



Louisiana Access to Justice Commission

10:00 a.m. on Friday, May 12, 2023

Attendees:

- Hon. Jeffrey Cashe, Judge, 21st Judicial District Court
- Lawrence J. Centola, Treasurer, LSBA Board of Governors
- Edmund Jacob Giering IV, Treasurer, Louisiana Bar Foundation
- Christy Kane, Pro Bono Counsel, Entergy of Louisiana
- Gregory L. Landry, Executive Director (retired), Acadia Legal Services Corp.
- Prof. Virginia D. B. Listach, Professor, Southern University Law School
- Prof. Luz Molina, Professor, Loyola University School of Law
- Chris Ralston, Partner, Phelps Dunbar
- Veronica Sizer, Executive Counsel, Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- W. Michael Street, LSBA Board of Governors
- Sandra A. Vujnovich, Judicial Administrator, Louisiana Supreme Court
- Justice John L. Weimer, III, Chief Justice, Louisiana Supreme Court

Guests:

- Paula Ates, Chair Emeritus, LSBA Civil Law and Litigation Section,
- Amanda Brown, Executive Director, Lagniappe Law Lab
- Stephen I. Dwyer, President, Louisiana State Bar Association
- Erin Green, Louisiana Supreme Court
- C.C. Kahr, Executive Director, The Pro Bono Project
- Tom Polites, ATJ Intern
- Destiny Singleton, ATJ Intern
- Victoria Vicknair, ATJ Intern

LSBA Staff:

- Stephanie Beagh, ATJ Projects Counsel
- Bridget Berins, ATJ Coordinator
- Rachael Mills, ATJ Projects Counsel
- Monte Mollere, ATJ Director
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* A G E N D A *

I. Welcome and Introductions

Prof. Luz Molina, standing in for co-chair Alainna Mire, and Chief Justice Weimer welcomed attendees.

II. Consent Calendar

Adoption of the Consent Calendar was moved by Greg Landry, seconded by Chris Ralson and adopted with no opposition.

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III. Louisiana Bar Foundation Report Edmund Giering updated the Commission on the work of the LBF highlighting the following items:

- a. The 2023-24 LBF officers were installed in April. They include President Deidre Deculus Robert of Baton Rouge, Vice President Hon. John C. Davidson of Alexandria, Treasurer Edmund J. Geiring IV of Baton Rouge, and Secretary Mike Mestayer of New Orleans.
- b. Edmund also reported that at the recent LBF meeting, the Board approved more than \$7.5 million in annual sustaining grants. The LBF anticipates awarding approximately \$12 million for the next fiscal year beginning July 1st.

IV. Access to Justice Commission Issues and Initiatives

a. **Access to Justice Conclave**

i. **Update on the March 3, 2023 Event**

Stephen Dwyer reported the ATJ Conclave was very well attended by a variety of stakeholders and was successful in opening dialogue to create a unified community response to assess the needs of, and offer help to, those in need. Prof. Molina and Chief Justice Weimer added that the priorities established were:

- understanding community needs through sharing previously collected data by partners;
- expanding community education trainings to ensure the recognition of legal issues by community partner organizations;
- developing partnerships between legal aid and non-legal organizations like United Way; and
- creating a comprehensive marketing plan to inform the public about available resources and legal help.

ii. **Adoption of the Conclave Priorities and Efforts to Implement Resulting Initiatives**

At the request of President Dwyer, the Commission agreed to create a new Community Education and Outreach Committee to support and facilitate the implementation of the adopted priorities. The Commission agreed to sunset its Building Bridges Committee to ensure sufficient capacity for the new efforts. The successes and dedicated efforts of this committee's members was duly acknowledged. The proposal to do this was moved by Sandra Vujnovich, seconded by Greg Landry, and approved.

b. **Language Access Committee Expansion**

At the request of Prof. Molina, the ATJ Commission agreed to expand the scope of its Language Access Committee, renaming it the Accessibility Committee beginning with the 2023-24 ATJ Commission. Professor Molina agreed to remain as Committee Chair during the transition. This expansion will change the scope and makeup of the committee. Professor Molina's motion was seconded by Greg Landry and approved.

c. **Justice for All Work** –Amanda Brown and Stephanie Beaugh updated the Commission on the continuing post-grant efforts to increase access points in rural areas. of St. Bernard Parish (Chalmette) and Beauregard Parish (Deridder) in furtherance of the JFA Implementation Plans. Jefferson Parish is establishing an Access Point in the Joe Yenni Building in Elmwood and has requested use of the

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software platform created by Lagniappe Law Lab. Live programming for the Access Points (Law Talks) partner organizations are well-received and have been offered to all public libraries expanding the program's reach statewide.

- d. **Mental Health & the Criminal Justice System** Monte Mollere reported on behalf of the LSBA Criminal Justice Committee which in conjunction with the Louisiana Mental Health Association (LAMHA) provided multidisciplinary training at the LAMHA Conference. This report is relevant to Commission members as they remain hopeful of establishing a state mental health task force similar to those created in other states.

V. Access to Justice Committee Issues and Initiatives

a. Pro Bono

- i. **Lawyers in Libraries** Stephanie Beauth reminded everyone the dates for the Lawyers in Libraries are October 23 – 28, 2023 and put the call out for volunteer attorneys to participate.
- ii. **Pro Bono Publico & Children's Law Awards Ceremony** Bridget Berins invited commission members to attend the ceremony being held May 17, 2023 at the Louisiana Supreme Court building.

- ## VI. Adjournment
- Chief Justice Weimer's call to adjourn the meeting was put into motion by President Dwyer, seconded by Veronica Sizer and adopted.