

ATTORNEYS VOLUNTEER TALENT FOR "LAWYERS IN LIBRARIES" SERVICE PROGRAMS



Attorneys Ruby A. Lewis, left, and Felicia H. Hamilton, right, presented a program in Caddo Parish (Shreveport). With them, librarian Wyolanda Hall.

By Michael W. Schachtman

Louisiana pro bono attorneys provided much-needed legal assistance to the public during the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) "Lawyers in Libraries" Week of Service Oct 23-28, 2017. A total of 142 attorneys volunteered for 76 events across the state, providing limited services to hundreds of Louisiana residents who likely would not otherwise have access to counsel. The Week of Service was scheduled to mark Louisiana's participation in "National Celebrate Pro Bono Week" (Oct. 23-28), but attorneys are encouraged to volunteer at their local libraries throughout the year. More information is available online at: www.LouisianaLawyersinLibraries.org.

"The event really took off this year. More than 70 people were served at Jefferson Parish libraries in just a three-hour period. The service is extremely valuable for people who can't afford a lawyer, and for those who come to the library because they simply don't know where else to go for help. Our patrons request this service throughout the year," said Chris Smith of the Jefferson Parish Library System.



Attorneys presenting the program at the Jefferson Parish East Bank Regional Branch were, from left, Wendy B. Vitter, Amber R. Gilbert and Donald G. D'Aunoy, Jr.



Attorney Meghan E. Notariano presented programs at the Hammond Library and Ponchatoula Library (Tangipahoa Parish).



Attorneys presenting a program in Rapides Parish were, from left, Robert G. Levy, Toni R. Martin and Paul J. Tellarico. With them, Debbie Smith with the Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project.



Attorneys presenting an Ask-a-Lawyer event in the Washington Parish Library (Bogalusa) were J. Norris Scott, left, and Bryan A. Harris, right. With them, branch manager Emmitt Guy.

Launched in 2014, “Lawyers in Libraries” is part of the Legal Education & Assistance Program (LEAP), an ongoing collaboration between the LSBA’s Access to Justice Department, the Law Library of Louisiana and Louisiana public libraries statewide. The program includes training for library staff on how to help the public find an attorney and reliable self-help resources provided by courts and legal aid partners.

“The Louisiana State Bar Association is committed to making attorneys available to everyone in Louisiana with legal issues, regardless of financial circumstance. This includes the Lawyers in Libraries program, which enables attorneys to provide direct services to their communities at no cost. Public libraries are natural starting points for people in search of legal information and resources, and this type of innovative partnership is why Louisiana is considered a national leader when it comes to access to justice,” said LSBA President Dona Kay Renegar.

“Librarians are natural partners in addressing the access to justice gap. Self-represented litigants (SRLs) will go to the library to seek information to solve their legal problems. Public librarians are traditionally taught to avoid helping SRLs because of the possibility of practicing law without a license. For two years, the Law Library of Louisiana, with the assistance of the LSBA’s Access to Justice Department, Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center and the Louisiana Library Association, has been offering training sessions to public librarians about how to locate legal information and resources for



Attorney Lisa Borne presented a program in St. Bernard Parish.

referrals. Public librarians are then able to assist people in their communities who otherwise would have little to no help. The Law Library demonstrates that the role of the librarian is the same with legal questions — showing people where to find information and then allowing them to help themselves,” said Miriam Childs, director of the Law Library of Louisiana.

The LSBA would like to acknowledge Louisiana libraries, the LSBA members who volunteered in their communities, and the pro bono agencies and organizations helping to coordinate this annual event.

“Lawyers in Libraries” Attorney Volunteers

- Acadia Parish:** William J. Casanova.
- Ascension Parish:** Gregory L. Hughes.
- Avoyelles Parish:** Douglas L. Bryan, Emily L. Edwards and Charles A. Riddle III.
- Beauregard Parish:** John M. Welborn III.
- Bienville Parish:** Russell A. Woodard.
- Bossier Parish:** Aaron R. Wilson.

Caddo Parish: Monique I. Davis, Sherron P. Douglas, Shelvia R. Grant, Felicia M. Hamilton, Ruby A. Lewis, Terrell J. Myles and Edward A. Takara.

Calcasieu Parish: Gerald L. Brown.

Caldwell Parish: Benjamin J. Brown.

Cameron Parish: Jennifer A. Jones.

Catahoula Parish: Lewis M. Gladney.

Claiborne Parish: Jerry Edwards and Charles E. Tabor.

Concordia Parish: Harrece C. Gassery

DeSoto Parish: Nicholas E. Gasper and Aaron R. Wilson.

East Baton Rouge Parish: Joaquin M. Johnson and Carina E. Salazar.

East Carroll Parish: Laurie R. Brister.

East Feliciana Parish: Rodney B. Hastings.

Grant Parish: Walter P. McClatchey, Jr.

Iberia Parish: Loreal M. Jackson.

Iberville Parish: Perry W. Terrebonne.

Jackson Parish: J. Michael Rhymes.

Jefferson Davis Parish: Nicholas D. Cole.



Attorney Nicholas E. Gasper, left, presented a program in Mansfield (DeSoto Parish). With him is head librarian Doris Ross.



Attorneys presenting the program in Orleans Parish (Gentilly) were, from left, Margaret F. Swetman, Daya Naef Ellis and William B. Schwartz.



Attorney Michele C. Stross, far right, presented a program in St. Charles Parish. With her are library staff Lauren Pitz, Carol Johnson and Brenda Guillot.

Jefferson Parish: Donita Y. Brooks, Donald G. D'Aunoy, Jr., John Shea Dixon, Chester A. (Chip) Fleming III, Amber R. Gilbert, Lauren B. Griffin, Hester R. Hillard, Christy M. Howley, Peter M. Meisner and Wendy B. Vitter.

Lafayette Parish: Jeremy A. Bazile, Aaron P. Beyt, Caitlin Paige Beyt, Mandi Borne Bucher, Kyle N. Choate and Carolyn C. Cole.

Lafourche Parish: David C. Peltier.

LaSalle Parish: Rossanna Rahim Mcllwain.

Lincoln Parish: Krystin M. Frazier.

Livingston Parish: Joseph A. Booth, Markita S. Hawkins, Peter A. Ryan and Hon. Zorraine M. (Zoey) Waguespack.

Madison Parish: Angela L. Claxton.

Morehouse Parish: Jay Mitchell.

Natchitoches Parish: Lewis M. Gladney.

Orleans Parish: Andrea L. Agee, Dara L. Baird, Salvador I. Bivalacqua, Tessa L. Cluck, Thomas D. Dunn, Jr., Veleka Eskinde, Charlin S. Fisher, Leonard K. Fisher III, Chester A. (Chip) Fleming III, Julius Christopher Ford, Monique N. Green, Martha J. Grisette, Robert A. Kutcher, James G. Maguire, Marcia S. (Suzy) Montero, Evian Muqrabi, Daya Naef Ellis, Leonor E. Prieto, William B. (Bill) Schwartz, Matthew S. Smith, Margaret F. Swetman, Gregory M. Thompson, Eric D. Torres and Elizabeth A. Widhalm.

Ouachita Parish: Dianne L. Hill and Dayna M. Ryan.

Plaquemines Parish: Danielle Clark Phillips.

Pointe Coupee Parish: John Lane Ewing, Jr.

Rapides Parish: Robert G. (Bobby) Levy, Toni R. Martin, Edward E. (Ted) Roberts III and Paul J. Tellarico.



Attorney John Van Robichaux, Jr. presented a program in St. Bernard Parish.

Red River Parish: Lewis M. Gladney.

Richland Parish: Myrt T. Hales, Jr.

St. Bernard Parish: Lisa Borne, Nicholas N. Cusimano, Sr., Samuel L. Fuller, Christopher S. Liuzza, Stacey LaGraize Meyaski, Daniel W. Nodurft, Brian D. Page and John Van Robichaux, Jr.

St. Charles Parish: Scott J. Falgoust, Stephanie V. Lemoine and Michele C. Stross.

St. Helena Parish: Sean P. Brady.

St. James Parish: Monique M. Edwards.

St. John the Baptist Parish: Monique M. Edwards.

St. Landry Parish: Kathleen E. Ryan and George F. Severson.

St. Martin Parish: Neal C. Angelle.

St. Mary Parish: Adolph B. Curet III.

St. Tammany Parish: Joseph P. Anderson, Jr., Rachel T. Anderson, William D. Cass, Jason M. Freas, Anne D. Guste, Joseph B. Harvin, Janet L. MacDonell, Lisa Paige, Cynthia M. Petry, Shawn Smith, Dorian L. Tuminello, Kim Vanderbrook, Elizabeth A. Widhalm and Sean E. Williams.

Tangipahoa Parish: Lauren A. Duncan and Meghan E. Notariano.

Tensas Parish: Joe McCaleb Bilbro.

Terrebonne Parish: Lakethia B. Bryant, Sarah A. Legendre, Teresa D. King, Joan M. Malbrough and John E. Sirois.

Vermilion Parish: Burton P. Guidry.

Vernon Parish: John K. (Mike) Anderson, Wesley R. (Wes) Bailey and S. Christie Smith IV.

Washington Parish: William H. Arata, Bryan A. Harris and J. Norris Scott.

Webster Parish: Angela M. Smith.

West Baton Rouge Parish: Parris A. Taylor.

West Feliciana Parish: Talya J. Bergeron and Rodney B. Hastings.

Winn Parish: James E. Mixon.

“Lawyers in Libraries” Organizations

Acadiana Legal Services Corp.
Baton Rouge Bar Association
Central Louisiana Pro Bono Project
Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers
Louisiana Civil Justice Center
Northshore Pro Bono Project
Pro Bono Project (New Orleans)
Shreveport Bar Association
Southeast Louisiana Legal Services Corp.
Terrebonne Parish Bar Association

Michael W. Schachtman is the Louisiana State Bar Association Access to Justice Department's self-represented litigation counsel. He works with Louisiana courts and legal aid partners, including libraries, self-help centers and similar access to justice-related programs. (michael.schachtman@lsba.org; 601 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70130)

