

SPEAKING OF JUSTICE

News From The Florida Bar Foundation
 volume 3 issue no. 2

INSIDE

2 Message from Foundation President Michele Kane Cummings

3 Blackwell, Self receive 2011 Medal of Honor Awards

6 Clearwater affordable housing units saved

9 Passion for public interest law drives Summer Fellows

Foundation thanks legislators

10 Five new directors join the Foundation board

11 Leadership institute equips legal aid attorneys to address challenging projects



Ashlyn Sikes, 8, and her mother Amy enjoy a moment together in their backyard. Amy and her husband Adam are extremely grateful for the legal assistance they received from four law students at the Florida State University Public Interest Law Center, which is funded through a Florida Bar Foundation Children's Legal Services grant.

COLIN HACKLEY

How Ashlyn got her sparkle back

by Nancy Kinnally

Sparkly. An eager, cheerful learner. Ashlyn Sikes' teacher used these words to describe the Tallahassee second-grader, who finished out the school year with her best report card ever.

"I love her enthusiasm for school," commented the teacher.

Ashlyn's parents, Adam and Amy Sikes, are proud of their 8-year-old daughter, but they also credit four Florida State University law students for her successful second-grade finish.

It was only with the students' help that the Sikes were able to salvage for their daughter what started out to be an agonizing year.

Ashlyn's love of school had come naturally starting in kindergarten, but her ability to master skills had not. From Ashlyn's preschool years, her parents had noticed she had difficulties with fine-motor skills, speech, reading, short-term memory and attention span. The more advanced the classroom material became, the further behind she fell. The sense of failure took a heavy toll on Ashlyn.

By second grade, she was a different child.

see SPARKLE, p. 4

Message from the President

It was my great honor June 23 to receive the gavel signifying Foundation leadership from John Noland, who has done so much as president – and together with his wife Pam, as donors – to further the Foundation’s mission.

Later that evening, at the Foundation’s annual dinner, I was inspired by the words of Bruce Blackwell upon his acceptance of the well-deserved 2011 Florida Bar Foundation Medal of Honor for a lawyer. Bruce used the occasion to urge those in attendance to step up their financial support for the Foundation.

In his acceptance remarks, Bruce pointed out that the Foundation’s once substantial reserves have been largely consumed as a result of an extended period of low interest rates, which have cut IOTA revenue to 88 percent below where it was during his 2007-08 term as president. As a consequence, he said, the Foundation needs bold ideas to raise the \$15 to \$20 million needed to meet a near-term and, we expect, temporary shortfall.

Bruce recommended specific ways we all can help, such as by becoming

members of The Legacy for Justice, a special giving society for those making or facilitating major or planned gifts of \$10,000 or more, or by becoming double Fellows, essentially repeating our original \$1,000 pledge to the Foundation.

I encourage anyone willing and able to take on Bruce’s challenge to contact the Foundation’s director of development, Tim Bachmeyer, at (800) 541-2195 or tbachmeyer@flabarfdn.org.

It also struck me that the story behind the recipient of the 2011 Medal of Honor Award for a non-lawyer, Katie Self, is a perfect example of why it is so important that we join forces in helping sustain the Foundation and its grantees.

In the mid-90s, Katie, as executive director of the Sarasota Teen Court, Florida’s first such program, used a \$6,800 Improvements in the Administration of Justice grant from the Foundation to help create the Florida Association of Teen Courts. That little spark lit a big fire.

Today, there are more than 22,000 at-risk children in 50 Florida counties diverted into Teen Courts every year.



Michele Kane Cummings

The Foundation has many similar stories in which the enduring impact of its funding has spread statewide and nationally. The cumulative effects of the Foundation’s leadership and funding on access to justice in the state of Florida are truly astonishing.

I look forward to working with the Foundation’s able and dedicated staff and board in the coming year as we together strive to ensure that the Foundation’s far-reaching effects continue unabated.



Michele Kane Cummings
President

Doing well by doing good.

Supplement your retirement plan • Get a guaranteed fixed income for yourself and your spouse • Provide for another’s income

These worthy goals can all be met by purchasing a charitable gift annuity with The Florida Bar Foundation. Part gift, part annuity, it can be a significant gift to the Foundation while at the same time providing guaranteed lifetime income. The charitable gift annuity differs from a commercial annuity in that as part gift, it provides a portion of the principal as a charitable income-tax deduction. It also provides a fixed quarterly income, only a portion of which is subject to income tax.

An example for a 70-year-old person is as follows:

Gift: \$10,000
Annual return: 5.8%
Annual payment: \$580
Taxable portion of payment: \$178
Tax-free portion of payment: \$402
Charitable income-tax deduction: \$3,605

Find out more.

Tim Bachmeyer
tbachmeyer@flabarfdn.org
(407) 451-9187



“By setting up a charitable gift annuity, I’ve established a steady income stream for myself, but just as important to me, I’ve created a legacy to support something I truly believe in – equal access to justice.”

Rod Petrey
Foundation President, 1987-88
Florida Trend Floridian of the Year, 2011

Blackwell receives Medal of Honor for a lawyer

Bruce B. Blackwell, an Orlando attorney widely renowned for his pro bono work, professional leadership and service to the organized Bar, received The Florida Bar Foundation's 2011 Medal of Honor Award for a lawyer, the Florida legal profession's highest award, June 23 at the Foundation's 35th annual reception and dinner.

Blackwell, a partner in the law firm of King, Blackwell, Downs & Zehnder, is a past Foundation president and currently serves as a trustee of The Florida Bar Foundation Endowment Trust. He also is a past president of the Orange County Bar Association, past member of The Florida Bar Board of Governors, and current president of the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society.

The impact of Blackwell's service is evidenced by the tremendous support his nomination received. His nomination letter was signed by 42 leaders of the legal profession, including past recipients of the Medal of Honor; past presidents of the American Bar Association, The Florida Bar, the Orange County Bar Association, and The Florida Bar Foundation; a former justice of the Florida Supreme Court; a law school dean; 11 judges; and many current and past members of The Florida Bar Board of Governors.

Described in the nomination as a "workhorse for our profession who leads by example," Blackwell has a reputation for taking on tough pro bono cases and often going well beyond providing legal help. After handling a pro bono landlord-tenant case, for example, Blackwell and his family decided to invite the family's eldest daughter, a teenager named Sabrina Wiggins, to live with them while she finished high school and applied for college.

see **BLACKWELL**, p. 8



Bill Loucks, president of Florida Lawyers' Mutual Insurance Company, stands with 2011 Medal of Honor recipients Katie Self and Bruce Blackwell. FLMIC is a long-time sponsor of The Florida Bar Foundation's annual dinner, at which the awards are presented.

HILDA PEREZ

Self receives nonlawyer Medal of Honor

Apioneer in the implementation of Teen Courts across Florida, Kathleen "Katie" Self of Sarasota was presented The Florida Bar Foundation's 2011 Medal of Honor Award for a nonlawyer June 23.

Self began serving as the executive director of Florida's first Teen Court in 1989 when it was still a fledgling project of the Junior League of Sarasota. Self essentially volunteered her services during the Teen Court of Sarasota's start-up years. Since that time she has overseen the program's growth from 60 delinquency referrals that first year to a current caseload of 500 at-risk youth and more than 250 student volunteers annually. In its 22 years, the program has served about 7,800 at-risk youth using a widely emulated model of juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention in which student volunteers serve as peer

mentors by participating as defense or prosecution counselors, clerks or bailiffs during a sentencing hearing supervised by volunteer adult judges and attorneys. Under Self's leadership, Teen Court of Sarasota has grown from a program with an annual operating budget of \$5,000 to a nonprofit organization with an operating budget of \$300,000.

Based upon the philosophy that a youthful violator is less likely to re-offend when his or her punishment is decided by peers, Teen Court has been shown to reduce recidivism among youth. Then-Chief Judge Lee Haworth of the 12th Judicial Circuit Court, in supporting Self's nomination, noted that the delinquency recidivism rate among first-time offenders in Sarasota County is just 12 percent, compared to 42 percent statewide.

Self was not only being recognized for her impact on the youth of Sarasota

see **SELF**, p. 8

SPARKLE, from p. 1

"She had become withdrawn, and her confidence was at rock-bottom," Adam said.

"My smiling, happy daughter now complained of headaches and stomachaches daily in an attempt to avoid school."

The Sikes were notified shortly before the end of the first grading period of the 2010-11 school year that Ashlyn would be marked as failing or significantly behind in all subject areas. Heartbroken at the impact Ashlyn's academic struggles were having on their once bubbly and outgoing little girl, they turned to a center at FSU's College of Law whose Health Care Access/Special Education Project is funded by The Florida Bar Foundation through a \$127,720 Children's Legal Services grant.

"We sought the assistance of the Public Interest Law Center in the fall of 2010 to help us understand, and fight for, our daughter's rights to a free and appropriate public education," Adam said.

By that time, the Sikes had already done everything they could to help Ashlyn on their own. They had taken her to see a doctor specializing in developmental issues and learning disabilities. At the suggestion of the school administration, they had paid dearly for a private evaluation in an effort to speed up the process of getting her help.

But the same school administration then ignored the report. No changes were made to Ashlyn's Individualized Education Program (IEP), the document that establishes her educational needs and rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The only documented intervention in place was a weekly 15-minute session of speech therapy. Ashlyn's other disabilities went unaddressed.

Amy finally couldn't hold back the tears when she was told by the school's Exceptional Student Education (ESE)



COLIN HACKLEY

Three of the four members of Ashlyn's FSU Public Interest Law Center Dream Team: (from left) Vanessa Ritter, Oaj Gilani and Carolyn DeVita. Not pictured is Valentina Villalobos.

liaison that putting Ashlyn in a special education class would stigmatize her.

"How could the liaison for the ESE program perpetuate the stigma associated with ESE, yet be oblivious to the fact that failing has a far greater stigma, and would be psychologically more damaging to Ashlyn?" Amy said.

The Sikes were later told Ashlyn didn't need help to improve her handwriting, since nowadays everyone uses computers.

At the time, Ashlyn was scoring below grade level on standardized writing tests, but because the deficits with her fine-motor skills were not addressed in her IEP, her teacher could not make accommodations for her, nor was Ashlyn receiving occupational therapy to improve her writing.

Oaj Gilani, then a second-year law student, was taking a course at the Public Interest Law Center, led by managing attorney Paolo Annino, when she and her classmate Carolyn DeVita inherited Ashlyn's case from fellow students Valentina Villalobos and Vanessa Ritter, who had taken it up in the fall.

Armed with knowledge and documentation of the laws and policies governing Ashlyn's educational rights, Gilani and DeVita accompanied the

Sikeses to meetings with school officials for the purpose of getting the school to include the educational services Ashlyn needed in her IEP. Among other things, they knew that if a parent requests an intervention on behalf of a child, the school has 60 days from the date of the request to conduct an evaluation of the need.

"There were some tough meetings with the school where school-board staff ignored or attempted to intimidate Carolyn and Oaj," Adam said. "In the face of this adversity, Carolyn and Oaj always stood their ground and impressed me with their professionalism, knowledge and tenacity."

Gilani said IEP meetings are supposed to involve a team approach, with everyone working together in the best interest of the child, but their initial meeting was nothing like that. Although she and DeVita were there to represent Ashlyn, she said the school representative was dismissive.

"She wouldn't look at us or even recognize our presence. Every time I tried to talk, she would cut me off," Gilani said. "Once we were able to get her to talk to us we were able to reach an agreement."

For Gilani, it was a compelling lesson in what it means to be a lawyer.

"In the law school setting, you're used to getting so much theory and case law, but it doesn't make sense until you have to apply it," Gilani said. "I was really amazed at how just our involvement was able to help them so much."

Among the things now included in Ashlyn's IEP are the auditory presentation of materials, the ability to dictate written responses, modified testing, placement into an ESE class for writing, reading and math, and continued speech therapy. Amy points out that the ESE class is a much smaller setting with more one-on-one instruction.

"The IEP was more than an immediate help for Ashlyn; it ensures future academic success throughout her educational career," Amy said.

Amy and Adam are still awaiting the full evaluation that is required to make occupational therapy a part of the IEP. But in the meantime, Ashlyn's ability to dictate her writing tests enabled her to improve her scores by two or three grade levels last spring.

The Sikeses stress that Ashlyn has always had great teachers, but in some cases those teachers weren't able to provide their daughter with certain services or accommodations because her needs weren't documented in her IEP. It was only with the law students' help that they were able to expand the IEP to include more than just speech therapy. Once that happened, and Ashlyn began receiving more interventions and accommodations, she immediately began improving in all areas.

Annino said Ashlyn's story is typical of the Public Interest Law Center's special education cases, which make up about a third of the center's 60 ongoing cases.

"They were dragging their feet on getting the evaluations this little girl needed," Annino said.

These days, Ashlyn has her sparkle back. She enjoys helping her mom cook, playing outside with friends, going on family bike rides, and doing absolutely

anything her sister Abigail, 10, is doing.

She's the kid who walks down the hall at school and gets showered with calls of "Hey, Ashlyn!"

Because there's just something irresistible about a little girl who sparkles.

The Sikeses will be forever grateful to Gilani and DeVita, as well as their fellow law students Villalobos and Ritter, who worked on the case originally.

"I am, in ways words cannot describe, indebted to each of these individuals," Adam said in an e-mail to the president of FSU, the dean of the law school, and everyone involved in the case at the Public Interest Law Center.

"My daughter is no longer being left behind. She enjoys school again. Her confidence is returning. She is smiling again. Ashlyn is learning that she can succeed, and this would not be the case without them. I am not able to fully express my appreciation for giving me my daughter back."

Gilani, in turn, believes Adam and Amy Sikes are the ones to be commended.

"A lot of parents have these problems, but they don't know how to approach the school, or if they do and are discouraged from proceeding, they usually do stop after a while," Gilani said. "A lot of it was their effort. We wouldn't have been involved if they hadn't been so adamant about making sure Ashlyn was getting what she needed."

But the Sikeses believe also that were it not for the funding the Foundation provides the Public Interest Law Center, their daughter might still be struggling. Adam shared his appreciation with the Foundation's board in another e-mail.

"I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you as well, for your generous donation of time, energy, and financial resources in support of The Florida Bar Foundation," Adam wrote. "Your donations provide advocacy for those that would otherwise have none. Your generosity has made a monumental difference in the life and future of my child."



COLIN HACKLEY

"The IEP was more than an immediate help for Ashlyn; it ensures future academic success throughout her educational career."

– Amy Sikes



COLIN HACKLEY

"I was really amazed at how just our involvement was able to help them so much."

– Oaj Gilani
FSU Law Student



Patricia Redding, center, will soon have a long-awaited ADA-compliant unit at Norton Apartments in Clearwater, Fla., where she lives with her cousin, Nehemiah Dillard, right, who is her caregiver. With them is Stetson law student Maria Bogomaz, who assisted Gulfcoast Legal Services attorney Christine Allamanno on an affordable housing project to save the long-neglected, HUD-subsidized apartment complex and make improvements, including providing wheelchair accessible units.

Clearwater affordable housing saved

by Nancy Kinnally and Christine Allamanno

Confined to a wheelchair by multiple sclerosis, Clearwater, Fla., resident Patricia Redding, 50, had become a prisoner in her own apartment when promised modifications to make it wheelchair accessible and ADA-compliant were never made.

Later, when raw sewage backed up into Redding's unit, the property manager at Norton Apartments also failed to keep his word and replace her soaked carpet. Redding, whose cousin, Nehemiah Dillard, lives with her as her full-time, medically-necessary caregiver, saw no way out.

"I live on Social Security disability and food stamps," said Redding. "I was trapped in this apartment. I could not afford to move."

What she and the 47 other low-income families living there did not know was that their landlord was preparing to file Chapter 11 bankruptcy – not only on Norton Apartments but on a total of 19 affordable multifamily housing complexes in Florida.

In 2009 and 2010, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

gave Norton's landlord consecutive failing scores on the condition and management of the property and required that the owner submit a plan for bringing the complex into compliance. When the landlord didn't respond, HUD began the process of terminating the rent subsidies and was poised to shut Norton down.

Although residents had been approved for relocation assistance, much more was at stake.

"Once HUD terminates a project-based Section 8 contract, that particular housing subsidy is lost to a community's low-income residents," said Christine Allamanno, an attorney at Gulfcoast Legal Services in St. Petersburg, a grantee of The Florida Bar Foundation. "HUD does not put the project-based subsidy back or transfer it to another development. It is lost for good, and it is happening all over Florida at a time when we have a critical need for subsidized housing due to economic conditions."

Allamanno is working on Florida Legal Services' statewide Affordable Housing Project, which was funded by

a \$262,850 grant from the Foundation in 2010-11. In addition, Gulfcoast Legal Services received an \$85,000 Foundation grant for its work on a regional affordable housing project in the Bay area together with Bay Area Legal Services, which received an additional \$39,000.

As HUD was preparing to move Norton residents off the property, Allamanno and her partner on the Foundation's regional affordable housing grant, Dorothea Lee of Bay Area Legal Services, were attending a seminar in Tampa sponsored by the Florida Housing Coalition, the National Housing Trust, and the Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing at the University of Florida. There, local and national experts in housing preservation came together to teach Florida affordable housing advocates legal and financial strategies for preserving the state's remaining project-based Section 8 subsidies, and about the warning signs of an impending loss of such a subsidy.

"Norton met all the criteria," Allamanno said.

A visit to the apartment complex easily convinced Allamanno that it was a community worth saving.

In spite of the extremely neglected condition of the concrete-block buildings – including termite damage, a failing sewage system and foundations that had been lifted by tree roots – Allamanno saw the apartment complex as a place where residents had forged strong bonds. Seniors and disabled residents knew they could rely on the young families there to run errands, and they in turn helped look out for the children.

Redding's neighbor, Christopher Goolsby, who had lived at Norton Apartments for seven years with his wife and two young daughters, had built makeshift ramps for some of the disabled residents and helped Redding clean up after her sewage backup the best he could.

Goolsby's elderly nextdoor neighbor, Jritta Belk, cried at the thought of not

having him around to help her.

“I don’t know what I would do if I had to move away from Chris and his family,” Belk said.

Norton Apartments is one of the few, project-based Section 8 multifamily communities remaining in Pinellas County. Families living there pay 30 percent of their annual income as rent, with the balance of the market rate being paid by HUD to the landlord.

The HUD rent subsidy is critical to prevent homelessness for families whose incomes consist of Social Security disability payments and food stamps or whose breadwinners work at low-wage jobs or are unemployed. Another group of tenants are frail elderly whose medical expenses swallow up most of their meager incomes.

Allamanno and Lee learned about the bankruptcy, which turned out to be good news. It meant that an automatic stay prevented HUD from terminating the subsidy without first asking leave of the bankruptcy court, because all executory contracts and unexpired leases remain in place when a bankruptcy is pending.

“The owner’s bankruptcy gave us the time that we needed to put together a plan to save Norton Apartments,” Allamanno said.

It was critical to secure the assistance of an attorney with bankruptcy expertise, as bankruptcy law is a complex specialty.

Kent Spuhler, executive director of Florida Legal Services, located John Lamoureux, a principal at Carlton Fields with extensive bankruptcy and construction law expertise. Lamoureux toured the property with Allamanno and met several residents.

“You see why we want to save it?” Allamanno asked.

Lamoureux gladly took the case pro bono and began crafting a strategy whereby an entity that would be approved by HUD could purchase the property out of bankruptcy by paying off the mortgage



Jritta Belk, left, is disabled and depends on Christopher Goolsby, right, her neighbor at Norton Apartments, for help with many tasks. When HUD planned to relocate Norton residents, Belk had worried about what she would do without Goolsby if she had to move.

COURTESY OF GULF COAST LEGAL SERVICES

due on the property, with the approval of the bankruptcy court, and take ownership of the property free and clear.

It was an exit strategy that would benefit all of the parties involved – the owner; who would be out from under the obligation of the mortgage; the bank, who would get its mortgage paid off; HUD, who could form a future relationship with a responsible entity to manage the property and maintain the subsidy going forward; and most importantly for the Norton families, who would at last be living in renovated housing with responsible management.

But the work was far from over.

The strategy required that an entity acceptable to HUD be found to take over the property. Lee brought Norton Apartments to the attention of Frank Bowman, housing development manager for the Pinellas County Department of Community Development, which was able to secure the property through its Neighborhood Stabilization Program. In addition, Pinellas County provided a \$390,000 grant from the Department of Energy to provide residents energy-star-certified ranges, refrigerators and air



“If any of the pieces had fallen out of the picture, those buildings would be vacant and crumbling right now instead of becoming a hub for revitalization and community services for the neighborhood.”

– Christine Allamanno
Gulfcoast Legal Services

see HOUSING, p. 11

Wiggins is now a veterinarian who credits much of her success to Blackwell and his family. She recalls that at the time she did not understand the reason for the generosity she was shown.

"I was waiting for the other shoe to drop," Wiggins said. "Then I realized the shoe is never going to drop. This was the kind gesture of a kind person. It blew my mind."

Beyond providing pro bono legal services to the poor, Blackwell has worked to secure funding for legal aid locally, statewide and nationally. In so doing, he has received accolades for his political acumen, diplomacy, and countless hours of dedication.

"The continuing thread over more than 30 years has been his commitment to enthusiastically serve others who can never, ever repay his kindnesses, his compassion, or his often life-changing services," Blackwell's nominators wrote. "He has a daily commitment to provide access to justice, and his behind-the-scenes

work on key policy matters at the state and national level regarding our profession, and particularly service to the underserved, is extraordinary."

The American Bar Association recognized Blackwell in 2008 with its Grassroots Advocacy Award for his sustained and effective lobbying of Congress on behalf of federal funding for legal services for the poor. That same year he received the Outstanding Voluntary Bar President Award from the Florida Council of Bar Association Presidents. In describing Blackwell's impact on the statewide legal profession, this group noted that he served with "quiet diligence and sincere goodwill" and that he provided the lawyers of Florida the example that is the foundation of leadership.

"Because of his leadership, others watch, others learn, others follow and others serve," the Bar nominators wrote.

Blackwell has received awards for his pro bono service, both from the Ninth Judicial Circuit and from The Florida Bar.

He was also recognized by the Orange County Bar Association in 2003 with its highest award for professionalism; by the George C. Young First Central Florida American Inn of Court in 2009 with its highest award for professionalism, ethics, and civility in the practice of law; and by the Florida State University College of Law in 2009 with the Alumni Service Award, its highest award for service to the law school.

While selected as one of 48 lawyers statewide for inclusion in Florida Trend's first Legal Elite Hall of Fame in 2010, Blackwell's passion is to ensure access to justice for those in poverty and otherwise without hope.

"I consider the work of the Foundation to be the most rewarding of my legal career," said Blackwell, who served for 11 years on the board, playing a vital role in policymaking, fundraising and advocacy. "We work to provide access to justice for thousands of Floridians who live in poverty."

County, but also for her statewide and national leadership. With a \$6,800 Improvements in the Administration of Justice grant from The Florida Bar Foundation in 1994, Self helped organize a conference that served as the catalyst for the development of the Florida Association of Teen Courts, which in turn received \$1.5 million from the Department of Juvenile Justice to implement Teen Courts throughout Florida. As founding president of the state association, Self helped administer grants for 37 other counties. Today, the program is in place in 50 Florida counties that together divert more than 22,000 at-risk children into Teen Courts every year.

Self also co-authored legislation to fund Florida's youth courts, and that legislation is now used as a model for funding of Teen Courts nationally. Today, there are Teen Court programs in more than 1,000 communities across the United States.

Self continues to be an innovator among Teen Court leaders. In 2001, she noted that the number of Teen Court cases involving substance abuse was rapidly on the rise. In response, she developed – together with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office – Camp X-RAYD, which stands for "Examine Reality About Your Decisions." The intensive program is designed to lower the recidivism rate among youth referred for substance abuse.

"Today, she sees a need for increased counseling services for at-risk youth and their families," wrote Hunter W. Carroll, a Sarasota attorney who volunteers as an adult judge and a member of the Teen Court Board. "She has already identified willing counselors, and I know soon this latest add-on to the Teen Court program will be launched."

Carroll pointed out that the program not only serves at-risk youth, but promotes volunteerism and civic responsibility and

creates an environment where youth in the program can be positive role models for other students in the community.

"Many children have been given a second chance – and have become constructive members of society – because of Katie," Carroll said. "Our juvenile justice system is better because of her."

One of those who got a second chance thanks to Self's program, second-year law student Stefan Campagna wrote in his nomination about the effect Self had on his life through Teen Court. Without it, he said, he would have been in juvenile detention until he was 18.

"Instead, I was sitting in my first college class on my 18th birthday," Campagna wrote.

"To disappoint Mrs. Self would be to disappoint the person who literally gave me a second chance at life, and that is one thing that always pushes me to succeed," Campagna wrote.

Passion for public interest law drives Summer Fellows

by Gabrielle Davis

Stetson University law student Jhenerr Hines' desire to help the disadvantaged started at home.

"I grew up in a very poor home, and most of the people I grew up with are dead or in jail," said Hines, a native of Montego Bay, Jamaica. "I'm very blessed, and I feel the need to reach out and give back."

Hines, along with 20 other law students from Florida as well as out-of-state law schools, got a chance to fulfill that need while participating in The Florida Bar Foundation's 2011 Legal Aid Summer Fellowship program.

Established in 1995, the 11-week summer fellowship, from May to August, allows students to serve as fellows working on a variety of cases and projects at 21 Foundation-supported legal aid programs throughout the state.

To prepare the law students for their fellowships, the Foundation sponsored a workshop May 19-20 in Orlando, where they learned about relevant practice areas including family law, foster care, housing, landlord/tenant issues, and civil and immigration rights.

Knowing the importance of providing legal assistance to the poor, Tampa law firm Fowler White Boggs sponsored Hines' fellowship at Bay Area Legal Services, enabling the Foundation to place 21 fellows, rather than the 20 that were originally funded.



Hala Sandridge of Fowler White Boggs, left, was recognized at the Foundation's 2011 annual dinner for her firm's gift of support for the Legal Aid Summer Fellowship of Jhenerr Hines, right, who is working at Bay Area Legal Services this summer.

"By sponsoring a 2011 Summer Fellow, our firm is able to help our legal aid program provide additional legal assistance to those who cannot afford it," said Hala Sandridge, a shareholder with Fowler White Boggs who joined the Foundation's board July 1.

"In turn, a law student with a passion for public interest will be afforded the opportunity to use her legal skills."

An added benefit of the summer fellowship program is that fellows serve as "ambassadors" for public interest law, sharing their experiences with other law students, thereby "helping us recruit for other intern projects or for employees," said Bay Area Legal Services Executive Director Dick Woltmann.

Many fellows have gone on to work in public interest law, such as 2002

summer fellow Kristen Lentz, now the managing attorney for Florida Institutional Legal Services. Lentz said her summer fellowship inspired her career choice.

"For me it confirmed the importance of working on behalf of marginalized and poor populations and it made me want to continue to work in legal services," Lentz said. "And I have for eight years now."

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sponsorships are \$5,500 for first-year law students and \$7,000 for second-year students. If you or your firm is interested in sponsoring a summer fellow, please contact Florida Bar Foundation Executive Director Jane Curran at jcurran@flabarfndn.org or (800) 541-2195.

Foundation thanks legislators for their support

The Foundation is grateful for the ongoing support of Sen. Mike Fasano, who chairs the Budget Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations, and Rep. Richard Glorioso, who chairs the Justice Appropriations Subcommittee.

Fasano and Glorioso each played key roles in securing \$1 million in funding for the Florida Access to Civil Legal Assistance Act during this year's legislative session, although the funds were later vetoed by Florida Gov. Rick Scott. In past years, the state appropriation has been administered by The Florida Bar Foundation through a competitive application process to support legal aid organizations working to help Floridians facing job loss, bankruptcy, domestic violence and other civil legal matters.



Sen. Mike Fasano



Rep. Rich Glorioso

Five new directors join the Foundation board



Retired Chief Judge of the First Judicial Circuit, **John P. Kuder**, has been elected by the Foundation to serve a three-year term as an at-large director. Kuder earned his bachelor's degree from the Spring Hill College and his juris doctor from the University of Florida College of Law. Kuder established the Chief Judge's Children's Council, Youth Gang Task Force and Task Force on Minority Issues. He is a founding member of the First Judicial Circuit Inns of Court. Kuder founded the John P. Kuder Children's Foundation, an orphanage and school for abandoned and orphaned children in India.



Miami attorney **David B. Rothman** of Rothman & Associates, P.A. has been appointed by The Florida Bar Board of Governors to serve a three-year term as an at-large director. Rothman earned his bachelor's degree and juris doctor from the University of Florida. Rothman served on The Florida Bar Board of Governors for more than a decade and served as president of the Miami-Dade County Bar Association from 1997-98. In 2007, he led "Put More Back," a two-year campaign to boost attorney pro bono hours.



Tampa attorney **Hala Sandridge** of Fowler White Boggs has been elected by the Foundation to serve a three-year term as an at-large director. Sandridge earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and her juris doctor from the Florida State University College of Law. She has served on committees and sections of the American Bar Association and chaired the appellate sections of the Hillsborough County Bar Association and The Florida Bar. Sandridge has been recognized several times for her pro bono service, including receiving the Distinguished Pro Bono Award from Bay Area Legal Services in 2007 and the Have a Heart Pro Bono Service Award in 2009.



As president of Florida Legal Services, Tallahassee attorney **Daniel H. Thompson** of Berger Singerman is a designated director on the Foundation board. Thompson earned his bachelor's degree from Yale University and his juris doctor from the Florida State University College of Law. He served as president of the Legal Aid Foundation of the Tallahassee Bar Association and is a former member of the Executive Council of the Environmental and Land Use Law Section of The Florida Bar.



As Florida Bar president-elect, Tampa attorney **Gwynne A. Young** is a designated director on the Foundation board. A shareholder with Carlton Fields, Young earned her bachelor's degree at Duke University and her juris doctor from the University of Florida College of Law. She has served on several Florida Bar sections and committees and has also served on the American Bar Association's Steering Committee on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children. She received the Hillsborough County Bar Association's Jimmy Kynes Pro Bono Award in 1999 and was the 2003 recipient of The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Award. Young is a past president of the Hillsborough County Bar Association and the Hillsborough County Bar Foundation.

At-large directors serve a maximum of two, three-year terms, with one-third selected by the Board of Governors of The Florida Bar, one-third by the Foundation board, and one-third by the Florida Supreme Court.

Legal Aid Leadership Development Institute equips legal aid attorneys to address challenging projects

by Gabrielle Davis

Legal Aid lawyer Matthew Trail thought a Lee County public school needed systemic change.

The school, designed for children with behavioral problems, was failing the students by not providing mental health and proper academic support as mandated by law, said Trail, an attorney with the Florida Equal Justice Center in Fort Myers whose work is funded by a Florida Bar Foundation Children's Legal Services grant.

"I know it's been a problem for a couple of years," Trail said. "But I didn't quite know how to tackle it."

Trail credits his fellowship with the Foundation's Florida Legal Aid Leadership Development Institute with helping him structure a working plan to create change.

The year-long institute, which concluded May 19, brought together 13 up-and-coming legal aid attorney fellows and 13 more-experienced legal aid attorney mentors to strategize on projects the fellows created to solve problems identified in their communities. Other projects included developing a policy to minimize academic disruptions among foster youth and creating a pro se clinic in Polk County. The Florida Bar Foundation funded the establishment of the institute by the Center for Legal Aid Education in 2009.

"The institute has been valuable for me to meet with other attorneys to discuss legal strategy," said Trail, who added that the school district has now, after extensive legal advocacy, hired a behavioral expert to work at the school. "I've been able to do some good work and get some changes that I don't think I would have been able to do without the institute experience."

Institute fellow Martha Pardo, an attorney with Florida Rural Legal Services in West Palm Beach, worked on a project to help ensure that a local public housing authority complied with federal and state regulations when terminating residents from housing programs.

Pardo said learning how to manage large projects and getting other stakeholders involved was the key to the project's success.

"Housing recipients' rights were being ignored during the termination process, which is a federally-protected right," Pardo said. "Through tireless advocacy efforts and applying the tools learned at the Florida Legal Aid Leadership Development Institute, the public housing authority changed the way it was implementing the rules. The changes were slow and not without a fight, but they happened."



COURTESY OF THE FLORIDA EQUAL JUSTICE CENTER

"I've been able to do some good work and get some changes that I don't think I would have been able to do without the institute experience."

**– Matthew Trail
2011 Florida Legal Aid
Development Institute Fellow**

HOUSING, from p. 7

conditioners.

The Pinellas County Housing Authority took over ownership and management of the property, and since the closing March 15 has appointed a new full-time property manager. Contractors have begun correcting the conditions that caused Norton to fail its HUD inspections, including the long-standing sewage backup issue.

Work is set to begin on an ADA-

compliant unit for Redding, pending permitting and coordination with structural work being done on other units. In the meantime, she now has a wheelchair ramp.

Allamanno points out that the story is a prime example of the saying, "It takes a village." She cites a long string of contributors to the process, including the Neighborhood Stabilization Grant from Pinellas County and Clearwater, the Housing Authority, the pro bono

attorney from Carlton Fields, the residents themselves, and the grants from The Florida Bar Foundation that enable her and Lee to do affordable housing work.

"If any of the pieces had fallen out of the picture, those buildings would be vacant and crumbling right now instead of becoming a hub for revitalization and community services for the neighborhood," Allamanno said.



Leadership and Funding for Justice in Florida

250 S. Orange Ave., Suite 600P
Orlando, FL 32801

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 273
Orlando, FL

The Florida Bar Foundation is the only statewide organization that provides funding for Legal Aid and promotes improvements in addressing the civil legal needs of the poor.

SPEAKING OF JUSTICE GOES ONLINE ONLY

For the past two years, the Foundation has graced your mailboxes with the latest news about our work, and the work of our grantees, through its quarterly print newsletter, *Speaking of Justice*. To preserve revenue for grants, *Speaking of Justice* has gone to electronic-only publishing and will now hit your e-mail inboxes instead. For those who prefer reading on paper rather than on a screen, it is still available on our website in a printable PDF format. Not only is electronic distribution more economical and environmentally friendly, but it is also supported by the results of a September 2010 Foundation survey in which only 27 percent of donors expressed a preference for print. *Speaking of Justice* will continue to bring you the same in-depth stories about the efforts of the Foundation and its grantees to provide greater access to justice.

SPEAKING OF JUSTICE



www.facebook.com/TheFloridaBarFoundation

CONTACT THE FOUNDATION

(407) 843-0045
(800) 541-2195 (Toll free in Florida)

EXECUTIVE

Jane Elizabeth Curran, Executive Director & Director, Improvements in the Administration of Justice Grant Program
jcurran@flabarfdn.org

COMMUNICATIONS

Nancy Kinnally, Director of Communications
nkinnally@flabarfdn.org
Gabrielle Davis, Communications Coordinator
gdavis@flabarfdn.org

DEVELOPMENT

Tim Bachmeyer, Director of Development
tbachmeyer@flabarfdn.org
Alicia Hodge, Annual Giving Manager
ahodge@flabarfdn.org

FINANCE & IOTA OPERATIONS

Lou Ann Powell, Director of Finance & IOTA Operations
LAPowell@flabarfdn.org
Lushawn Phillips, IOTA Operations Manager
lphillips@flabarfdn.org

GRANTS

Paul Doyle, Director, Legal Assistance for the Poor & Law Student Assistance Grant Programs
pdoyle@flabarfdn.org

OFFICERS

Michele Kane Cummings, President
Maria E. Henderson, President-elect
John Patterson, First Vice President
Hon. Emerson R. Thompson, Jr., Second Vice President
John A. Noland, Immediate Past President

DIRECTORS

Solomon L. Badger, III	Donna M. Krusbe
Matthew G. Brenner	John Patrick Kuder
Anthony J. Carriuolo	Juliette E. Lippman
Patrick J. Casey	Dominic C. MacKenzie
Jewel White Cole	L. Christian Marlin
Hon. Marva L. Crenshaw	Roberto R. Pardo
J. Blair Culpepper	David B. Rothman
Mayanne Downs	Hala Sandridge
Michael J. Faehner	Sam Stark
Leo J. Govoni	Damian E. Thomas
Douglas M. Halsey	Daniel H. Thompson
Scott G. Hawkins	Kathryn D. Weston
Philip N. Kabler	Hon. Reginald K. Whitehead
George F. Knox, Jr.	Gwynne A. Young

Every day, in every city in Florida,

we help legal aid help those least able to afford a lawyer.

We are The Florida Bar Foundation,

and we believe the justice system works best when it works for everyone.



Leadership and Funding for Justice in Florida