

CLASI Honors Sager and Guerke at 65th Anniversary Events

CLASI recently held two fundraisers to celebrate its 65-year history —one “downstate” at the University of Delaware’s Virden Center in Lewes on October 26, and one “upstate” at World Cafe Live at the Queen in Wilmington on November 1. CLASI presented a Founders Award at each event to recognize people who embody the dedication of CLASI’s founders to the advancement of access to justice for low-income and otherwise disadvantaged Delawareans.

At the Lewes celebration, CLASI presented the Founders Award to I. Barry Guerke, Esquire. Mr. Guerke has been actively involved in raising funds for the Combined Campaign for Justice in Kent County almost every year since the Campaign’s inception in 1999, and this year is a campaign co-chair. His firm, Parkowski, Guerke &

Swayze, P.A. was the first firm to achieve 100% participation in the Campaign in 1999, and has achieved 100% participation in every year but one since.

At the Queen, CLASI presented the Founders Award to Thomas L. Sager, Esquire. Mr. Sager is senior vice president and general counsel, DuPont Legal. Mr. Sager is also a long-time dedicated supporter of Delaware’s Combined Campaign for Justice, lending his help and leadership every year since the Campaign’s inception in 1999 to generate support for Delaware’s legal services agencies from companies in Delaware. The DuPont Company has been a strong supporter of the Combined Campaign.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, donors and attendees, CLASI raised about \$65,000 to support our programs!



Tom Sager, Clark Collins and Terri Cheek



Barry Guerke and Mike Parkowski

Automatic Mortgage Foreclosure Mediation Starting Soon

On Sept. 21, 2011, Delaware Governor Jack Markell signed a bill that makes mediation automatic in residential mortgage foreclosure lawsuits filed in Delaware Superior Court. The Delaware Department of Justice is working on a plan for implementation of the process, which will be modeled on the

Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program. CLASI and other nonprofit agencies that have been involved in assisting homeowners facing foreclosure are working with the DOJ on development of the new program, which will begin on January 21, 2012.

Homeowner defendants in foreclosure cases will receive information about the program along with the lawsuit. They will be able to work with housing counselors and legal services attorneys to explore alternatives that may enable them to stay in their homes.

Inside this issue:

Melissa Allman Receives Service Award	2
Dan Atkins Publishes Article on MLPs	2
Senior Legal Hotline Now Available	2
Sponsors of CLASI’s 65th Anniversary Celebrations	3
Congress Decides to Cut LSC Funding	3
CLASI Board of Directors Welcomes Judy Scarborough	3

Special points of interest:

- More photos of our 65th Anniversary celebration at the Queen inside!
- Check the back page for CLASI’s web and social media information.
- Write to Terri Cheek at tcheek@declasi.org to provide feedback or to be added (please!) to our e-newsletter email list.

Melissa Allman Receives Service Award



Rashmi Rangan and Melissa Allman at “Celebrate CRA 2011”

On October 4, the Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council (DCRAC) presented its Excellence in Community Service Award to CLASI Staff Attorney Melissa Allman. Melissa leads CLASI’s Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP). This program provides intake, investigation and processing services for housing discrimination complaints. It also provides free legal representation in negotiations, administrative complaint proceedings before state and federal agencies and in court proceedings.

The FHIP also provides consumer and agency workshops and seminars on fair housing issues, including recognizing discrimination, knowing the protected classes, understanding the concept of “reasonable accommodation” for people with disabilities, and learning the administrative complaint process.

Funding for the FHIP is provided by HUD to support enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination based on race,

color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status and disability. State law also prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, creed, marital status and age.

Almost all housing-related transactions are covered by the Fair Housing Act, including housing rentals, sales, mortgage lending, homeowners insurance and appraisals.

For more information, see our website or call Melissa Allman at (302) 575-0660.

“Under the MLP model, poverty lawyers team up with health care providers and social workers to address legal and social barriers to good health.”

Dan Atkins Publishes Article on MLPs

CLASI’s Disabilities Law Program Litigation Director Dan Atkins is working on developing a new regional collaboration between health care providers such as Christiana Care Health System and Westside Family Healthcare, educational institutions such as Widener University School of Law and the University of Delaware Health Sciences program, and nonprofit legal services providers such as CLASI. This type of collaboration is known as a medical-

legal partnership (“MLP”). Under the MLP model, poverty lawyers team up with health care providers and social workers to address legal and social barriers to good health and reduce health care outcome disparities.

MLPs can help prevent medical treatment from being undermined by patients’ lack of access to decent, safe housing, medical insurance, income and food. Dan has been working on the MLP model in Delaware for several

years, and, with other authors, recently published an article about MLPs in the Delaware Medical Society journal. The article has sparked a surge of interest in this valuable work.

Since October 2010, Dan has been part of an MLP at Widener University, partnering with Crozer -Keystone Healthy Start, ChesPenn Health Services, and Crozer Chester Medical Center Pediatric Practice.

Senior Legal Hotline Now Available



After a year of planning, through a grant from the Administration on Aging and in conjunction with the Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities and Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, CLASI and Delaware Volunteer Legal Services have joined forces to start a Senior Legal Hotline.

Delaware senior citizens now have a single place to go for legal

assistance.

Whatever information number (211, Division of Aging ,etc.) a senior citizen calls initially, he or she will be forwarded to the hotline. The hotline staffer will obtain relevant information from the senior. The senior will then be referred to a volunteer attorney for help. The pro bono attorney will answer questions for the senior, and if that does not re-

solve the problem, the senior will be referred to CLASI or another lawyer for legal services. The hotline went into effect in October.

For more information, contact CLASI’s Deputy Director and Elder Law Program Director William Dunne at 302-575-0660, ext. 244.

Sponsors of CLASI's 65th Anniversary Celebrations

Frank Sinatra (\$10,000)

Laffey McHugh Foundation

Billie Holiday (\$5,000)

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Attendees at the Queen.



Club Phred playing (gratis) for the crowd at the Queen. They were great!

Congress Decides to Cut LSC Funding

On Tuesday, November 15, the House and Senate conferees on the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill agreed to fund LSC at \$348,000,000 for FY 2012. This is a 14.8 percent reduction in funding for basic field grants.

The LSC (Legal Services Corporation) is the largest single funding source for civil legal aid in the United States. The LSC was established in 1974.

CLASI was the Delaware recipient

of LSC funds until 1996, when, in response to new restrictions imposed by Congress on all activities (regardless of funding source) of any LSC recipient, CLASI decided to create the Legal Services Corporation of Delaware (LSCD) to become the LSC fund recipient in the First State. The last time that LSC was funded at the current level was 2007.

Needless to say, this is not a good time to cut funding for legal aid for people with low incomes.

As reported by the News Journal in September, the poverty rate is higher than it has been since 1993.

LSC funds help address the legal needs of the elderly, individuals with disabilities, domestic violence victims, veterans and others seeking government income and medical benefits to which they are entitled and families facing illegal evictions.

“[T]his is not a good time to cut funding for legal aid for people with low incomes. ... [T]he poverty rate is higher than it has been since 1993.”

CLASI Board of Directors Welcomes Judy Scarborough, C.P.A.

The CLASI Board of Directors recently approved the appointment of Judy Scarborough, C.P.A. to the Board. Judy is a director at Master, Sidlow & Associates, P.A. Judy holds a Master of Science degree in accounting from the University of Delaware and specializes in Performance Measurement, Business Valuations, Accounting & Auditing, and Not-For-Profit Issues.

She is a past president of the Delaware Society of CPAs and also belongs to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Wilmington Women in Business, CPA Associates International, Inc. (Not-For-Profit/Government Services and Human Resources Management committees), National Association of Certified Valua-

tion Analysts, the Institute of Business Appraisers, and the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. Judy joined Master, Sidlow & Associates after earning her B.S. in Accounting from the University of Delaware. Judy was recognized as an Outstanding Alumnus, receiving recognition in front of the entire crowd at a Delaware football game in the fall of 2002.



Equal Access to Justice

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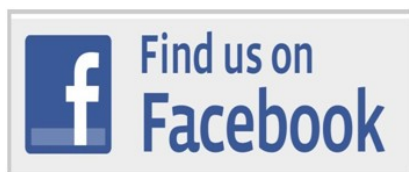


CLASI is a private, non-profit law firm dedicated to equal justice for all. We provide civil legal services to members of our community who have low incomes, disabilities or who are age 60 and over. Our services help our clients to become safe and self-sufficient.

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CommunityLegalAidSociety

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We're on the Web!
www.declasi.org

Working toward equal justice for all...

From a humble beginning in 1946, when 204 clients received legal services out of a small office in the basement of the courthouse in Wilmington, CLASI has grown to a statewide agency serving 3,090 Delawareans in 2010 through four programs: Poverty Law, Disabilities Law (DLP), Elder Law (ELP), and Fair Housing.

CLASI's Poverty Law Program provides services to help clients meet their basic needs, including safe, decent, affordable housing, maintaining a steady income, obtaining or retaining access to healthcare and other public benefits, and ob-

taining safety from abuse.

The Disabilities Law Program is appointed by the Governor as the Protection and Advocacy System for Delawareans with disabilities. It serves clients with both developmental and adult onset disabilities. The DLP helps children with special education, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid benefits. For adults, the DLP helps with abuse and neglect in institutional settings, housing discrimination, physical and program accessibility barriers, assistive technology, voting, and disability-related public benefits.

The Elder Law Program provides civil legal assistance to Delaware residents who are 60 and older. ELP staff help these clients with consumer problems, landlord/tenant issues and benefits problems. The staff also helps them obtain and modify advance health care directives and powers of attorney.

The Fair Housing Program tests housing providers in the areas of rentals, sales, mortgage, homeowners insurance, and accessibility. The program also investigates and files enforcement actions on behalf of victims of housing discrimination.