

VOL. 1 ISSUE 3 · SEPTEMBER 2023

PRO BONO INSIGHTS

A Monthly Georgia Legal Services Program Newsletter

Message from the Pro Bono Unit Director

In planning this September edition of Pro Bono Insights, we chose disaster legal readiness as our theme. Fast forward a week into late August and now Hurricane Idalia is bearing down on the Florida's Gulf Coast with southeast Georgia in its predicted path.

Georgia Legal Services Program has been engaged in delivering disaster legal services for almost thirty years. Georgians with low incomes and marginalized communities in our state are especially vulnerable to the twin perils of physical disaster and the resulting legal turmoil. The loss of one's home to a tornado implicates insurance disputes and lease issues. People lose important government-issued documents that must be replaced quickly. FEMA applications for disaster assistance can result in denials or future demands for repayment. Disasters aren't just about the weather and immediate loss of property; disasters can lead to long-term financial difficulties and bankruptcy, lost employment and broken communities.

Following a federally-declared disaster, GLSP helps mobilize volunteer lawyers to help meet the resulting legal needs, such as providing advice on repair contracts and insurance settlements, assisting in securing documents, and preparing applications for federal benefits. Volunteers can assist from their own home or office, and we have a Disaster Legal Services Manual (https://bit.ly/GLSP_Disaster_Legal_Services) to help guide our volunteers. Take a look at it and you'll understand better the task.

You can volunteer to help after a disaster: https://bit.ly/Pro_Bono_Sign-Up. While preparing to volunteer, you just may learn something that you might need to know should you find yourself or your neighbors standing in the street staring at a disaster-damaged home.

After all, we ALL need to be disaster ready and disaster legal ready.



Mike Monahan
Director of the Pro Bono Unit

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2023 GLSP PRO BONO CONFERENCE AND AWARDS



THE CONFERENCE

UGA SCHOOL OF LAW

OCT 11 - 13

GLSP invites its partners and peers to learn more about access to justice in rural and small city Georgia. This year's event highlights constructive collaboration opportunities with law students and law schools. Sessions will include speakers from GLSP, the Judicial Council of the Georgia Supreme Court, Self-Represented Litigants Network, Georgia-based law schools, the State Bar, and more.

Attendance is free, but pre-registration is required.

For more information or registration questions, contact Heidi Behnke (hbehnke@glsp.org)

GLSP PRO BONO AWARDS

LOCATION: TBD (ATHENS, GA)
DATE: OCTOBER 11, 2023
TIME: 6:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Join GLSP's awards reception celebrating the standout volunteers and partners who contribute to our mission of providing access to justice and opportunities out of poverty across the state, including:

- The Pro Bono Champion: The individual who handled the greatest number of GLSP pro bono cases in 2022.
- The Pro Bono Advocate: An attorney who wove pro bono into the fabric of their law practice
- The Pro Bono Servant: A long-time attorney volunteer with GLSP.
- The Pro Bono Catalyst: A person or entity who partners with GLSP to support pro bono success in their community.
- The Pro Bono Wise Counsel- An attorney volunteer who regularly serves as a GLSP in-house attorney.
- The Powerhouse Law Student: A law student or recent graduate who has excelled in providing service through GLSP.



For more information or to register, contact Heidi Behnke (hbehnke@glsp.org)

National Pro Bono Week

October 22 - 28, 2023

Each year, the last week of October is reserved as a National Celebration of Pro Bono. Since 2009, the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service has led this initiative by sponsoring, coordinating, and supporting more than 13,000 events in 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. According to the ABA "...this initiative provides an opportunity for legal organizations across the country to collaboratively commemorate the vitally important contributions of America's lawyers and to recruit and train the many additional volunteers required to meet the growing demand."

GLSP's Pro Bono Unit encourages our volunteers and partners to sign up to serve clients, recognize your colleagues who undertake pro bono work, and join us in celebrating those who help provide meaningful access to justice for individuals and families across Georgia.



Learn More about the Initiative at
https://bit.ly/National_Pro_Bono_Week





CLE and Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are encouraged to access and explore our substantive training materials through our Pro Bono Learning Management System (Learning.GLSP.org). Additionally, GLSP and our partners host a variety of free or at-cost CLE sessions throughout the year.

To learn more about our training program, volunteer to host/present a training, or recommend new topics, please contact Mike Monahan (mmonahan@glsp.org).

CLE Training Events

Stay tuned for more CLE opportunities in the next edition of Pro Bono Insights.

DIRECT REPRESENTATION

GLSP's Pro Bono Unit offers a wide array of in-person and remote direct service opportunities throughout the state of Georgia. These opportunities are a great way for attorneys licensed in Georgia to assist clients one-on-one with legal matters ranging from appearing in court, drafting documents, or obtaining access to new resources. Opportunities exist statewide in the following substantive areas:

- Wills and Powers of Attorney
- Restriction of Criminal Records
- Bankruptcy
- Protective Orders for Victims of Violence
- Name Changes
- Probate of Estates
- and more

Paladin, our new volunteer platform, lists some of our existing opportunities. You can access it by going to https://bit.ly/GLSP_Paladin.

To learn more about region-specific opportunities, contact one of our Pro Bono Coordinators or Staff Attorneys (see page 11 of this newsletter) or contact Mike Monahan (mmonahan@glsp.org).

UPCOMING PRO BONO CLINICS

Clinics may be advice-only or brief services. Some clinics will be cover a variety of civil legal issues and provide clients time to meet with a private attorney for advice on their issue. Other clinics will focus on a specific legal issue, such as wills or record restriction, and will require the attorney to draft documents prior to meeting the client at the clinic. You can participate on-site or virtually.

Check out our upcoming legal clinics around the state and find one that meets your volunteer interests. Remember, for many clinics you can join us in-person or participate remotely.



Gainesville Probate Clinic

Looking for 1 volunteer to provide up to 4 clients with counsel and advice on probate/estate matters. Contact Maria Fuentes (mfuentes@glsp.org) to sign up or for more information.



Moultrie Record Restriction Clinic

Looking for volunteers to assist clients in reviewing their criminal records and complete requests for restriction of applicable items. Contact Sarah Anderson (sjanderson@glsp.org) to sign up or for more information.



Gainesville Probate Clinic

Looking for 1 volunteer to provide up to 4 clients with counsel and advice on probate/estate matters. Contact Maria Fuentes (mfuentes@glsp.org) to sign up or for more information.

COMING SOON...

November 1
Floyd County
Wills Clinic

November 9
Warner Robins
Veterans Clinic

November 15
Gainesville
Probate Clinic

December 20
Gainesville
Probate Clinic

Not able to volunteer right now, or want to increase your impact? A gift to GLSP helps support our staff and provide access to justice and opportunities out of poverty throughout the state!

bit.ly/Justice_2023

SEPTEMBER'S PRO BONO STARS

Join with us to applaud September's Pro Bono Stars - A Volunteer Lawyer and a Pro Bono Partner



STAR VOLUNTEER LAWYER

NATHAN M. JOLLES



"IT IS OUR DUTY TO LEAVE THE WORLD IN A BETTER PLACE THAN WHAT WE CAME INTO."

Pro bono publico is about more than free service for clients. It's a vision. It's an expectation. It's a mission. For volunteers like Nathan M. Jolles, this month's Pro Bono Star, pro bono work is one way that he serves the public. "I've always felt that my Jewish faith teaches me that we are bound to repair this world...I also want to set an example for my own child, who's now a teenager. It's easy to say what the right thing to do is, but kids, and especially teenagers, really learn more from what you do and the example you set."

Nathan is a third-generation attorney in Augusta and describes himself as a man of family, faith, and charity. In addition to his pro bono work, Nathan is passionate about rallying his firm (the Law Offices of Nathan M. Jolles) and peers behind this mission through events and organizations such as the Georgia Legal Food Frenzy, AMBUCS, the Master's Table soup kitchen, East Central Georgia Partners in Homeownership, and his temple. This charitable work is Nathan's "other primary calling in life." According to Nathan, "I've participated in the Legal Food Frenzy Fundraiser with Golden Harvest Food Bank for over a decade, but I

really think the success of my firm in this fundraiser speaks to the generosity of my clients, family and friends, and particularly my wife who puts in a great effort to raise the funds."

So far this year, Nathan has assisted with seven legal matters on behalf of the Augusta Regional Office. This pro bono work mostly focuses on drafting wills and power of attorney documents—preserving homes and decision-making abilities for GLSP's clients with low incomes. According to Nicole DeLoach, a GLSP Staff Attorney formerly of the Pro Bono Unit, "Nathan has been such a great attorney to work with. He is committed to the betterment of our community in Augusta, and this is apparent through his actions. It's frankly contagious. I'm thankful to have the opportunity to collaborate with him in order to serve our clients."

SEPTEMBER'S PRO BONO STARS



Join with us to applaud September's Pro Bono Stars - A
Volunteer Lawyer and a Pro Bono Partner

STAR VOLUNTEER PARTNER



GEORGIA TEAM READY

Georgia Team Ready is a collaboration led by Georgia Legal Services Program, Alston & Bird, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, King & Spalding, State Bar of Georgia Younger Lawyers Division, and Troutman Pepper, focused on providing statewide civil legal assistance during a disaster. It is responsible for recruiting, training, and supporting pro bono volunteers; matching clients affected by state and federally declared disasters to legal advice

and assistance; coordinating the emergency statewide hotline; and maintaining an updated Georgia Disaster Law Manual for advocates.

Lawyers serve as critical “third responders” for disaster survivors, and the work of Georgia Team Ready helps meet the multitude of legal needs that can arise in the short-, medium-, and long-term. This includes issues with housing and utility matters, document replacement, income protection, addressing repair scams, access to education, FEMA claims, and more. Many of these issues only arise in the wake of disasters, but must be addressed promptly when they occur. Collaborations such as Georgia Team Ready greatly expedite action and relief for clients.

For more information or to volunteer, contact:

Alexandra V. Eichenbaum, Esq.
Director of Pro Bono Innovation
aeichenbaum@glsp.org
470-577-9089

LEGAL ASSISTANCE HOTLINE FOR GEORGIA DISASTER SURVIVORS

1-866-584-8027
OR
1-404-527-8793

Georgia Team Ready is currently providing FREE legal assistance for individuals in Cook, Glynn, and Lowndes counties who were affected by Hurricane Idalia.

The Pro Bono Village

by Rachael Schell, Pro Bono Staff Attorney



Have you heard the old saying, “it takes a village”? Well, that tidbit of wisdom is most certainly applicable to pro bono. Most volunteers are in communication with their local Pro Bono Coordinators. But what you may not know is how the Pro Bono contact you connect with in your Regional Office works with other GLSP attorneys and support staff.

It is easy to think of GLSP as two separate entities- staff and pro bono. But the Pro Bono Program does not exist in a vacuum. Our staff attorneys, leadership team and Pro Bono Coordinators are in constant communication. While I am admittedly biased, I believe the Macon Regional Office is an excellent model of collaboration.

Take a recent example of this collaboration in action. Recently I attended a Macon Bar Association Luncheon. I had asked Staff Attorney, Sammy Hall, to save me a seat. When I arrived, Sammy had saved me a seat next to a semi-retired attorney he had just met who was new to Macon. By that time, Sammy had introduced himself and already explained the Pro Bono Program to the potential volunteer. He had set me up for success to get the volunteer signed up, and after attending a Probate Training in Macon shortly thereafter, the volunteer has just accepted his first two cases! Sammy also provided him with a template for a standard Will and introduced him to the office staff. Talk about teamwork! Any attorney who volunteers with us can expect the same level of service and guidance. You will have not just your local Pro Bono Coordinator supporting you, but an entire team of professionals who want you to have a meaningful experience.

GLSP offers many training opportunities and document templates for volunteers. This is a great way to learn about a new area of law, especially for new attorneys just starting out. There are webinars, presentation materials, outlines, and templates that we frequently share with our volunteers. We have subject matter staff attorney experts in many legal areas and connect volunteers with them if questions arise. We also have volunteers helping volunteers! Many of our volunteers are delighted to mentor another volunteer to assist them in serving a client. So, within our village, taking on a pro bono client can help you develop the experience you need to broaden your practice.

Additionally, collaborating with our GLSP lawyers, as well as other legal professionals and community partners you will encounter while volunteering for us can foster connections that might not otherwise be established. These connections often lead to referrals, other collaborative opportunities, and provide valuable insight into the legal community as a whole. One of our volunteers has begun to receive recognition as a rising expert in education law. It was not her practice area, but she took on pro bono cases to learn about an issue that she was passionate about. She worked with GLSP’s education experts and has now established herself as a leading advocate in the field.

Every lawyer knows that Model Rule 6.1 of Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct provides, “a lawyer should aspire to render at least fifty (50) hours of pro bono publico legal services per year.” Most lawyers find pro bono work incredibly rewarding, representing a shift from focusing solely on billable hours, to also including other impactful contributions. If you want to make meaningful contributions in a holistic, supportive, and welcoming environment, GLSP’s village is the place for you. So, if you see any GLSP lawyer in court, at a bar event, or any social event, let them know you want to volunteer, and your local Pro Bono Coordinator will reach out to you in record time! I promise that you will not regret it.

My Pro Bono Addiction

by Aimee Risher,
Pro Bono Unit Intern and 2L
with Georgia State University
School of Law



I never wanted to do pro bono—that was always going to be someone else’s job. If I was going to attend law school and accrue \$100,000 in student loans, I was certainly not going to work for free. I was going to hustle, network, and graduate to take a glamorous, high-paying job with rich, powerful clients. But I am nothing if not a pragmatist. I knew that to be the best package for job applications, I needed to show that I was well-

rounded, experienced, and had the ability to serve others. I saw an opportunity through the Alternative Spring Break program at my school: we would spend one week in rural Georgia serving legal deserts by drafting wills for low-income individuals. I would get enough pro bono hours to have an extra stamp on my diploma and pick up some practical skills that I might pitch in interviews.

The experience was meaningful and eye-opening. I had no idea what the practice of law looked outside of the big city (and most of this was colored by television shows), so that week was full of surprises. I left understanding the army of pro bono attorneys I had built in my mind that go around and help all the marginalized people in Georgia is much smaller than I imagined. I also understood that even the most straight-forward of tasks for lawyers (i.e., drafting wills) is not simple. Meaning: people need lawyers. Without them—paid or pro bono—most don’t stand a chance in any legal matter.

I was offered a summer intern position with the Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP) Pro Bono team. Despite not having planned to take a job, something told me I couldn’t pass up the opportunity. It was the best decision I have ever made.

Looking back, the ten weeks I spent at GLSP are like a psychedelic montage with bright colors and loud music, but I can’t help smiling.

At the beginning, I was wary of what assignments I would be given. I was afraid my private-practice-bound mentality and lack of experience would show. I started out doing research on a wide variety of cases and quickly learned that the law is a game. We won and lost cases over the summer—but tried our hardest with all of them. I realized that sometimes, even as well-prepared and well-educated lawyers, it is still out of our hands—which got me thinking: what hope does a non-lawyer have?

I was fortunate to sit in some strategic discussions where I learned that an embarrassingly low number of attorneys in Georgia do pro bono work (remember, I was going to be one of the people who didn’t either). “If I could get each lawyer in the state to just take one [pro bono] case a year, I would be thrilled” are words I will never forget. “Well, I could do that,” I thought to myself. The tables were starting to turn.

Continued on page 10

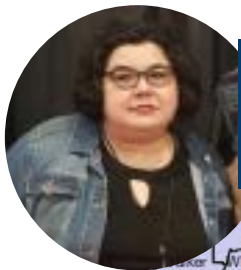
My Pro Bono Addiction (continued)

I then participated in clinics where we met some of the nicest people, not all of whom came to us because they couldn't afford a lawyer. So many of the people we met with just didn't know what they needed. Some simply weren't sure what form to fill out or how to file with the court. Others were on the verge of losing their homes and couldn't understand how that could happen or what to do about it. Most just wanted someone to listen to them as they grieved or tried to weigh their options. But almost all of them were grateful for pro bono services and willing to do whatever we asked of them to facilitate a resolution in their matter. The warm, fuzzy feeling I got from helping those most in need was starting to become addictive. As the summer wound down, it hit me that soon I would go back to school and I felt sad. There were still so many people who needed help and not enough people to help them. I wasn't ready to quit because I still had too much work to do. That's right. Pro bono is now in my blood.

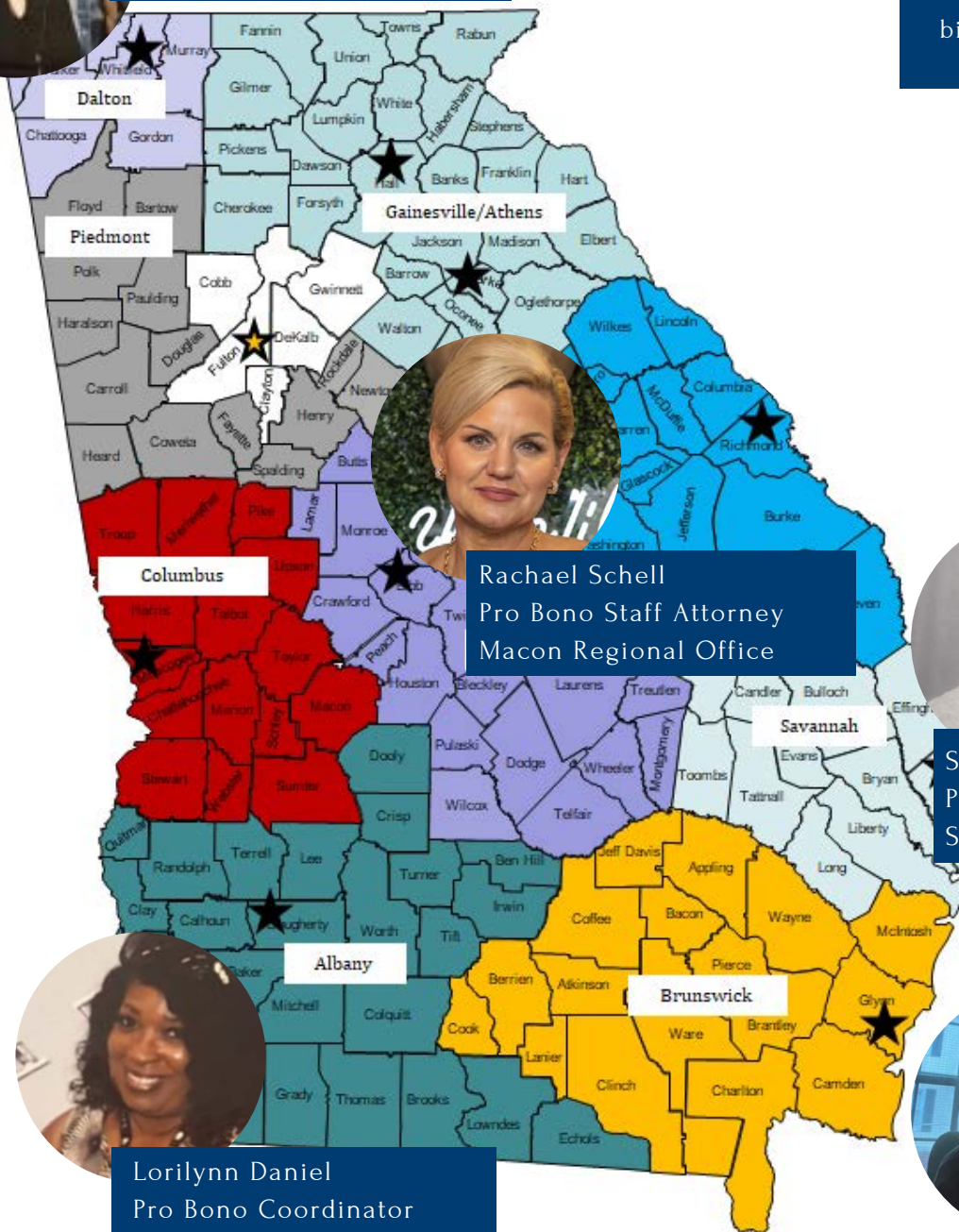
So now I am back in school, full-time, and working part-time for GLSP. Taking a case or two at a time and balancing that with the rest of my life fairly easily. That got me thinking: if I can do pro-bono work during what is arguably the most stressful time of my life (law school), why can't I take a case or two at a time after graduation? Sure, I will still need to pay my bills, but if I intentionally incorporate pro bono work now, perhaps I can make it part of my future career? And if I can do it, why can't my classmates do it too?

After a brief exposure to pro bono work, I am an advocate—maybe even a flag-bearer. I have agreed to lead an Alternative Spring Break group so that more students can experience the same journey. I am working with GLSP to find more ways for law students to participate in or support pro bono work. And, after conversations with several classmates, we are in discussions to create a group or network at our law school that helps to connect students to service opportunities and fosters a “pro bono can be part of my practice” mindset as we enter the profession and become the next generation of lawyers. Because if not us, then who?

MEET THE TEAM- REGIONAL OFFICES



Angelina Vaquera-Linke
Pro Bono Coordinator
Dalton Regional Office



Rachael Schell
Pro Bono Staff Attorney
Macon Regional Office



Sarah J. Anderson
Pro Bono Supervising Attorney
Savannah Regional Office



Lorilynn Daniel
Pro Bono Coordinator
Albany Regional Office



Marika LaRoy
Pro Bono Coordinator
Brunswick Regional Office

WE'RE HIRING!

GLSP's Pro Bono Unit is hiring in our Augusta, Columbus, and Piedmont Offices.

To learn more, contact Mike Monahan (mmonahan@glsp.org) or view our job postings at bit.ly/GLSP_Jobs

MEET THE TEAM- CENTRAL SUPPORT



Mike Monahan
Director of the Pro Bono Unit



Alexandra V. Eichenbaum
Deputy Director of the Pro Bono Unit



Ashley Clark
Pro Bono Supervising Attorney



Nobie Mitchell
Pro Bono Coordinator

WE'RE HIRING!

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To learn more, contact Mike Monahan (mmonahan@glsp.org) or view our job postings at bit.ly/GLSP_Jobs



Deborah Chapman
Pro Bono Support Manager



Tommy Richards
Pro Bono Coordinator