

VOL. 2 ISSUE 4 • JUNE 2024

PRO BONO INSIGHTS

A Monthly Georgia Legal Services Program Newsletter

Message from the Director

June honors many significant events and causes. Nationwide, this month's Pride events have honored the efforts of LGBTQ+ Americans and allies to combat discrimination, while the Juneteenth holiday commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. As a backdrop to these equity milestones, June is also National Homeownership month.

June reminds us of the long and challenging road to freedom and equality. While significant progress has been made, the fight for equity - including for fair housing - remains a critical issue. Black communities in particular have been denied access to homes through redlining and predatory lending practices.

We must advance the fundamental right of housing equity and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in safe, affordable, and welcoming homes. You can do this by 1) supporting efforts promoting fair housing and combating discrimination, 2) providing resources and information to empower individuals in navigating the housing market, and 3) partnering with local organizations to address housing needs and create inclusive neighborhoods.

Just as we join together to celebrate Juneteenth, Pride, and other equity milestones, we can come together to advocate for housing justice and work towards a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. In doing so, we can contribute to a more equitable society.



Mike Monahan
Director of the Pro Bono Unit

This issue:

Welcome

PAGE 01

CLE & Direct Service
Opportunities

PAGE 02

Upcoming Pro Bono Clinics

PAGE 03

Pro Bono News and Stories

PAGE 04

GLSP's Pro Bono Team

PAGES 05 - 06



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 6 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.



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.



Douglas 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.



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COMING SOON...

September 6
Ft. Oglethorpe
General Advice Clinic

September 18
Gainesville
Probate Clinic

October 4
Dalton
General Advice Clinic

October 16
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_2024

HOMEOWNERSHIP, RACIAL JUSTICE, & WILLS

by Cari King, Deputy Director of Pro Bono Unit Partnerships and Collaborations



June is when we celebrate the end of slavery in the United States with Juneteenth, and has also been designated National Homeownership Month. These issues are more related than you probably realize: systemic and structural racism against Black Americans continues to affect their ability to obtain and pass on generational wealth, including real property.

Today, many Black American families across Georgia face the possibility of losing their claim to real property due to issues stemming from heirs property. The [Georgia Heirs Property Law Center](https://gaheirsproperty.org) (gaheirsproperty.org) defines heirs property as “a home or land that passes from generation to generation without a legally designated owner resulting in ownership divided among all living descendants in a family.” In Georgia, if a person dies without a will or another designation of the real property, the property interest goes to whoever is indicated in Georgia law. For instance, if the person died with a spouse and two children, the real property interest is divided among them; the spouse and each child would get one-third of the interest in the property. Now imagine generations and generations of this kind of property interest division – it gets confusing and complicated.

A claim to ownership through heirs property (especially generations of heirs property) is not as stable as having one’s name on a deed or a will with a decedent’s wishes spelled out. When a group of extended family members all have small fractional interests in a family property, it is likely that the property (and any wealth represented by the property) will not remain with the family. Perhaps a developer will convince some heirs to sign away their property interests for a small fraction of what it is worth and pursue a court case to obtain ownership of the property. Or family members lose track of who is responsible for paying the property taxes and the land is lost in a tax foreclosure sale. Even if family members stay in the house and keep up with the property taxes, heirs without a proper deed transfer cannot access certain repair grants and the house may fall into disrepair.

An important tool to help keep real property in our clients’ families, generation to generation, is estate planning. Our Wills Signature Project provides advance directives and wills to clients in the counties GLSP serves throughout the state. Pro Bono Supervising Attorney Ashley Clark works with our regional pro bono coordinators, local community groups, and volunteer groups to organize clinics to create and execute these important documents (see Page 3 for upcoming dates). Clients are visibly relieved to get these documents in place, and their wills set out what happens to their real property rather than leaving it to Georgia law.

If you are interested in learning more about our pro bono opportunities, see our Paladin page at bit.ly/GLSP_Paladin. If you are interested in the intersection of heirs property and racial justice, this [ProPublica article](https://bit.ly/ProPublica_heirs_property) (bit.ly/ProPublica_heirs_property) goes more in-depth into the issue, and I also highly recommend [this documentary](https://to.pbs.org/3ROzv1p), (to.pbs.org/3ROzv1p) which discusses untangling heirs property as a way to make reparations.

MEET THE TEAM- REGIONAL OFFICES

WE'RE HIRING!

GLSP's Pro Bono Unit has an open position in the Savannah Regional Office.

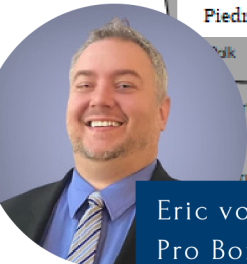
To learn more, contact Mike Monahan (mmonahan@glsp.org) or view our job postings at bit.ly/GLSP_Jobs



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



Rachael Schell
Pro Bono Staff Attorney
Macon Regional Office



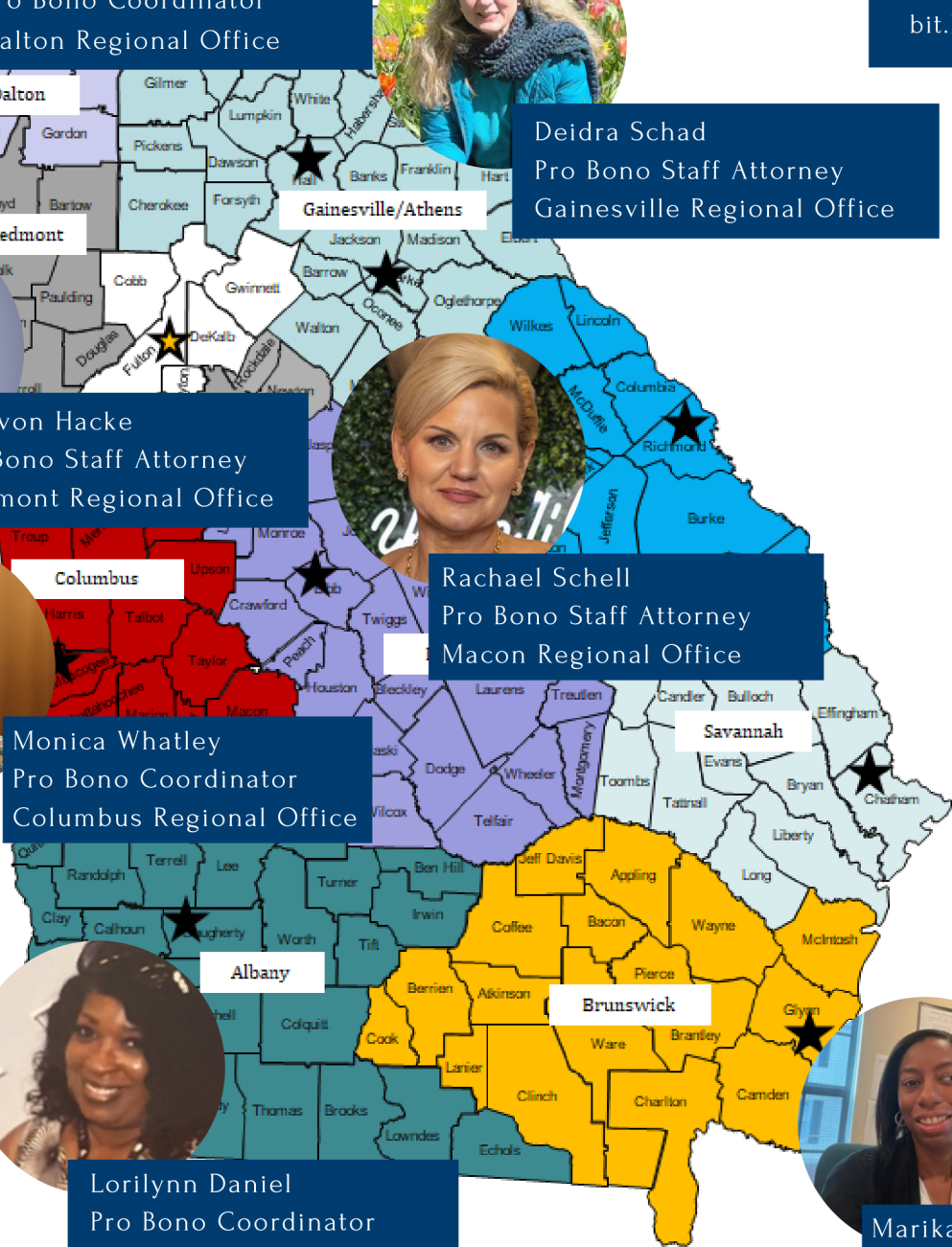
Monica Whatley
Pro Bono Coordinator
Columbus Regional Office



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



Sarah J. Anderson
PBU Deputy Director
Clinics and Compliance



Ashley Clark
Pro Bono Supervising Attorney



Nobie Mitchell
Pro Bono Coordinator



Cari King
PBU Deputy Director
Partnerships and Collaborations



Deborah Chapman
Pro Bono Support Manager



Tommy Richards
IT Analyst

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