



# CIVIL JUSTICE

JUNE 2021

Newsletter of the Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP)

## GLSP IS TURNING

A Message from Rick Rufolo, Executive Director



Over 50 years ago, GLSP began to take shape when a group of younger lawyers from the State Bar of Georgia began studying the “disproportion between the need for legal services by those who cannot afford them and the present supply of legal services available to them.” They found that lawyers tend to concentrate in urban areas whereas many of Georgia’s poor lived in rural areas where legal help was less available. In 1971, the Younger Lawyers Section incorporated the Georgia Legal Services Program “to provide legal services to indigent persons to the fullest extent possible.”

To commemorate our 50th anniversary, we are delighted to announce our upcoming events to celebrate this momentous occasion.

On Friday, September 17, 2021, Georgia Legal Services Program will host the Rural Georgia Justice and Poverty Summit at the Georgia State University College of Law’s Center for Access to Justice. This special virtual event will provide an opportunity to bring together researchers, state agencies, the philanthropic community, policy makers and legal advocates to better understand complex problems facing underserved rural communities and marginalized populations.

To culminate our 50th anniversary, GLSP will host an award and fundraising gala on Saturday, April 30, 2022 at Ventanas in downtown Atlanta. We look forward to an inaugural event of 200+ guests where we will honor and highlight 50 years of achievement.

Our 50th anniversary events will be extraordinary. Information regarding the events and benefits of the various sponsorship levels will be available on the GLSP website at [www.glsp.org](http://www.glsp.org) and by contacting Amy Crowell at (770) 609-7188 or [acrowell@glsp.org](mailto:acrowell@glsp.org). Please join Georgia Legal Services Program’s network of supporters. All of us can help ensure that Georgians living in rural communities receive the legal help they need by becoming a sponsor or donor.

# REFLECT, Renew, *and Inspire*

**Homero Leon, Jr.**, Specialist Attorney  
**Darlene Lackey Rushing**, Executive Legal Assistant  
**Tara Vogel McIntosh**, Supervising Attorney  
**Nicole Harris**, Grants Manager

**As part of our 50-year anniversary celebration, we have begun to document experiences from our employees, showcase the attempts made by our lawyers, paralegals, and staff to fulfill the mission of GLSP as a force of accountability and continued growth.**



## Reflections

GLSP Specialist Attorney, Homero Leon, Jr. came to work with GLSP from Orlando Legal Aid in 1992, as Director of the "Invisible Children" project. Ensuring equal access to education and opportunities has always been a passion for Homero. Reflecting back on the past 30 years with GLSP, his dedication and commitment resonated in his words.

### Why did you choose to work for GLSP?

I wanted to use my blessings to help folks who were not as blessed as I had been. No one selects when, where, and to whom one is born. Yet, those 3 facts determine and control almost all of our life.

### How has GLSP evolved over the years?

GLSP was once a small, more intimate law firm and boy, has it grown over the years.



### As GLSP continues for another 50 years, what should GLSP focus on for the future?

Moving forward, as a civil legal law firm, stay away from a corporate culture. Stay engaged with the client, and the community. Adapt to different races and cultures of the community.

As we reflect on the last 50 years, we spent some time talking with Ms. Darlene Lackey, the Executive Legal Assistant since October 1998.



### Why did you choose to work for GLSP?

My work at Georgia Legal Services Program began in October 1998. I was hired by Phyllis Holmen, Executive Director; Robert Davis, Associate Director, and Jack Webb, the Director of Finance. I was interviewed by all of them. I saw the job advertisement in the newspaper, and I applied. I had heard of Atlanta Legal Aid, but not

Georgia Legal Services. After researching, I was eager to learn more how this organization served the under-served population.

### How has GLSP evolved over the years?

GLSP continues to be innovative in technology efforts and diversify our portfolio of cases that our attorneys handle.

### As GLSP continues for another 50 years, what should GLSP focus on for the future?

I believe we should continue to focus on our mission to provide civil legal services for persons with low incomes, creating equal access to justice and opportunities out of poverty.



Photo by Bruno Nascimento on Unsplash

## Renew

Throughout the years, GLSP and our clients have been faced with several disasters: from floods and tornadoes, to more recently, racial tensions and a health pandemic. GLSP has maneuvered to protect its employees and to continue to provide support to individuals in most need of legal assistance. Overnight our world was upended by COVID-19, which affected our service delivery, and our ability to meet with clients, while ensuring the health and safety of our employees. Our staff quickly adapted to the needs of our clients by representing clients in court by video and hosting virtual community education sessions. As we move forward, GLSP will continue to fulfill our mission to provide civil legal services for persons with low incomes, creating equal access to justice and opportunities out of poverty and meet the most critical needs of our clients.

## Inspire

Our clients motivate us to keep striving to fulfill our mission. Our client victories inspire us to hope for success and a better future.

Anthony\* and his mother were referred to our office through the Autism and Developmental Center. He is in elementary school and has Autism and some behavior issues. Anthony's mother was frustrated with the school because the staff was not challenging her son enough academically, and they would call her to come to pick him up after every outburst or problem. The mother was also concerned that her son was not receiving enough supervision and that he was not receiving all of the therapy he was entitled to under his Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Our medical legal partnership attorney advocated for Anthony at his IEP meeting and successfully helped him receive a one-on-one aide. Anthony's aide will ride the bus with him to and from school, be by his side throughout the entire school day, and will work on coping techniques and diversion tactics to help curb the behavioral issues. We also set new academic goals that the mother felt more accurately reflect her son's capabilities and reaffirmed the therapies that Anthony will receive through his IEP.

*\*Name changed to protect identity*

# What Did The World Look Like in 1971?

- Richard Nixon was President of the United States
- The Chrysler New Yorker was the most popular automobile
- The average cost of a car was \$3,742!
- Georgia Legal Services Program (formerly known as Georgia Indigents Legal Services) was incorporated

## Donate to GLSP Today!

Help us close the justice gap in Georgia! Donating to GLSP is easy and will help us continue to provide equal access to justice and opportunities out of poverty to the 2.5 million Georgians eligible for our services. Donate today by visiting [www.glsp.org](http://www.glsp.org) (click "Get Involved") or mail your check to:

**Georgia Legal Services Program  
Development Office  
104 Marietta Street, Suite 250  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303**

Thank you for your support.

Georgia Legal Services Program is a non-profit law firm recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS. Gifts to GLSP are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.





## Georgia Legal Services Program

104 Marietta Street  
Suite 250  
Atlanta, GA 30303

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#### **President, Board of Directors**

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#### **Executive Director**

Rick Rufolo

#### **Printer**

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## Regional Offices

### **Albany Office**

131 West Oglethorpe Boulevard  
Albany, Georgia 31701  
(229) 430-4261  
(800) 735-4271

### **Athens Office**

1865 West Broad Street, Suite B  
Athens, Georgia 30606-3572  
(706) 227-5362

### **Augusta Office**

1450 Greene Street, Suite 110  
Augusta, Georgia 30901  
(706) 721-2327  
(800) 248-6697

### **Brunswick Office**

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Brunswick, Georgia 31520  
(912) 264-7301  
(877) 808-0553

### **Columbus Office**

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P.O. Box 176  
Columbus, Georgia 31902-0176  
(706) 649-7493  
(800) 533-3140

### **Dalton Office**

219 West Crawford Street  
P.O. Box 2004 (30722-2004)  
Dalton, Georgia 30720  
(706) 272-2924  
(888) 408-1004

### **Gainesville Office**

705 Washington Street, Suite B-1  
Gainesville, Georgia 30501  
(770) 535-5717  
(800) 745-5717

### **Macon Office**

241 Third Street  
Macon, Georgia 31201  
(478) 751-6261  
(800) 560-2855

### **Piedmont Office**

104 Marietta Street, N.W., Suite 240  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
(404) 894-7707  
(800) 822-5391

### **Savannah Office**

6602 Abercorn Street, Suite 203  
Savannah, Georgia 31405-5848  
(912) 651-2180  
(888) 220-8399

### **Farmworker Rights Division**

104 Marietta Street, N.W.  
Suite 250  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
(404) 463-1633  
(800) 537-7496

### **Georgia Clients Council**

104 Marietta Street, N.W.  
Suite 250  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
(404) 463-1952

### **Pro Bono Resource Center**

104 Marietta Street, N.W.  
Suite 100  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
(404) 527-8762  
(800) 334-6865