

CONNECTICUT BAR FOUNDATION

Serving the Bench, Bar, and Connecticut Citizens since 1952

Issue 6, Fall 2016



Looking Ahead: James W. Cooper Fellows Programs

2017 is shaping up as another busy year for CBF James W. Cooper Fellows programs. On March 17, 2017, the Fellows and Quinnipiac University School of Law (QUSL) are co-sponsoring the Tenth John A. Speziale Alternative Dispute Resolution Symposium entitled “Finding Solid Ground: Environmental and Land Use Dispute Resolution in Connecticut.” The program will feature national and local experts and will explore how to solve conflicts and disputes before they wind up in litigation and, alternatively, how ADR can help to resolve issues after a court case has been initiated. The full-day program is hosted by QUSL and will conclude with a reception for participants and attendees.

The Diversity Symposium, which the Fellows are co-sponsoring with the Connecticut Bar Association, is being planned for April 20, 2017 at UCONN School of Law. The Diversity Symposium is intended to continue the meaningful dialogue that was started by the CBA’s Diversity Summit and will include panel discussions and/or presentations on topics including implicit bias, diversity metrics, infrastructure building, and self-assessment and reporting. Additional details will be announced soon.

The third Judge Mark R. Kravitz Symposium is currently planned for the fall of 2017.

Barry Armata of the CBF Fellows Education and Program Committee announced that 8-10 Fellows Roundtables are being planned for 2017. Details are still being finalized; however, several topics and dates have been set. On January 18, 2017, Meghan Freed will moderate “The Art of the Legal Blog.” Discussion leaders and attendees will have the opportunity to explore how lawyers are creating blogs as a means of marketing, commenting on areas of practice, cases or events, and getting their views out there. The conversation will look at some things that a lawyer should consider when entering this domain, including ethical considerations, whether blogs actually generate business and if they are worth the effort.

A second roundtable planned for January in Hartford and Fairfield is “Can you just listen?” Moderated by Barbara Aaron in Hartford and Krista Hess and Joe D’Alesio in Fairfield, attendees will reflect on the election results and the divisiveness of our country and the importance of and need for people to listen to one another. Discussion points include what the difference is between listening and hearing and whether we listen in order to respond or listen to understand; how we listen - actively and with an open mind or processing a response; and whether and how the inability to truly listen to one another affects our legal system, our society, our policies and our safety. Programs scheduled for the remainder of 2017 will be announced soon.

The Fellows Education and Program Committee is led by Chair Dwight Merriam and Vice-chair Daniel Schwartz. If you have suggestions for a future program, are looking to help plan a symposium, or would be interested in leading a Roundtable discussion, contact Dwight (dmerriam@rc.com) or Dan (dschwartz@goodwin.com), or get in touch with Don Philips at don@cbf-1.org or at 860-722-2494.

Foundation Briefs

SAVE THE DATE!

CBF Reception and James W. Cooper Fellows Annual Meeting

April 25, 2017

The Hartford Club

Upcoming Events

Future Roundtables (2017 Dates and Locations TBD unless noted)

February: Access to Justice/
Civil Gideon. Quinnipiac University School of Law

March 23, 2017: Choosing law tracks—what makes some choose a litigation track and others a transactional track. UCONN School of Law

April: “A Master Class Discussion” with 4 to 6 lions and leaders of the bar. New Haven area

May: “The Grass is Always Greener...Or is it?” Private practice, public service, and in-house lawyers will discuss assumptions and realities of various types of legal practices. Hot Tomatoes, Hartford

More Roundtable details will be announced soon.

**Civil Gideon Task Force
Final Meeting
December 9, 2016
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT**

Building a Foundation for the Future



Update on Fellows and Foundation Projects

The CBF and Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network have entered into an agreement to produce and complete 25 video interviews for the **Fellows History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession project**. The interviews are being taped at the Connecticut Public Television studios in Hartford and are scheduled to be completed by the end of January, 2017. In addition to the interviews, photographer Isabel Chenoweth is again volunteering her time to update the Women in Black portrait project of Connecticut's women judges. An event is being planned for next year to celebrate the work of the History of Connecticut Women in the Legal Profession project and unveil new judges' portraits. Law firms, organizations and individuals interested in sponsorship opportunities should contact Ann Rubin of Carmody, Torrance, Sandak, Hennessy at arubin@carmodylaw.com, or Don Philips at the CBF.

Robert Harris succeeds Jack Steigelfest as the chair of the **Fellows Quintin Johnstone High School Essay Contest** Committee. Many thanks to Jack for his years of service as chair and for his continuing service on the committee. This year's topic is "Taking a Knee or Taking a Stand." It concerns a star high school football player who takes a knee during the national anthem before a game. Thereafter, the player is chosen to address a school assembly, during which a student quietly turns her back to him as he speaks. The school's principal decides to discipline the student who turned her back, but not the football player. Essayists play the role of a Student Disciplinary Board member charged with determining if there has been an enforceable violation of the student handbook provision that requires students to treat each other with respect and to propose appropriate discipline if such a violation has occurred.

Statewide Legal Services Offers a New and Innovative Pro Bono Program

Statewide Legal Services (SLS) has recently launched a virtual legal advice clinic, "Connecticut Justice Online Anytime" where low income Connecticut residents can ask an attorney for help with a civil legal question. The service, made possible through SLS's partnership with the ABA, technology development from Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz and funding by the Connecticut Bar Foundation, allows qualified users to post questions about civil legal problems on a secure website (<https://ct.freelegalanswers.org/>) and receive legal help from volunteer Connecticut attorneys.

The client and attorney interact asynchronously (not in real time, like a "chat" situation). Registered volunteer attorneys have access to the website's queue of client questions (sorted by practice area), and select a legal question to answer in their practice area. Qualified clients acknowledge that there is no expectation of long-term representation. The attorney has the ability to mark his answer "closed," so that the client is unable to ask further questions in the question queue. Volunteer attorneys remain anonymous when posting a response to a client and are covered by the program's malpractice insurance.

According to Ashleigh Backman, SLS's Pro Bono Attorney Manager, "The virtual pro bono program not only eliminates barriers to accessing legal services, but also eliminates barriers for attorneys to do pro bono work." She further notes that the website "makes it easy for attorneys to volunteer, track their pro bono hours, and provide civil legal answers to those in need, at any convenient time and place."

SLS is seeking Connecticut attorneys in good standing to volunteer to participate in this virtual legal clinic. Interested attorneys can create a volunteer attorney account on <https://ct.freelegalanswers.org/>. After creating an account, SLS will send the attorney an email with specific details. Interested attorneys may also reach out to Jonathan Caez, Pro Bono Coordinator, at jcaez@slsct.org for more information. Other pro bono opportunities offered by SLS include (1) Direct Representation of low income clients in court or at administrative hearings, (2) Call4Law (unbundled telephonic brief advice), (3) Family Law Clinic, and (4) Security Deposit Clinic.

SLS pro bono attorneys receive access to free, on-demand legal training programs and professional liability coverage.

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Connecticut Veterans Legal Center: Serving Those Who Served Their Country

In 2014, the CBF made its first grant to the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center, then a relatively new legal aid provider serving veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness and overcoming legal barriers to housing, healthcare and income. As a medical-legal partnership, CVLC is co-located and staffed within the Errera Community Care Center in West Haven, a Veterans Administration community mental health facility which gives easy access to free legal assistance to qualified veterans who seek VA mental health, employment, housing, addiction, wellness and primary care services.

When not busy meeting veterans at the Errera Center, CVLC attorneys previously relied on shared office space provided at no cost by Wiggin and Dana, LLP. Now, thanks to the Simon Konover Company, CVLC has moved into its very own office space. The move allows CVLC attorneys to continue to help Connecticut veterans with veteran-specific legal issues, such as Veterans Administration benefits and military discharge upgrades. CVLC attorneys also assist veterans with a wide variety of legal issues including: family, housing, criminal record expungement, bankruptcy, consumer debt, Social Security, employment, and estate planning.

For attorneys interested in helping, CVLC has numerous opportunities to volunteer. The organization is proud of the support it provides to volunteer attorneys to achieve excellent outcomes with their veteran clients. VA-accredited attorneys are particularly needed to help with VA benefits cases and CVLC offers various trainings throughout the year to help pro bono attorneys maintain VA accreditation. If you are interested in becoming accredited and need information, or are interested in helping to protect the legal rights of veterans in other practice areas, please visit ctveteranslegal.org, or contact Nikki Kelsey at 203-794-4291 or nkelsey@ctveteranslegal.org.

New Haven Legal Assistance Bids Farewell to Executive Director Susan Nofi

Susan Garcia Nofi, Executive Director of New Haven Legal Assistance, has accepted a position with Central West Justice Center, an affiliate of Community Legal Aid, in Springfield, Massachusetts, where she'll be practicing in the employment unit, representing low-wage workers in unemployment compensation and other employment matters. When asked about her decision, she said "There are a lot of things I have enjoyed about the Executive Director role, but I have really missed the practice of law."

Sue began her career at NHLA in 1996 when she was hired as a staff attorney in the housing unit. She later started working out of NHLA's satellite location in the lower Naugatuck Valley, an area where she grew up and lived until recently. Sue left to work for the unemployment appeals division of the Connecticut Labor Department, but returned to NHLA in 2009 to become the organization's Deputy Director. She was hired as Executive Director following Pat Kaplan's retirement in 2012.

When asked about leaving NHLA, Sue said she'll "miss the whole ethos of the organization. It's a special place, with a trailblazing spirit and a unique place in legal aid history. I am lucky to have 'grown up' as a lawyer there. And of course I will miss my friends and colleagues." She hopes to be remembered as someone who led innovative projects, such as CTLawHelp.org, developed new partnerships, and as someone who "cares deeply about the client community." The Connecticut Bar Foundation wishes Sue great success as she begins a new chapter in her legal

Leadership Banks

The CBF extends its appreciation to its Leadership Banks for paying the highest rate on IOLTA balances and generously waiving service fees. The CBF is also grateful for the many attorneys and law firms who place their IOLTA accounts with a Leadership Bank. Such patronage results in greater funding to civil legal aid providers and helps to increase legal representation and provide legal services to low-income Connecticut residents. Thank you!

**Bank of New York Mellon • Start Community Bank • Sterling Bank • Thomaston Savings Bank
Torrington Savings Bank • Washington Trust Company • Westfield Bank**

Building a Foundation for the Future