

Committee on Civil Justice UPDATE



SEPTEMBER 2008

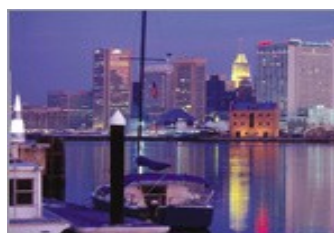
- **Chief Justice**
Leah Ward Sears
Ex-Officio
- **Anne W. Lewis**
Co-Chair
- **Teri P. McClure**
Co-Chair
- **Jill O. Radwin**
Executive Director
- **Tracy Powell**
Project
Coordinator
- www.gaccj.org

Court Solutions Conference: Report

The National Center for State Courts held its second bi-annual Court Solutions Conference September 8-10, in Baltimore, Maryland. A team of eight made up the Georgia delegation: Presiding Justice Carol Hunstein (Supreme Court of Georgia), Judge Wayne Purdom (State Court of DeKalb County), Chief Judge Brenda Weaver (Superior Court, Appalachian Judicial Circuit), Debra Nesbit (Administrative Office of the Courts), Mike Monahan (State Bar Pro Bono Project), Tracy Powell (Committee on Civil Justice), Wendy Glasbrenner (Georgia Legal Services Program), and Laureen Adams (Law Librarian, Dougherty County).

This three day conference aimed to address the demand for assistance in dealing with the growing issues in today's changing courts. The conference offered three educational tracks in separate areas of court management:

Delivering Court Interpreter Services; Survival by Service Re-Design; and, Self-Represented Litigation. Our Georgia team participated in the Self-Represented Litigation track, as



**Inner Harbor
Baltimore, MD**

this is a major issue being addressed by the Committee on Civil Justice, as well as many other groups across the state.

The Self-Represented Litigation track was organized around the presentation of fifteen solutions modules, on a broad range of topics, including establishing self-help centers, ethical guidelines for clerks and court staff, limited

scope representation, law library services, and more. Each module was presented to all SRL track participants, followed by further presentation and discussion in small breakout groups. These groups allowed for representatives from different states to discuss and exchange ideas, and it was agreed by many members of our team that this was one of the most valuable portions of the conference. Time was allotted each day for teams to engage in "state planning time"; this was especially beneficial to the Georgia team.

The conference concluded with brief reports from each state and a panel discussion entitled "Agenda for the Future", with Richard Zorza (Self-Represented Litigation Network), Chief Justice John Broderick (Supreme Court of New Hampshire), Justice Laurie Zelon (California Court of Appeals), and Robert Baldwin (Vice President, National Center for State Courts).

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Appalachian FLIC Update

Chief Judge Brenda Weaver and her staff have been hard at work since the Family Law Information Center opened in July. The center has already assisted many self-represented litigants with their legal needs. Richard Zorza

has been contracted to perform the evaluation of the center, which will begin upon his visit to the Appalachian Circuit in late September, and continue over the next year, to conclude at the end of 2009.

Mr. Zorza and representatives from the Circuit will speak to the Committee at the September 26th meeting.

Legal Needs Study: Update

It has now been over a year since we began work on the Legal Needs Study. This task has been extensive, and the end product will prove to be invaluable to improving services for the poor people of Georgia. Dr. Carol Pierannunzi and her staff at the Burruss Institute have been dedicated to this project and have also been patient with us as we have “learned as we go” throughout this process. As has been evident from presentations at the State Bar meeting and to the Judicial Council, from articles in the *Georgia Bar Journal* and *The Atlanta Lawyer*, and from inquiries from many other entities in Georgia’s legal community, there is great interest in this study and much anticipation for its release. We are just as eager to share it.

Following the program at the State Bar Annual Meeting in June, Len Horton, Executive Director of the Georgia Bar Foundation, published an article in the August issue of the *Georgia Bar Journal* entitled “Supreme Court’s Legal Needs Study: Changing Georgia’s Civil Justice System.” He commended the June 5 program, saying “...this new effort to expand access to justice to disadvantaged Georgians had an excellent new beginning with the reports of the legal needs study.” Aside from the preliminary results, Mr. Horton also discussed Chief Justice Sears’ evident dedication to both the cause of access to justice in general and the Committee in particular: “The personal presence of Chief Justice Sears signaled the importance the Court has placed on making

access to justice a reality for all Georgians...fundamental change is clearly on the minds of our Court as suggested in the [her] strong words...” Access the article at <http://gabar.org/public/pdf/GBJ/Aug08.pdf>.

The final product was originally anticipated to be ready in late August. It has now been pushed back, and a final report is expected by the end of October. Anne Lewis, Jill Radwin, and Tracy Powell met with Richard Zorza, a nationally recognized expert on civil legal aid issues, to discuss the development of a five-year strategic plan for the state, based on the results of the study. Mr. Zorza is scheduled to speak to the Committee at the September 26 meeting.

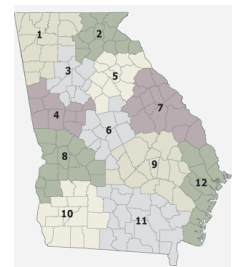
Limited Scope Representation

At the July conference of the Council of Superior Court Judges, Judge Wayne Purdom presented a model rule for the implementation of limited scope representation in Georgia. The rule was first heard by the Uniform Rules committee, chaired by Judge Mary Staley, and was given a passing vote. The rule moved on to the full committee, in which it was also

received favorably, and was approved. The rule will go before the committee for a second vote at the Council’s January conference.

Judge Purdom and Jill Radwin worked together to draft this rule, and there is no doubt that final approval of the rule will be a major stepping stone for access to justice in Georgia, and for the entire state. To view the

proposed rule, visit the Council of Superior Court Judges website, www.cscj.org, and refer to the article entitled *7/30/08 Proposed Amendments to the Uniform Rules of the Superior Court*.



Committee News

A quick look at what's been going on...

- **Rita Sheffey** was elected to serve on the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors, during the annual meeting on June 7. She will serve in the Atlanta Judicial Circuit, Post 17 seat.
- The **Atlanta Bar Association** will hold its first pro bono fair and luncheon, "Celebrating Service", on October 2
- **Anne Lewis** spoke at the August 26th meeting of the Judicial Council of Georgia, reporting on the Committee's history and work thus far.
- The Committee has been invited to participate in the **Atlanta Bar Association's** annual Pro Bono March Madness campaign. **Tracy Powell** attended a planning meeting with other participants on August 25th. The results of the Legal Needs Study will be presented as part of this month-long program.
- An article written by Len Horton about the Committee's presentation at the State Bar Annual Meeting was featured in the August 2008 issue of the **Georgia Bar Journal**.
- **Jill Radwin** thanks all of those who have sent words and prayers of support to her during this difficult time. Read about Jill's illness and treatment at her Caring Bridge Journal, at www.caringbridge.org/visit/jillradwin. Jill also wants to thank Anne for setting her up on the blog.



Chief Justice Sears at Judicial Council, August 26.

Access to Justice in the News

*Access to Justice Headlines information/source found at www.atjsupport.org

The **New Mexico** Supreme Court amended its court rules on appearances in order to allow for limited scope representation. www.nmbar.org/Attorneys/lawpubs/BB/bb2008/BB052608.pdf

The **Supreme Court of Nevada** adopted a rule to create the state's Emeritus Attorney Pro Bono Program.

The North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission released its initial report on access to the state's courts, complete with recommendations for improvement, in June. Access the report at www.ncbar.org/featuredItems/1/3047/index.aspx

The **Wisconsin State Bar Board of Governors** unanimously approved a petition to the state Supreme Court calling for the creation of a state Access to Justice Commission. Strong support for the Commission is found in the state's recent Legal Needs Study.

The **Tennessee Bar Association** launched a 4 All Campaign to build access to justice in the state. The Bar Association has produced an educational video for both the Bar and the public. See the video at www.tba.org/4ALL

[Article on civil right to counsel](#) in July/August 2008 **ABA Bar Leader**.

The **National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel** launched a new website in July. Access at www.civilrighttocounsel.org

The **Texas Student Loan Repayment Assistance Program** created by the state Texas Access to Justice Commission, has been fully funded by the Texas State Bar and Access to Justice Foundation. All 88 eligible applicants from 2008 will receive benefits, as opposed to only 45 of 76 applicants in 2007.

The **Maine Justice Action Group** is making progress on implementing the recommendations made in its [Statewide Access to Justice Planning Initiative \(2007\)](#).

Committee on Civil Justice Meeting

When: Friday, September 26, 2008

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Where: State Bar of Georgia Meeting Room #3

Agenda

I. Welcome

- A. Greeting from Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears
- B. Greetings from the Co-Chairs
- C. Introduction of Guests
- D. Approval of May 2008 Meeting Minutes

II. Legal Needs Study Update

- A. Status
- B. Next Steps
 - i. Roll-out/Marketing Plan
 - ii. Strategic Plan

III. Appalachian Circuit Family Law Information Center

- A. Status
- B. Brief Summary of Evaluation

IV. Presentation from Richard Zorza: Ideas for a Statewide Strategic Plan

LUNCH BREAK

V. Presentation from Supreme Court Committee on Justice for Children

VI. Limited Scope Representation Project

- A. Update from Judge Purdom
- B. Next Steps

VII. New Business Items

- A. Report from NCSC Court Solutions Conference
- B. Participation in Atlanta Bar Association Pro Bono March Madness
- C. Timeline for Next Six Months
 - i. Subcommittees to resume meeting to work with results of LNS

VIII. Future Meeting Date(s) and Closing

- A. Friday, December 12, 2008





Judge Glenda Hatchett

Celebrating SERVICE

October 2, 2008 - 12:00 Noon at
The Temple, 1589 Peachtree Street, N.E.

LUNCHEON



Hank Aaron

The Atlanta Bar Association will present its annual Pro Bono and Community Service Awards and the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation will present its annual Pro Bono Awards. We also will celebrate the many Atlanta Bar members and sections and their pro bono and community service work. Lunch will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m. and conclude by 1:45 p.m. Television judge, and former Fulton County Juvenile Court Judge, Glenda Hatchett will be our featured speaker. Baseball great Hank Aaron, who established the Chasing the Dream Foundation to help children realize their dreams, as he realized his, will be our special guest. This is a must-attend event! \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members.

Preceding the luncheon will be a pro bono fair (12:00 - 12:30 p.m.) with representatives of at least 22 organizations available to talk about their programs and their need for volunteers.

Pro Bono Fair Participants

- American Civil Liberties Union • Atlanta Legal Aid Society • Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation
- Catholic Social Services • Civil Pro Bono Family Law Project • Georgia Appleseed
- Georgia Asylum & Immigration Network • Georgia Innocence Project • Georgia Justice Project
- Georgia Law Center for the Homeless • Georgia Lawyers for the Arts • Georgia Legal Services
- GSU College of Law Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic • Health Law Partnership • Lambda Legal Defense Fund
- Latin American Association • Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta • Truancy Intervention Project
- Southern Center for Human Rights • Southern Poverty Law Center, Immigrant Justice Project
- State Bar of Georgia Pro Bono Project • Veterans Legal Clinic

Participating Community Service Organizations

Atlanta's Table, Atlanta Community Food Bank • Everybody Wins!

Help our partners by bringing Polaroid 600 film for the Atlanta Santa Project, and books appropriate for grades 1-6 for Everybody Wins!

Registration Form

Celebrating Service Luncheon and Pro Bono Fair
Thursday, October 2, 2008, 12:00 Noon
\$40 Atlanta Bar members, \$50 non-members

Please return by Tuesday, September 23, 2008, to Suite 400, 229 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA 30303 or fax to (404) 522-0269. For questions, contact Mariana Pannell at (678) 510-1652 or mpannell@atlantabar.org.

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

- Check
- Mastercard
- Visa
- American Express

Signature: _____

Credit Card #: _____

Expiration: _____

**Supreme Court of Georgia
Committee on Civil Justice**

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Committee Membership

Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears	P. Todd Carroll
Anne W. Lewis Co-Chair	Richard Deane
Teri P. McClure Co-Chair	Terence Dicks
Charles T. Lester	Judge William Duffey
Rita Sheffey	Reverend Jane Fahey
W. Terence Walsh	Senator Seth Harp
Judge Wayne Purdom	Thomas D. Hills
Timothy W. Floyd	Linda Klein

Created in May 2005, the Committee on Civil Justice works to strengthen Georgia's civil justice system by developing, coordinating and supporting policy initiatives to expand access to the courts for poor and vulnerable Georgians.

Vision Statement

The cornerstone of our free society is a civil legal system that is available to all to address legal issues that arise in their daily lives and a judiciary that advances the fair, efficient, and impartial resolution of disputes

Mission Statement

To develop for implementation in Georgia a statewide, broad-based, publicly-known and supported, coordinated system for the poor which:

1. Provides education, advice and tools to identify and address legal issues;
2. Ensures competent legal representation when appropriate; and
3. Promotes the efficient, effective and fair resolution of legal issues and disputes

Representative Edward Lindsey	Advisory Members
Judge Willie Lockette	Martin L. Ellin
John B. Long	Steven Gottlieb
Cubbedge Snow	Sharon N. Hill
Michael Tyler	Phyllis J. Holmen
Derek J. White	Michael L. Monahan

Looking Ahead, etc.

**September 26 — Committee on Civil Justice Meeting
Atlanta, GA**

**October 2 — Atlanta Bar Association Pro Bono Fair “Celebrating Service”
Atlanta, GA**

January 12, 2009 — Legislative Session Begins

January 20-23, 2009 — Council of Superior Court Judges Winter Conference

March 2009 — Atlanta Bar Association “Pro Bono March Madness”