

p·a·i BRIEFS

Legal Aid

Fighting For Fairness
Promoting Justice!

our **MISSION**

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York is a non-profit law firm that advocates on civil matters for low income people to secure their basic needs, protect and preserve their legal rights and provide equal access to justice.

Serving the low-income and needy residents of Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, St. Lawrence, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren and Washington Counties, and the St. Regis Reservation.

executive **DIRECTOR**

Lillian M. Moy

VOLUNTEER profile

DeVall & DeVall

David DeVall of the Saratoga Springs law firm, DeVall & DeVall, will freely admit the law profession has been “very rewarding” for him and his brother and partner Richard DeVall. Their success is in large part the reason why they engage in pro bono work. “We both agreed some time ago that we should give something back, to help people who sometimes can’t help themselves.”

David DeVall was admitted to the New York Bar in 1978 and The Florida Bar in 1982. His brother followed him six years later. They took different routes to the place where they found themselves working together as law partners, and doing pro bono work with the Legal Aid Society.

David, 52, left the family homestead in New Hartford, NY to get a degree in Sociology at Union College, giving him a strong foundation to acquire his J.D. from Western New England College of Law in Springfield, MA. Upon graduation, he “went back home to practice for four or five years,” then returned to the Capital District in 1986 where he practiced Real Estate Law in Clifton Park.

His brother, Richard, 46, also achieved his undergraduate



Lillian Moy, Executive Director, presented David DeVall with the Distinguished Service Award at the June meeting of the Saratoga County Bar Association

degree at Union, and later went on to Albany Law. Immediately upon admission to the Bar, Richard joined the Rensselaer County District Attorney’s Office as an ADA.

It was in the late 1980s when the DeVall brothers carefully assessed the regional private practice scene, with an eye toward establishing their own practice. “Rich and I were working for well-established lawyers then, and one day we looked at each other and said ‘We can do this.’ We soon decided to hang a shingle, and we never looked back.” And so it was in 1989 the DeVall brothers found-

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Photo by Joan Heffler,
Creative Expressions
Photography

We are ending 2004 on a high note, with this year's Justice for All Campaign. As of November 1, we have a substantial amount of pledges from some of the leading law firms in the Capital District. We hope that others will follow suit shortly. It is because we trust that the leading Capital Region law firms will recognize their special responsibility for supporting the provision of legal services to the poor that we envision great success for the Justice for All Campaign. My thanks to our dedicated Co-Chairs, E. Stewart Jones and Arthur Siegel, Board President Peter Coffey and Director of Development Deanne Grimaldi.

Our Annual Phoneathon will continue, and this year is scheduled for December 7, 8 & 9. During the Phoneathon, lawyers will call their colleagues so that those who have not had a chance to contribute through the Justice for All Campaign may be able to do so on their own. If you can make calls, please let me know.

Although we've also had some setbacks this year, we are very excited to launch our expanded Homelessness Prevention Project. This project, funded by the NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, will provide

homelessness prevention representation throughout northeastern New York. In Albany County, we are also beginning our first interdisciplinary services to low income people with an attorney/housing advocate team to first prevent the eviction, and then assist a family in maintaining their housing. Also, with a new Doors of Hope grant, we can dedicate two attorneys on a part-time basis to represent

I am continually impressed with the gifts of financial support and pro bono legal services I see in the Capital Region.

victims of domestic violence in our Canton and Plattsburgh offices. This is the first funding dedicated to helping victims of domestic violence ever received in the north country.

The Society is also enormously grateful for the support of our local legislators: Thanks to Senators Breslin, Bruno and Farley and Assemblymembers Aubertine, Canestrari, McEneny and Tonko, we have funding to help support our direct legal services to victims of domestic violence, to low income residents of St. Lawrence County and to provide urgently needed upgrades to our technology.

As Chair of the New York State Bar Association's Legal Aid Committee, I have had the opportunity to work with bar leaders from throughout the state. I am continually impressed with the gifts of financial support and pro bono legal services I see in the

Capital Region. Along with our colleagues, Barbara Davis of the Albany County Bar Association, Lisa Frisch of The Legal Project and Cynthia Feathers of the New York State Bar Association, we made a videotape for our Pro Bono Law Firm Conference which will be used again in Rochester this coming Spring; My deepest thanks to the Hon. Howard Levine, Michael Whiteman, Peter Coffey, Kim Williams, Eugenia Brennan, Dan Hurteau, Gayle Hartz and Tina Corellis – Legal Aid Society supporters and fans who appeared in the video. A free copy of the video and a copy of the pro bono policy developed in connection with the Conference is available, just give me a call.

I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season. Thank you for supporting the Legal Aid Society.

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These law firms
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Annual

**JUSTICE
FOR ALL**

Campaign

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McNamee, Lochner, Titus & Williams

O'Connell & Aronowitz

Girvin & Ferlazzo

Bond, Schoeneck & King

Crane, Greene & Parente

The Towne Law Offices

Dreyer & Boyajian

Shanley, Sweeney, Reilly & Allen

Lavelle & Finn

Englert, Coffey & McHugh

Law Office of Stephen Johnston

list in formation

Campaign leadership has calculated their firm
gift at a minimum of \$200 per attorney



Phil Gitlin of
Whiteman,
Osterman &
Hanna and
E. Stewart Jones
at the Campaign
launch reception.

For campaign information
contact

Deanne Grimaldi at
518 689-6335 or
dgrimaldi@lasnny.org

The Board to Fund Equal Justice,

chaired by Arthur Siegel and E. Stewart Jones, Jr., was founded in 2004 by area law firms. The Board's goal is to solicit multi-year leadership gifts to support the work of the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York in the face of unstable state and federal funding.

Co-Chairs

E. Stewart Jones
E. Stewart Jones Jr., PLLC

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Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC

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Williams, P.C.*

Jeffrey McMorris

Nearly 10 years after first becoming a Member of the Board of the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, 42 year old Jeffrey McMorris remains deeply committed to the Society's mission of helping to provide legal assistance to those less fortunate.

"So many people with very little means find themselves in dire need of legal counseling, and often can't afford it," said McMorris, of Hudson Falls. "I feel a great sense of personal fulfillment in helping to provide these services, and have been very proud to serve as a Legal Aid Board Member for the past decade."

McMorris, a graduate of Albany Law School, was admitted to the Bar in January of 1988. A native of Greenwich, NY, McMorris is a partner of Oswald & McMorris of Ft. Edward.

"A lot of what we do here at Oswald & McMorris is serve as public defenders for Washington County. We have been doing a lot of criminal defense since 1992," said McMorris. "That is the primary focus of what I do." He also provides "family court representation on a private basis," he said, together with real estate representation and estate planning.

It was nearly a decade ago when McMorris "got a call from Jim Towne out of the blue," that a board member was departing, and "would I consider taking her

place?" McMorris said he jumped at the opportunity because it fit so neatly with his guiding philosophy that if you're in a position to help others who need it, you should do whatever you can for them.

I feel a great sense of personal fulfillment in helping to provide these services, and have been very proud to serve as a Legal Aid Board Member

Lillian M. Moy, the Executive Director of Legal Aid said she has been absolutely delighted with McMorris' work. "During his long tenure as a Board Member, Jeff has played an integral role in advancing the cause and mission of the Legal Aid Society," she said. "Low-income residents who live in the Washington and Warren Counties are well-served with Jeff on the Board."

McMorris, an historic preservation enthusiast, provides legal services to the Washington County Historical Society. He is also very involved personally with the Free & Accepted Masons of the State of New York, and serves

on the International Supreme Council, the Board of Directors, of DeMolay International, a youth group for young men aged 12 to 21. The group is loosely affiliated with the Freemasons.

DeMolay International teaches leadership skills, personal organization, public speaking, and the value of community service and character building. "The adults supervise the group, but really the members run the organization themselves," said McMorris, who followed a family tradition and became a member of DeMolay when he was a young teen himself. He was New York State president of the group while attending Colgate University. He continues to remain active as an adult advisor to give back to the organization which helped him develop as a young man.

And he added without hesitation: "Working with the kids helps because they keep me younger."

McMorris, whose work keeps him "extremely busy," reflected on his decision to attend his 20th year reunion at Colgate this year. "It was the first (Colgate) reunion I'd ever been to," he said. "Where did all the years go?"

E-MAIL US!

If you would like to receive updates, notices and referral information by e-mail, please e-mail Elena Rich at erich@lasnny.org.



Patrick Morphy

Legal Aid
ALUMNI

Legal Aid's story is part of the fabric of this legal community and starts with the many lawyers and law students who have worked at the Society. This column profiling Legal Aid alumni memorializes the Society's history, via some of our most talented attorneys and law clerks.

When Rochester, NY native Patrick Morphy graduated from St. John Fisher College in 1971, he found himself drawn to the State of Florida where two important things happened in his life. He met his future wife of 30 years, Molly, and, together with her, discovered the importance of community activism as a Vista Volunteer.

"We did a great deal of community work," he said, recalling that Vista worked closely with "Florida Legal Services folks, who showed me what you can do for people if you know the law." Having made what would become a lifetime career decision, he enrolled in Albany Law School "sight unseen. I figured if the school was in the State's capital, I couldn't go wrong."

While attending Albany Law, he clerked for the Troy office of Legal Aid. "At the time it was two lawyers and me," he said. When he graduated in 1977, and joined the Bar in 1978, he became an attorney for the Troy office where he remained for five years.

He and Molly soon became permanent residents of Eastside Troy where they raised three children, and where Patrick continued to give back to the community.

After his tenure at Legal Aid, Morphy secured a Howard Bush Foundation grant "to do private practice on a sliding scale" for three years. Following that experience, his career turned to public service when he joined the

office of Rensselaer County Surrogate's Court Judge Travers. "He introduced me to politics," he said, which eventually led to his serving for six years on the Troy School Board.

Later, soon-to-be Troy Mayor Mark Pattison "came up to me and said 'Troy is in the dumpster – let's see if we can get it out.'" Without hesitation, Morphy signed up to Pattison's plan and became the Mayor's Corporation Counsel in January 1996. He remained at that post until Pattison's term-limited departure in December of 2003.



PHONEATHON

This year's Phoneathon will be held on December 7, 8 & 9. We need your help to call your colleagues to ask them to support Legal Aid. Every caller who raises \$500 helps Legal Aid help one more low income family. Email Deanne Grimaldi at dgrimaldi@lasnny.org or call her at 689-6308 to let her know when you're available.

In addition to his public service work, he also served on Troy's advisory committee which was attached to the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Morphy also served as president of the Neighborhood Action Council, a consortium of neighborhood groups that served as a sounding board for residents concerned about their quality of life and the direction the City of Troy was taking.

Speaking recently from his office at Troy law firm Pattison, Sampson, Ginsberg & Griffin, Morphy pointed to his Vista experience as the genesis of his lengthy public service resume. "I experienced such a transition in my life in Florida doing the Vista work," he said. "As a comfortable, middle class kid who grew up in the suburbs, I discovered that not everyone is as fortunate" as he was. "I needed to give something back."

"And as his impressive credentials will demonstrate," said Lillian M. Moy, the Executive Director of Legal Aid, "Pat never stopped giving something back. "His record of service to the public – particularly to the disadvantaged – is one that anyone could be proud of."

A Special Thank You

from Elena Rich

I would like to give a special thanks to Kara Leopold and Daniel Hurteau, of Nixon Peabody, LLP for going far beyond the extra mile for one of our clients.



Elena Rich,
PAI Coordinator

I was presented with an unusual international custody case—our client was a battered woman, who had moved from New Zealand to the Capital District to accommodate her husband's employment. Our client was under the control of her husband as she could not work and was dependent on his financial support. Our client's husband was also abusing the children.

Never having encountered an international custody dispute before, the first person I thought of calling was **Daniel Hurteau** of **Nixon Peabody, LLP**. Dan has always been enthusiastic about taking on interesting cases and he accepted this case immediately.

When **Kara Leopold** took on this case with Dan, our client's only goal was to obtain custody and be able to return to New Zealand with her children. Kara exceeded our client's expectations by not only obtaining custody for her of her three children but also obtaining a final financial support and custody settlement which included tuition for her eldest child.

When I received the Final Disposition Form back from Kara, I was amazed at what she accomplished and the almost 200 hours she and Dan devoted to this case. I was happy for our client that Kara was so dedicated to

her cause and I was proud to run around the office bragging about Kara Leopold. One of the perks of being a pro bono coordinator is to see how devoted the attorneys

on our panel are, and to be able to see clients get amazing results from situations that seem so hopeless. Thank you Kara and Dan for your time and dedication.

DeVall & DeVall

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ed the bustling law firm of DeVall & DeVall in Saratoga Springs.

A great deal of the firm's work centers on bankruptcy cases and uncontested divorce. Richard created www.nyezdivorce.com a Web site that, David said, actually enables people "to get divorced on the Web." He said when the site was first launched, others in the legal community raised quite a stir. "But in time, we were able to demonstrate how appropriate the site was, and the concerns were withdrawn." He said the great value of the Web site is it proves to be a tremendous help to those who can't afford an attorney. "We actually got a call from someone in Manhattan who saw we charged \$895 for this service, fees included. They actually thought it was a typo, saying we should have added another zero after the five!"

Legal Aid Executive Director Lillian Moy marveled: "The DeVall brothers are among the most innovative and well-motivated

attorneys I know. I have been delighted with their work."

In addition to running their practice and doing pro bono work, both DeVall brothers hold public office. For 15 years now, David has served as Assistant Village Attorney, in charge of zoning, planning and local ordinance prosecution for Ballston Spa. Richard has been the Town Attorney for the Town of Wilton for 10 years.

David is married to his wife, Kelly, of eight years, and is father to a 16 year old stepson and eight year old daughter. Richard has an 18 year old boy and a 13 year old daughter.

It's been a decade since the DeVall brothers joined the PAI Panel, and both have found their experience to be deeply rewarding on a personal level. "It doesn't hurt to give something back, said David. "There are many needy people in the world, and it only makes sense to convey a benefit to them when we've benefited from our own careers."

Thanks to the following attorneys who have accepted cases:

**June 3 through
November 1, 2004**

Albany County

Albany Law School 36
Lynn Baker 2
Susan F. Bartkowski 3
Joseph S. Basloe
Lawrence Becker
Ira Bloom 3
Thomas A. Callaghan
Daniel J. Centi
Richard Croak
Michael J. Cunningham
Jonathan D. Deily 4
R. Christopher Dempf 2
Paul Devane
John J. Doherty
Martin S. Finn 2
Michael P. Friedman
Martin J. Goodman 2
Harold D. Gordon
Gayle E. Hartz 3
Kevin Hickey
Laurence A. Hoch 2
Daniel Hurteau 3
Kirsten Keefe
Kristen King
Stuart Klein 2
Brian LeCours
Gary A. Lefkowitz
Aaron Lounidas
Joseph McGovern
Ira Mendleson
Julie Keegan Michaels
Thomas A. Mitchell 2
Jennifer Monthie 3
Martin Mooney 2
Michael J. O'Connor 25
Stephen C. Prudente
Anita Thayer
James Towne
Frederick Wander 3
Richard H. Weiskopf
Richard L. Weisz
G. Kimball Williams 2

Clinton, Essex, Franklin & Hamilton Counties

Robert Kagan
Carl J. Madonna
Virginia Morrow 2
Jack Piller
Michael McCormick
Meredith Neverett

Columbia & Greene Counties

Anthony Buono
Cassandra L. Channing
Theodore J. Hilscher
Kevin Thiemann
Joseph Warren 2
John W. Winans
Joyce Rice Zeitler

Rensselaer County

Karen Bauer 2
Philip J. Danaher
Kileen Davies
Sharon Couch Debonis
Marc S. Ehrlich 2
Thomas V. Kenney, Jr.
Edward Smith

St. Lawrence County

Gary Alford
Natasha Hill 2
Cathleen O'Horo 1
Maureen McGaw 1

Saratoga County

Robert J. Chauvin
H. Elizabeth Clark
David F. Devall 2

David Dylis
Richard J. Herrmann
Matthew Hogan 2
Robert L. Katzman
Ronald Kim 2
Dennis J. Lamb
Alan R. Lecours 2
Steven Mastaitis
Emily Muller 2
Martin W. Pozefsky 2
Stephen Rodriquez
Kriston Smith
James P. Trainor

Schenectady County

Schenectady County Bar 7
Peter Coffey 3
Dennis M. Englert
John A. Fantauzzi
Lawrence M. Gordon
Robert Hoffman 2
Michael T. Horan
Kathryn McCary
Peter B. McHugh
Patricia Rodriquez
Laura L. Silva 2
Bryan Simmerman 3

Warren & Washington Counties

Patrick E. Barber
James Burkett
Gregory V. Canale
Thomas G. Clements
Kristine K. Flower
John Goodman, Jr.
William C. Johnston
Matthew R. Ludemann
Daniel Martindale
Joseph W. McPhillips
Adam Michelini
Michael J. Toomey

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FOR ALL**

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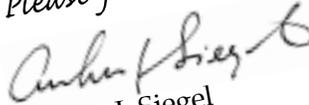
See page 3 for
information.

December 2004

Dear Colleagues,

This year we are co-chairing the Justice for All Campaign. We believe that Capital Region law firms, as well as individual attorneys, have a professional obligation to ensure access to the courts for the poor. Through your pro bono efforts and leadership gifts, we can mitigate the decline of public funding — and meet the growing legal needs of the poor. Our goal is 100% participation of the Capital Region's law firms.

Please join us!


Arthur J. Siegel


E. Stewart Jones