

VOL. 2 ISSUE 2 · APRIL 2024

PRO BONO INSIGHTS

A Monthly Georgia Legal Services Program Newsletter

Message from the Director

President Joe Biden and Georgia Governor Brian P. Kemp have proclaimed April as “Second Chance Month,” highlighting societal and legal barriers hindering those with criminal records from life success and calling us to help provide that second chance.

Governor Kemp’s proclamation reads in relevant part:

“The designation of April as Second Chance Month contributes to increased public awareness about the need for closure for those who have paid their debt, and opportunities for individuals, employers, congregations, and communities to extend Second Chances.”

At Georgia Legal Services Program, we are well aware of the harsh toll a past criminal arrest or conviction has on Georgians with low incomes. The criminal record often negatively affects credit records, home lease applications, and job applications, as well as other important areas of a person’s life.

Several years ago, our Pro Bono Unit launched a Pro Bono Records Restriction Project. Through the project, staff and volunteers conduct legal information and legal assistance clinics throughout the state, serving Georgians who wish to learn about record restriction and take action to make their lives better.

You can join us in honoring the federal and state proclamations - both this month and beyond - by volunteering your legal skills to help with record restrictions. Sign up at bit.ly/GLSP_Paladin.



Mike Monahan
Director of the Pro Bono Unit

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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 current opportunities. You can access it by going to bit.ly/GLSP_Paladin.

To learn more about region-specific opportunities, contact one of our Pro Bono Coordinators or Staff Attorneys (see page 8 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 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.

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.



Whitfield County Record Restriction and Wills Clinic

Looking for volunteers to assist clients in restricting their criminal records and/or assist clients in completing wills and powers of attorney. Record restriction volunteers must appear in-person. Volunteers interested in drafting wills may be able to participate remotely. 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 Deidra Schad (dschad@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 Deidra Schad (dschad@glsp.org) to sign up or for more information.



Dougherty County Wills Clinic

Looking for volunteers to draft wills and power of attorney documents. Contact Lorilynn Daniel (lmdaniel@glsp.org) to sign up or for more information.

COMING SOON...

Summer 2024

Wills Clinics in the
Appalachian Circuit,
Columbus, and Athens

July 21

Gainesville
Probate Advice Clinic

August 23

Douglas County
Wills 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_2024

APRIL'S PRO BONO STARS

Join with us to applaud this month's Pro Bono Stars



STAR VOLUNTEER LAWYER **ALYCEN MOSS**



“I HAVE FORMED LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANY OF THE FAMILIES I’VE HELPED, AND IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO WATCH THE CHILDREN GROW UP AND THRIVE.”

As Vice Chair of the Global Insurance Department of Cozen O’Conner, Alycen Moss is no stranger to risk. Her day-to-day includes insurance coverage, civil litigation, complex torts, public speaking/trainings across the country on handling claims and risk management issues, and serving on her Firm’s Pro Bono Committee. Alycen also uses her spare time to volunteer and support families facing a different kind of risk: poverty.

According to Alycen “It is so important for lawyers to give back to the community and ensure that individuals who are experiencing poverty have access to the legal system. Through Georgia Legal Services Program, I have been able to protect and advocate for children by assisting with adoptions and other family needs.”

On behalf of GLSP, Alycen has taken on more than a dozen adoption cases. Alycen is also a regular volunteer in the Atlanta community, especially for causes serving children and families such as the Agape Youth and Family Center, North Atlanta High School Foundation, Eric Holzworth Memorial Foundation, and National Charity League.

“Alycen’s commitment to justice and passion for advocacy are undeniable,” says Nobie Mitchell, Pro Bono Unit Paralegal with GLSP. “Children in Georgia now have a stable home because of her pro bono work, and their families can now obtain additional benefits to help support their growth and development. We are proud to have her on our team!”

APRIL'S PRO BONO STARS

Join with us to applaud this month's Pro Bono Stars



STAR VOLUNTEER PARTNER

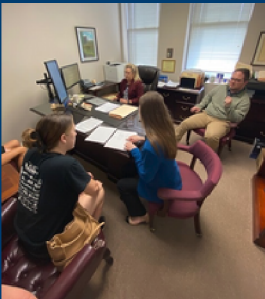


MERCER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW



GLSP's best partners bring their unique skills, status, and abilities to help us serve clients in ways that neither agency could accomplish alone. These collaborations achieve a win-win-win for themselves, GLSP, and - most importantly - the clients. Mercer University School of Law did just that by creating a 3L externship program through which students gain course credit to represent GLSP clients in federal bankruptcy proceedings.

In Spring 2023, externs filed eight chapter 7 bankruptcy cases. This year, they're on track to file nine cases. These start-to-finish assignments give students real-world experience interviewing and counseling clients, gathering and analyzing facts, negotiating, preparing and filing documents with bankruptcy court, using legal software, and more, all in a setting where they see the true significance and impact of pro bono work.



"This program is one-of-a-kind in Georgia and could not be done without GLSP's support and collaboration," says Professor Ishaq Kundawala, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Professor of Law, and Southeastern Bankruptcy Law Institute and W. Homer Drake Jr. Endowed Chair in Bankruptcy Law. "Oftentimes people find themselves facing financial challenges not of their own making. This project gets our students into the community and provides desperately needed help to clients. I look forward to continuing and growing this project with GLSP for many years to come."



"Working with Professor Kundawala, his students, and local attorney volunteers Joy Webster and Alex Sanders allows us to offer high-quality service to citizens who are struggling with crippling debt," says Rachael Schell, Pro Bono Staff Attorney for GLSP's Macon Regional Office. "This is what pro bono work is all about: innovation and teamwork to expand access to justice. I couldn't ask for a better partner!"

Caption: (top) Professor Ishaq Kundawala, (middle and bottom) Mercer Law externs participating in the bankruptcy project.

"GLSP IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF MERCER LAW'S CONSUMER BANKRUPTCY EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM."

PROFESSOR ISHAQ KUNDAWALA



by Alexandra V. Eichenbaum

Alternative Spring Break 2024

In March 2024, GLSP's Pro Bono Unit hosted its third "Alternative Spring Break" program. The four (4) trips this year focused on Record Restriction and Collateral Consequences, Protecting Homeowners through Estate Planning, Advancing Rural Access to Justice, and Helping Those Experiencing Homelessness.

40 law students from Brooklyn Law School, Emory University School of Law, and Georgia State University (GSU) College of Law attended the week-long event. Speakers from across Georgia and the country spent time with the students, including judges, attorneys, and advocates from the U.S. Magistrate Court for the Northern District of Georgia, the Northeastern Judicial Circuit, the Appalachian Judicial Circuit and APPFLIC, Wilcox County Courts, Douglas County Courts, Georgia ACT, Georgia Justice Project, Gwinnett County Solicitor General's Office, Piedmont Judicial Circuit, Hall County District Attorney's Office, Institute for Justice, State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division, Debra M. Finch, PC, Equal Justice Works, RiverLife, Pathways Center, and Brett Willis Law, LLC.

On the Record Restriction and Collateral Consequences trip, law students worked with lawyers and advocates to help low-income clients restrict criminal records, learn about alternative treatment courts, and the many collateral consequences of criminal convictions. One student on the trip commented, "This week was an incredible and eye-opening experience. Learning how the system continues to brutalize people with criminal history even after they've allegedly paid their debt to society was both enraging and invigorating. It reminded me why I came to law school in the first place."

On the Rural Access to Justice trip, students learned from judges and advocates about the barriers facing rural Georgians, with students designing a project utilizing law students as volunteer guardians ad litem in domestic civil cases. A highlight for students was hearing from "full-of-life, thriving lawyers, living and working happily with a sense of purpose in legal deserts," a GSU first-year law student remarked.

In Savannah, students worked on GLSP's partnership with the Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless and the Vital Records Pro Bono project. On the Protecting Homeowners trip, students worked with advocates on heirs' property issues while learning about the importance of estate planning and probate in Georgia, as well as affordable housing efforts around the state.

Students returned to school with increased knowledge of the barriers facing Georgians in poverty and an understanding of how they can support access to justice issues, both now and in the future.

"We often view the legal system purely in an adversarial lens. It was amazing to see what is possible and what change can be enacted when all sides come together and work for a common goal. [Alternative Spring Break] definitely reignited the fervor for change and helped us think change was possible."

MEET THE TEAM- REGIONAL OFFICES

WE'RE HIRING!

GLSP's Pro Bono Unit is seeking a Pro Bono Coordinator in the Columbus Office.

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



Angelina Vaquera-Linke
Pro Bono Coordinator
Dalton Regional Office



Deidra Schad
Pro Bono Staff Attorney
Gainesville Regional Office



Eric von Hacke
Pro Bono Staff Attorney
Piedmont Regional Office



Aubree Smith
Pro Bono Staff Attorney
Augusta Regional Office



Rachael Schell
Pro Bono Staff Attorney
Macon Regional Office



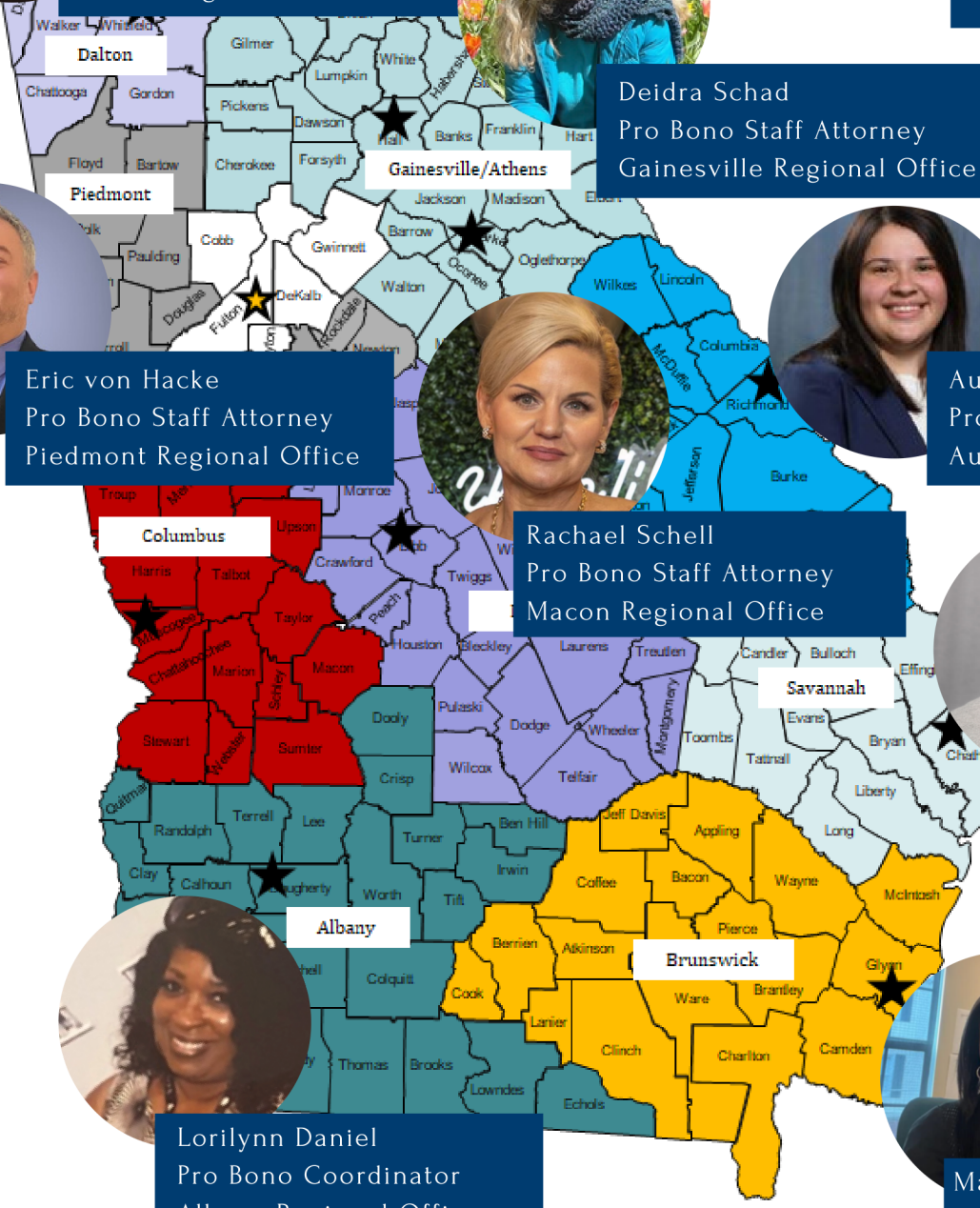
Sarah J. Anderson
Pro Bono Supervising Attorney
Savannah Regional Office



Lorilynn Daniel
Pro Bono Coordinator
Albany Regional Office



Marika LaRoy
Pro Bono Coordinator
Brunswick Regional Office



MEET THE TEAM- CENTRAL SUPPORT



Mike Monahan
Director of the Pro Bono Unit



Ashley Clark
Pro Bono Supervising Attorney



Deborah Chapman
Pro Bono Support Manager



Nobie Mitchell
Pro Bono Coordinator



Tommy Richards
Pro Bono Coordinator

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