

**ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION MEETING**  
**10:00 A.M. ★ Friday, May 19, 2017**  
**New Orleans, LA**

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**Attendance:**

Marta Schnabel, O'Bryon & Schnabel, Co- Chair  
Dale Atkins, Clerk, Orleans Parish Civil District Court  
Valerie Bargas, Vice President, Louisiana Bar Foundation  
Jeffery Coreil, Lafayette Parish Bar Foundation Board, Neuner Pate  
Alainna Mire, Alexandria City Attorney's Office  
Luz Molina, Loyola University of New Orleans College of Law  
Chris Ralston, Louisiana Bar Foundation Board, Partner, Phelps Dunbar, LLP  
Hon. Harry Randow, Judge 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (retired)  
Stacy Seicshnaydre, Associate Dean of Experiential Learning and Public Interest Programs, Tulane Law School  
Mark Surprenant, Pro Bono Partner, Adams and Reese  
Laura Tuggle, Executive Director, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services  
Sandra Vjunovich, Judicial Administrator of the Louisiana Supreme Court  
Hon. Lisa Woodruff-White, Chief Judge, East Baton Rouge Family Court

**Staff:**

Amy Duncan, ATJ Training Counsel  
Michael Schachtman, ATJ SRL Counsel  
Nicole Louque, ATJ Admin. Assistant  
Monte Mollere, ATJ Director  
Rachael Mills, ATJ Projects Counsel

**Guest:**

Leila Abu-Orf, ATJ Developing Leadership Intern  
Angela Bazile, Executive Counsel to Chief Justice  
Bernette Johnson, Louisiana Supreme Court  
Donna Cuneo, Executive Director, Louisiana Bar Foundation  
Monette Davis, ATJ Developing Leadership Intern  
Milton Hernandez, ATJ Developing Leadership Intern  
Amelia Hoppe, Louisiana Civil Justice Center  
Anais Moore-Jaccard, ATJ Developing Leadership Intern  
Evian Mugrabi, Louisiana Civil Justice Center

**Welcome & Introductions**

Marta Schnabel welcomed the Commission members and participants introduced themselves. Chris Ralston moved to accept the Consent Calendar and Valerie Bargas seconded.

**Commission Updates:**

**Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows – Mark Surprenant**

Mark Surprenant presented the findings of the committee tasked with investigating the Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows pilot project. The committee suggests the program begin January 2018. Mark Surprenant motioned that the Commission recommend to the LSBA Board of Governors that the pilot program be implemented as outlined in the report. The motion was seconded by Judge Woodruff-White and passed unanimously.

**State Funding – Chris Ralston**

Chris Ralston summarized progress on the Funding Committee. The economic impact study was completed showing that for every dollar spent on civil legal aid in Louisiana there was an \$8.73 economic benefit. He reported on the status of the notary fee bill which increased the notaries' annual \$25 fee and dedicates the increase to help fund civil legal aid. He reported that the bill faced several challenges including being labeled a tax and requiring a hyper-majority to pass. Also, for other reasons, the bill had to be reintroduced with a new author. These difficulties resulting in the bill being deferred after presentation to the Civil Law Committee.

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### **Federal Funding – Laura Tuggle**

In March the administration's budget included elimination of all funding for Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for 2018; however funding is secured through September 2017. FY2017 funding is \$385 million. Bar leadership attended ABA Day in Washington DC to lobby for funding civil legal aid through LSC. Organizations are also attempting to meeting with members of Congress on recess in Louisiana. Much support has been garnered for civil legal aid funding: letters of support signed by Deans of law schools, Fortune 500 companies, large law firms and media campaigns.

### **Louisiana Civil Justice Center – Ameila Hoppe/Evian Mugarabi**

LCJC was started in the wake of Katrina as a disaster hotline and still serves that purpose today. In addition LCJC has three other programs: legal hotline, help desks and community legal clinics. The legal hotline takes calls on a multitude of civil legal aid issues. The help desk in Orleans has an attorney that can assist the public with domestic court issues and has over 5000 visitors per year. They also staff virtual help desk in libraries in rural areas throughout the state. The LCJC's Arabic Community Legal Clinic was born from a need of other attorneys reaching out to Evian Mugarabi to help translate for Domestic Violence cases. LCJC's Justice Tour assisted over 500 people last year. The Justice Tour provides Ask-A-Lawyer clinics in rural libraries and helps to inform individual who may be miles from the nearest legal aid office about LCJC services offer. They also reach out to attorneys in the community to participate. Qualified visitors are also referred to appropriate legal services. In 2016 LCJC served over 14,000 people.

### **Modest Means Committee – Mark Surprenant**

A proposal was presented to develop a "modest means directory" to serve the legal needs of the working poor. That is, individuals making 200-400% above the government's poverty guidelines who are unable to access free legal services, but also are unable to access traditionally priced legal services. The committee set 3 goals in developing a mechanism to reach the working poor: to identify the market, identify lawyers to supply services and create a program to connect the clients with the attorney. Amy Duncan gave a brief overview of how the directory would work for both attorneys and clients. The Commission adopted the proposal and unanimously approved the motion to recommend that the LSBA establish a Modest Means Directory as suggested.

### **Self-Represented Litigation Committee – Judge Harry Randow**

Last year the Commission approved moving forward with uniform domestic forms earlier in the year. The forms will be placed on the LSBA website, LawHelp, and distributed through the library system. The committee plans to send the forms to member Judge Woodruff-White for final vetting.

### **Pro Bono and Children's Law Awards**

The Pro Bono and Children's Law Awards will be held on May 23, 2017 at 5:00pm at the Louisiana Supreme Court located at 400 Royal Street followed by a reception. The Commission members are encouraged to attend to celebrate with the winners.

Valerie Bargas' motion to adjourn was seconded by Alianna Mire. Moved and the meeting was adjourned.