

LIANG ON FRONT LINES OF LEGAL AID

Whatever honors come Lisa Liang's way during her legal career will have to compete with a handmade potholder and award certificate that says, "To the Best Lawyer."

One of Liang's clients made her those treasured mementos during her time as a staff attorney in the health law unit with Atlanta Legal Aid Society. Liang (J.D. '08) helps low-income Atlantans with life-threatening illnesses deal with legal issues that affect their health and quality of life. It's common for her to take cases with little advance notice. Liang points to former Gov. Roy Barnes who says: "Working in Legal Aid is kind of like working in a legal emergency room."

For Liang, a day could include going to court, drafting documents, visiting a client in hospice to work on his will, supervising an intern, doing telephone intake and giving a presentation to social workers.

The path that brought Liang to this career started with doing medical social work. She then taught kindergartners and first-graders for several years through Teach For America. She remembers helping her students' parents decipher some of the myriad forms they had to deal with.

"I always thought, 'There's got to be a lawyer that does this,'" Liang says. Eventually, she decided to go to law school and pursue public interest work.

Today, her clients' cases can be complex to unravel. For example, she may start by helping a terminally ill client with guardianship plans for a child and then realize that the client is also eligible for unrealized benefits. "What starts out as one legal issue is often many," Liang says. "And, in that, there's a lot of opportunity for us to make some really big, substantial differences in the client's life."

—Sarah Beckham

TAKING STOCK

This summer, the shelves at food banks around the state were fuller thanks to Georgia Legal Food Frenzy.

"Summer is actually a critical time," says Jon Pannell (J.D. '05), a Food Frenzy veteran. With kids who are normally fed at school out for break, more families turn to food banks, he says.

A partner at Gray Pannell & Woodward LLP in Savannah, Pannell is the immediate past president of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia. The Food Frenzy is a project by the Young Lawyers Division, Georgia Food Bank Association

and the Office of the Attorney General.

The committee chair this year was Jonathan Poole (J.D. '05) a classmate of Pannell's and with Strickland Brockington Lewis LLP in Atlanta. Poole says his



time at Georgia State Law,

where he was a Public Interest Law Association scholarship recipient, nurtured his interest in service.

Law firms, legal organizations and law schools compete as they collect money and canned food items to support Georgia food banks. The top prize is the Attorney General's Cup. Pannell enjoys seeing the creativity firms use to drum up donations. Some host events such as concerts or movie screenings.

In its first two years, the Food Frenzy collected 1.4 million pounds of food and involved more than 15,000 legal professionals around Georgia. This year, more than 16,000 legal professionals raised 1.1 million pounds of food and Georgia State Law, led by Chris Collier (J.D. '14) and Wayne Satterfield (J.D. '15), won the competition among five state law schools.

—Sarah Beckham