our mission

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York provides effective, free civil legal services and education to and advocacy for people with low income or other barriers to accessing the legal system. We secure basic needs, protect and preserve legal rights, provide equal access to justice and seek fairness and dignity for our clients.


executive director

Lillian M. Moy

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W hen Charles Badu talks about becoming an American citizen, his whole face breaks into a grin. LASNNY and attorney Brian Wang helped build that smile.

A native of Ghana, Charles came to this country when he was 18 in 2001, his heart and mind set on becoming a United States citizen.

“My mom would take us on long vacations to America,” Charles recalls, beaming across the living room of an Albany apartment at his mother, visiting from Ghana.

His uncle, a U.S. citizen, adopted Charles. This allowed him to pursue permanent residence and a green card. After he got these, he needed to wait the standard five years before applying for citizenship.

Charles went about his life, assuming his papers were in order. He went to school and he worked. When his grandmother died in 2009, he went home to Ghana to visit family. Upon his return to the United States, nothing seemed out of the ordinary at

New Citizen Gives Thanks

Immigration case has a happy ending
Energy, skills and talents

There is a lot going on at the Legal Aid Society. With the receipt of a generous Judiciary Civil Legal Services grant, we are recruiting new staff to help us meet our clients’ essential legal needs. It has been some time since we were able to hire across the program — it feels good.

In addition, we are beginning to implement our strategic plan by convening board and staff committees to explore generating attorneys’ fees in appropriate cases and to consider new ways to develop and fund more systemic advocacy. While these two initiatives are related, there are some differences. Attorneys’ fees will generally come from cases brought under fee-shifting statutes, such as Social Security Disability appeals to the United States District Court and consumer law litigation. Our commitment to increasing our impact will permeate our individual efforts as well as our partnerships with community organizations. With a healthy mix of experienced and newer staff, LASNNY has the energy, skills and talent to maintain our historic commitment to individual clients as well as to help even more people through our legal services.

Finally, plans are being launched to celebrate our 90th Anniversary, with a special dinner and awards celebration on May 2, 2013. My thanks to all of you who have once again committed to our Justice For All Campaign. While grant funds come and go, your support provides the stability the Legal Aid Society needs.

I welcome your comments and questions about the changes at the Legal Aid Society and, as always, look forward to hearing from you. I wish you and your loved ones the best for the Holiday Season and I hope to see you in the next few weeks.


donate now to the 2012 justice for all campaign online at www.lasnny.org or use the enclosed envelope
Helping Humans

“Representing humans, I don’t represent companies,” says Ronald J. Kim, Esq., member of the LAS Board of Directors. “In bankruptcy, I represent debtors. In consumer issues I represent consumers. I do a lot of employment discrimination work, and I only represent employees.”

This makes his involvement with LASNNY a logical extension of his law practice, The Law Offices of Ronald J. Kim in Saratoga. In his work, he sees that the legal needs of low income and even middle income people are not being met, which underscores the importance of the agency’s mission.

Recently, during a strategic retreat, board and staff assessed the challenges of trying to fulfill the organization’s mission as governmental support decreases. Kim has been working with staff to see what other opportunities there are to raise money from services that LASNNY provide.

“There are some statutes, mostly on the federal level, that allow consumers to essentially protect their rights against oppressive debt collection and illegal debt collection,” says Kim.

As the economy has gotten worse that activity has increased, he notes. The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act is a federal law that allows a lawyer to sue these entities on behalf of his or her client, and retain attorney’s fees. Kim told LAS that there are not a lot of people doing that work in that area and it is now being investigated as a possible revenue source.

A former city council member in Saratoga Springs, Kim is finishing a second three year term, and is looking forward to serving another three years on the board. In his tenure, he’s been happy to help figure out how the agency can be more self-sustaining, through ideas such as utilizing the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, and also, through securing donations. He expects his volunteering efforts will continue in similar capacities.

“Clearly, there’s always the economic incentive,” Kim says of his paid legal work, “but for me, the psychic benefit of representing people I agree with, or protecting their rights, has been a big part of my job satisfaction. So to be able to do that also with Legal Aid has been gratifying.”

Legal Aid Society Board of Directors

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Funding:

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York is funded by grants from the Legal Services Corporation, the Interest on Lawyer Account Fund of the State of New York, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, United States Department of Justice, New York State Legislature, New York State Office of the Attorney General, NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, NYS Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, Albany County Department for Aging, Fulton County Office for Aging, St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging, Washington County Office for the Aging, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Office for the Aging, City of Saratoga Springs, New York State Bar Foundation, United Way of the Greater Capital Region, Albany Law School, Hunger Solutions New York, NYS Unified Court System Judiciary Civil Legal Services, Warren County, Albany County Department of Social Services, Schenectady Community Action Program, Education and Services, Joseph’s House, City of Schenectady, City of Albany, City of Troy, New York State Attorney General Homeowner Protection Program, law firms, corporations and individuals through the Justice for All Campaign.

Donate through the SEFA Campaign.
Our SEFA number: 50-00198
(left) Senator Tom Duane, Lillian Moy, Laurie Shanks, Al DeSalvo
(right) Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill, Rachael Kretser, Charlotte Buchanan

(left) Tom O’Connor, Michael Whiteman, Tucker Stanclift, Don Boyajian, Amy Klein, E. Stewart Jones, Connie Mayer, Mel MacKenzie
(right) Tom O’Connor, Michael Whiteman, Tucker Stanclift, Don Boyajian, Amy Klein, E. Stewart Jones, Connie Mayer, Mel MacKenzie

(above) Tucker Stanclift, Don Boyajian, Dan Hurteau, Peter Coffey, Amy Klein, E. Stewart Jones

(below) Senator Breslin, Tom O’Connor, Stu Jones, Tucker Stanclift, Don Boyajian

(below) Connie Mayer, Mel MacKenzie, Amy Klein
12 Angry Jurors

May 7, 2012

(left) Mary O. Donohue, Polly Mason Freihoffer and Justin Donohue
(right) Leah Threatte Bonjowski, Patricia Rodriguez, Rob Colborn

Kimberly Sanger-Jones, E. Stewart Jones, James Knox

677 Prime Catering and Jane Scott

The Hurteau Family: Alicia, Dan, Mary Alice, Gabrielle

Michael Whiteman, Margery Whiteman, Phil Gitlen

(left) Leyla Kiosse, Donald Ferlazzo, Donna Ferlazzo, Sal Ferlazzo
(right) Donna Purnomo, Yono’s
Campaign Co-Chairs, Thomas J. O’Connor, E. Stewart Jones

(right) Barb Davis, Debra Collura

(below) Norma Meacham, Tom O’Connor, Sal Ferlazzo, Michael Whiteman

(below) Sanjeeve DeSoyza, Amy Klein, and colleague

(below) Jason Hughes, Kevin Glasheen, Ryan Kelheer
Tasty Crustaceans

(above) John Allen, Mike Murphy, Ed Laird
(right) John Criscione, Karen Arndt, Maureen Tighe, Rebecca Kane, Richard Goldman, Rachael Phelan

(left) Norma Meacham, Lillian Moy
(right) E. Stewart Jones, Rhonda Boyajian, Don Boyajian

Davia McDonald, Renee Hariton, Mindy Derosia, Deb Collura

Thomas Higgs, Benjamin Hill, James Knox, Sam Breslin

Annual Campaign reception, Fort Orange Club, September 27, 2012
PAI Programs for Volunteers

Attorney-For-The-Day Program
Provides low income clients with advice on a housing matter in Albany City Court. Brief Service.

Bankruptcy Veterans Program:
Provides Veterans with representation in filing a bankruptcy. Extended Service.

General Referrals:
Provides representation or advice to clients in different case types. Varied Service.

IOOV/LGBT Ask-A-Lawyer Clinic:
Offers legal advice to lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgendered people of color one evening per month. Brief Service.

Pro Se Divorce Program:
Private attorneys instruct clients how to complete divorce papers. Brief Service.

UIB Ask-A-Lawyer Program:
Provides representation or advice to clients in different case types. Varied Service.

General Referrals:
Provides representation or advice to clients in different case types. Varied Service.

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Provides representation or advice to clients in different case types. Varied Service.

Thanks to the following attorneys who have accepted cases

November 2011 through September 2012

Platinum Members (20 or more cases):

Clinton County: William Favreau, Meredith Neverett (2)

Columbia County: Douglas Coleman, Janet Kealy, Creston Laager, IV, Edward McConville, Chris Steadman

Franklin County: Judith Pareira (2)

Greene County: Edward Kaplan, Joseph Warren

Montgomery: Lisa Lorman

Rensselaer County: Robert William Johnson, III, Jill Nagy, Geri Pomerantz (2)

St. Lawrence: Neil Bhat, Alice Carrothers, Natasha Hill, Maureen McGaw (2), Gerry Leek, Charles Nash (3), Cathleen O’Horo (2), Daniel Pease


Schenectady: Peter Coffey, Teneka Frost-Amusa, Kate McGuirl, Peter McHugh (4), Kathleen Toombs

Warren: John Caffry, Karen Judd (3), Christopher Nenninger, Malcolm O’Hara (2), Michael Toomey

New Pro Bono Rules!

• Volunteers will now receive 1 CLE credit for every 2 actual hours of pro bono work.
• In addition, volunteers may report 10 pro bono CLE credits towards the
• Total required 24 CLE credits during an OCA reporting period.
• In addition, if you are a volunteer through the Attorney Emeritus program, you may report up to 15 credits in pro bono service during a report period.

All of these rules effectuated on 2/15/12.

Join us on Facebook
Private Attorney Involvement

Welcome new PAI Coordinator

My name is Monica L. Cook and I am the PT Coordinator of Private Attorney Involvement at Legal Aid. I truly enjoy working at Legal Aid because organizations like these are so very important in order to provide legal services for everyone, especially those who cannot afford it.

I am currently enrolled at Maria College in the Paralegal degree program and am scheduled to graduate in May of 2013. I currently live in the Stockade area in Schenectady, NY with my two teenage sons, Kenny (17) and Darnell (16) and our dog Peyton (4).
Legal Aid Endowment

Anonymous (3)
James B. Ayers
Jeffrey and Martha Baker
Richard J. Bartlett
Charlotte S. Buchanan
David and Kathleen Burke
Paul M. Callahan
Peter and Mary Coffey
John R. Dunne
Deanne Grimaldi
Richard C. Heffern
E. Stewart and Kimberly Jones, Jr.
Thomas V. Kenney Jr.
Amelia M. Klein
Skip and Merri P. Meislahn
Tim and Carmelina Morrison
Lillian M. Moy
Miriam M. Netter
Thomas J. O’Connor
Leslie Thiele and Ken Larsen
The Ruthman Family
Arthur and Ronnie Siegel
Keith C. St. John
Henda and Samuel Strasser
F. Michael Tucker
Wendy L. Wahlberg
G. Kimball Williams & Margaret. J. Gillis
Mary Withington

Albany County Bar Association and The Legal Aid Society are hosting:

18th Annual Holiday Party

December 13, 2012  6:00 - 8:00 pm
The Hampton Inn, Downtown Albany
Catered by Yono’s, SANTA will be stopping by!!

The celebration of special occasions, such as major holidays and birthdays are often very difficult for children in residential care. Each child deserves special attention and the number of children continues to rise. Therefore, Proceeds of our Party will benefit St. Catherine’s Center for Children.

Admission will be $25 plus an unwrapped Gift for the children of St. Catherine’s. Children under 12 are free. Please be sure that your Gifts are new and unwrapped. St. Catherine’s has provided us with a Wish List and we provide this to you only as a guide. Please visit our website, www.albanycountybar.com, for a copy of the St. Catherine's Center for Children Wish List, and to register.

F. Michael Tucker  
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during the years that you’re working,” Tucker says of his own decision to become a Guardian of Justice.

The Guardians of Justice are committed to securing justice for future generations through The Legal Aid Legacy Fund, LASNNY’s permanent endowment fund.

donations will...sustain the operations of the organization to insulate them from the highs and lows of government funding

Tucker sees that LASNNY, like all not-for-profits, is competing for dollars to cover its budget. By drawing attention to the necessity and merit of the organization’s work through various outreach efforts, he hopes to attract federal, state and voluntary contributions. Raising awareness of the Guardians for Justice helps ensure a continuous base of support that the organization can use to sustain its long term viability.

“It can tie people in and it also can provide the stability that a nonprofit needs,” he says. “As the legacy effort grows, there will be more and more people who participate in it. The benefits of their donations will be realized over time, hopefully in a way that will level out and sustain the operations of the organization to insulate them from the highs and lows of government funding.”

Tucker and his wife, Lynette, live in Delmar, where they raised three daughters. The examples of volunteerism and charitable support he saw in his community helped him focus his free time on the Guardians of Justice and other worthwhile causes.
customs. However, a few weeks later, just months shy of the date he could apply for naturalization, he received a letter requiring him to report for a deportation hearing.

This was not because Charles had done anything wrong. He had applied for permanent residence based on being adopted by his uncle, and immigration overlooked the fact that he had aged out of eligibility.

Charles hired a lawyer to help him unravel the complicated situation, but nothing was resolved. He kept working and attending the Borough of Manhattan Community College. He joined the Air Force Reserve because he wanted to give back to the country that has given him so much. Eventually, early in 2012, he found LASNNY.

“I contacted the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, their trial attorneys, to see if they were willing to work with him on this case,” Brian Wang says.

While researching the situation, Wang found that Badu would be eligible for naturalization under a special provision of the immigration laws that allow for active duty military or people serving in reserves to naturalize regardless of their status. Outside of military bases, this section of the law does not surface often, making the case more complicated than most immigration issues he handles.

“Brian assured me that America was fair and the law was on my side, and I had faith,” Charles says. “My mother said pray, pray, pray, and I did.”

While he was confident that the immigration law read in Charles’ favor, Brian did have concerns.

“Because it was such an obscure aspect of the law it might be a difficult task to convince the government that’s granting the benefits that this is what the law says,” Brian says.

Thus, he enlisted additional aid, asking the immigration liaison unit of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand’s office to advocate on behalf of Charles. The Senator’s office worked with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to ask for their agreement to administratively close Charles’ deportation proceedings so that he could pursue his naturalization through the military. With this assistance, and diligent attention to all areas of the case, from educating involved parties on the intricacies of this law, to making sure Charles’ paperwork followed him first to Basic Training and then back to Albany, Charles Badu became a U.S. citizen on August 23rd, 2012.

The work was very satisfying, says Brian Wang, and Charles Badu is very grateful for the help. While Charles sent a thank you note to Senator Gillibrand, he wants this story to thank her and her office, as well as the judge, LASNNY, Brian Wang, and the United States.

“America’s the best,” says Charles. “It has a lot of opportunities. This country really cares about the rest of the world, and never stops helping anybody else, no matter if there’s a backlash against them.”
Michael Tucker values volunteering, especially with the Legal Aid Society.

“The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York has been an organization I’ve supported throughout my career as a real estate developer, lawyer and now as a nonprofit executive,” says Tucker, who is President and CEO of the Center for Economic Growth, and also a member of Governor Cuomo’s Capital Region Economic Development Council. The Center for Economic Growth is an economic development organization serving an 11-county Tech Valley region, one of ten Regional Technology Development Centers designated by Empire State Development.

“In light of the fact that my legal background and experience were primarily in commercial real estate and financing, I wouldn’t have been effective in providing pro bono legal services in practice areas where those services are needed the most.”

Tucker believes strongly in the importance of providing free or low cost civil legal services, education, and other support to help people overcome barriers to accessing aid.

“If someone loses their apartment and is unable to afford legal representation, it’s affecting their families. It’s affecting their ability to perform their job, and it’s affecting the cost to the court system,” he says. If, however, a person has access to an attorney and some education about the legal system, then they can get their focus back to their family and their job; this makes good sense to the business of running society. He’s championed the general cause of legal aid for the poor before the New York State Court of Appeals, and he campaigns for The Guardians of Justice to help LASNYY fulfill its mission.

“You get to an age in your own life where you realize that you have the opportunity to do something long term in addition to whatever financial support you’re able to provide

continues on page 10