

**Legal Aid Society**  
of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland

**HONORING THE PAST AND BUILDING A FUTURE**



**2013 ANNUAL REPORT**

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Adrie Mae Rhodes

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## NASHVILLE PRO BONO PROGRAM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thor Y. Urness, *Chair*

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James L. Weatherly, Jr.

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues:

We took a moment this year to look back at the last 44 years of work by Legal Aid Society – more than four decades of striving for equal justice for all. In our efforts to secure justice, we found we have been producing ripples of hope. Through the years, we have sent out thousands of ripples, and at times, enormous waves of hope for our clients. We built on the work of the attorneys who started their careers here and moved on – and those who continue to fight for fairness with Legal Aid Society. This past year, as in every year in our history, we protected the vulnerable, including children, seniors, veterans and military families, people with disabilities and victims of domestic violence. The goal remains the same: to achieve justice. With your loyal support for our work, we continue to send forth ripples and waves of hope.

The work of our staff, *pro bono* attorneys, donors and volunteers allowed us to help people in **7,709 cases** in 2013. Throughout this book, you will find stories of the people we helped, the staff that obtained justice, and the future we are building to deliver more justice.

With continued thanks,



**Gary D. Housepian**  
Executive Director, Legal Aid Society



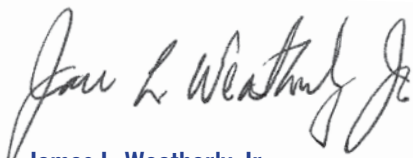
## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

Dear Friends:

Each year Legal Aid Society works to ensure fairness for all people in the civil justice system. Each year we fight for a level playing field by providing free legal assistance to those in need. This important work is made possible by many generous donations of time and money.

Over its 40-plus year history, Legal Aid Society has helped thousands of people with low incomes experience equal access to justice. Our employees and volunteers work tirelessly, and they are making a difference in people's lives even more so today than the day the organization began.

Thank you for your support along this journey. We will never stop the fight.



**James L. Weatherly, Jr.**  
President, Legal Aid Society Board of Directors



*“Each time a man stands up for an ideal,  
or acts to improve the lot of others,  
or strikes out against injustice,  
he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope...”*  
- Robert F. Kennedy

Our history is a part of us, and Legal Aid Society’s history is the story of people – community leaders, leading attorneys and everyday folk – who refused to accept a society where access to justice is available only to those who can afford it.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

Today, you can find these people throughout Middle Tennessee, those who helped Legal Aid Society develop over the last 44 years. Some are philanthropists who continue to work for justice through many avenues, including our organization. Some began their careers here and then put their talents and passion to work elsewhere in the community. Others have invested decades of their legal careers as Legal Aid Society attorneys, on the front lines of our continual push for equal justice. Many others have allowed us to expand our reach by volunteering their services as *pro bono* lawyers.

Thanks to the work of hundreds across the decades and to the continuing commitment today of many, Legal Aid Society is still making history.

**EDUCATION.** Through walk-in clinics, self-help brochures and the People’s Law School, Legal Aid Society gives people access to the knowledge they need to level the playing field. Clinics give clients a chance to bring their specific problem to an attorney, while our downloadable self-help brochures cover important topics including Medicaid, Social Security, landlord/tenant issues, long-term care options, consumer bankruptcy, immigration and power of attorney/conservatorship. The People’s Law School, an initiative expanded in Nashville in 2013, takes lawyers into classrooms to teach participants the basics of legal problems.

**REPRESENTATION.** Legal Aid Society provides direct legal representation in civil cases to people who cannot afford an attorney. This direct help from 30 staff attorneys goes to all kinds of people with low incomes – from children to the elderly, the homeless to veterans, domestic violence victims to people with disabilities, and more.

**PRO BONO WORK.** Legal Aid Society provides many opportunities for attorneys to help clients through *pro bono* cases. The Nashville Pro Bono Program, serving Davidson and Williamson counties, is one of the best examples in the country of how partnerships with law firms can be developed to provide free legal assistance to the most vulnerable in our communities.

# CELEBRATING THE WORK OF 2013

We have continued our commitment to helping people who have nowhere else to turn. In 2013, our efforts led to \$15,860,600 in free legal advice and representation.

A Glance at Our Work in 2013:

**\$15,860,600** market value of advice and representation from staff

**18,270** requests for assistance

**7,709** cases handled for low-income people

**500** domestic violence cases closed

More than **800** families obtained affordable housing or received help needed to keep their homes

At least **300** people received help preparing end-of-life documents

At least **225** people received assistance with employment issues

**\$247,805** recovered from the IRS

**30,279** legal self-help brochures distributed and **221,637** downloaded from our website

**97** *pro bono* clinics held throughout our service area

Over **1,800** clients assisted at *pro bono* clinics

**150** community education presentations given on civil legal issues

**6,362** people attended community education presentations

**\$3,311,291** obtained in federal income tax benefits for low-income families through the Tennessee Taxpayer Project

## Types of Legal Issues Addressed in 2013

- **28%** Family
- **11%** Consumer
- **14%** Income maintenance
- **16%** Housing
- **12%** Miscellaneous (education, juvenile, legal assistance to nonprofits, licenses, municipal needs, other miscellaneous)
- **5%** Employment
- **7%** Health
- **7%** Wills/estates, advance directives/powers of attorney



*“It is not in the stars to hold our destiny  
but in ourselves.”*

*- William Shakespeare*

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE TODAY: 2013 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES



*Nashville attorney Katie Evans Moss teaches a class for People's Law School.*



*Kristen Keely-Dinger and Jennifer Oldham present a check on behalf of Baptist Healing Trust to Legal Aid Society Executive Director Gary Housepian.*



*PICA volunteers helped Legal Aid Society with a community education project.*

Legal Aid Society and the Nashville Community Education Commission offered 19 free legal classes to 169 attendees through the **People's Law School** program.

**Baptist Healing Trust** provided \$55,000 to continue supporting the Middle Tennessee Medical-Legal Partnership, which includes the United Neighborhood Health Services clinic and Vanderbilt University's Shade Tree Clinic, which is run by medical and law students.

Legal Aid Society improved on its partnership with **Operation Stand Down Nashville** by becoming a subgrantee for legal work for 75 veterans and their families. We continue to host a monthly walk-in clinic at OSDN for veterans.

The Tullahoma office of Legal Aid Society continued providing services in four judicial districts in divorce cases through a \$12,000 grant from the **Administrative Office of the Courts**.

Legal Aid Society received a \$1,000 grant from the **Allegra Print & Imaging of Nashville FootPRINT® Fund** to support print communications services.

The **Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County** granted Legal Aid Society \$178,600 to provide legal assistance to victims of domestic violence.

The Tennessee Taxpayer Project of Legal Aid Society received \$100,000 from the **Internal Revenue Service**.

The **Joe C. Davis Foundation** provided \$2,500 in funding for the Middle Tennessee Medical-Legal Partnership.

**PICA** donated \$300 to Legal Aid Society and provided a group of volunteers for a community education project.

**United Ways** serving Anderson, Bedford, Cannon, Davidson, Franklin, Houston, Humphreys, Lincoln, Macon, Maury, Montgomery, Rutherford, Stewart, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson counties granted Legal Aid Society almost \$170,000 for legal assistance to people in those communities.

At the fourth annual Legal Aid Society **Bob Sullivan Memorial Breakfast**, Kevin Doherty, partner at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP, received the second Bob Sullivan Service Award which honors those in the entertainment realm who have provided significant assistance to Legal Aid Society.

*“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived.  
It is what difference we have made to the lives of others  
that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”*  
—Nelson Mandela

NALS... Association of Legal Professionals, Nashville Chapter raised \$3,350 for Legal Aid Society during its first annual NALS After Hours Silent Auction.

Legal Aid Society joined five other Nashville-based legal organizations to provide a **Day of Service** for the Nashville community with more than 50 lawyers on hand throughout the city giving free legal advice on one day.

Legal Aid Society joined the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) and the mayor's New Americans Advisory Council to sponsor a **Become a Citizen Now** workshop that assisted over 80 immigrants.



Tina Boone, PLS; Donice Alford, PP, PLS; NALS President Tiffany Burford Taylor; Sharon Smith; and Theresa Marchese, PLS present a check to Gary Housepian.

## EMPLOYEE STORY

### Sharmila Murthy *Reaching Out to Our Community*



Sharmila Murthy championed immigration issues during her years at Legal Aid Society. As a Skadden Fellow, she represented immigrants, refugees and other individuals from poor and marginalized communities, primarily in housing and consumer cases. She also created the Refugee and Immigrant Partnership Project for Legal Empowerment and served in a leadership role at the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC). Sharmila has gone on to become an assistant professor at Suffolk University Law School and a Visiting Scholar at Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Legal Aid Society has continued working with TIRRC to help immigrants find a path to legal citizenship. In 2013, Legal Aid Society and Nashville Pro Bono Program lawyers staffed two “Become a Citizen Now” events with TIRRC. The events helped more than 80 immigrants file naturalization petitions.



HCA employees helped Legal Aid Society during the annual HCA Community Day of Caring.



Bob Sullivan Service Award winner Kevin Doherty and Gary Housepian at the Bob Sullivan Memorial Breakfast.

# RECOGNIZING A BRIGHT FUTURE: 2013 STAFF AND BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

**Claire Abely** joined the Nashville office as a staff attorney in the consumer and housing section.

2013 Community Campaign Chair and Community Advisory Council member **Vic Alexander** was named one of the Top 10 Power Leaders in Accounting by the *Nashville Business Journal*. He is a third time winner.

Nashville Pro Bono Program (NPBP) board member **Martha Boyd** was included in the 2014 edition of Best Lawyers in America.

Murfreesboro Managing Attorney **Andrae Crismon** graduated from Leadership Middle Tennessee. He was also named a finalist for the Nashville Emerging Leader Awards and to the Matthew Walker Governing Board for the Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center.

**Jean Crowe** received the Ashley T. Wiltshire Public Service Attorney of the Year award from the Tennessee Bar Association.

2013 Large Firm Co-Chair **Dan Elrod** was named 2013 Mid-South Super Lawyer by Super Lawyers Magazine for health care.

**Derria Ford** joined Legal Aid Society (LAS) as grant administrator.

LAS board member **Charles Grant** took office as president of the Nashville Bar Association, becoming the first African American president in the association's 182-year history. Charles also received the A.A. Birch Outstanding Public Service Award from the Napier-Looby Bar Foundation.

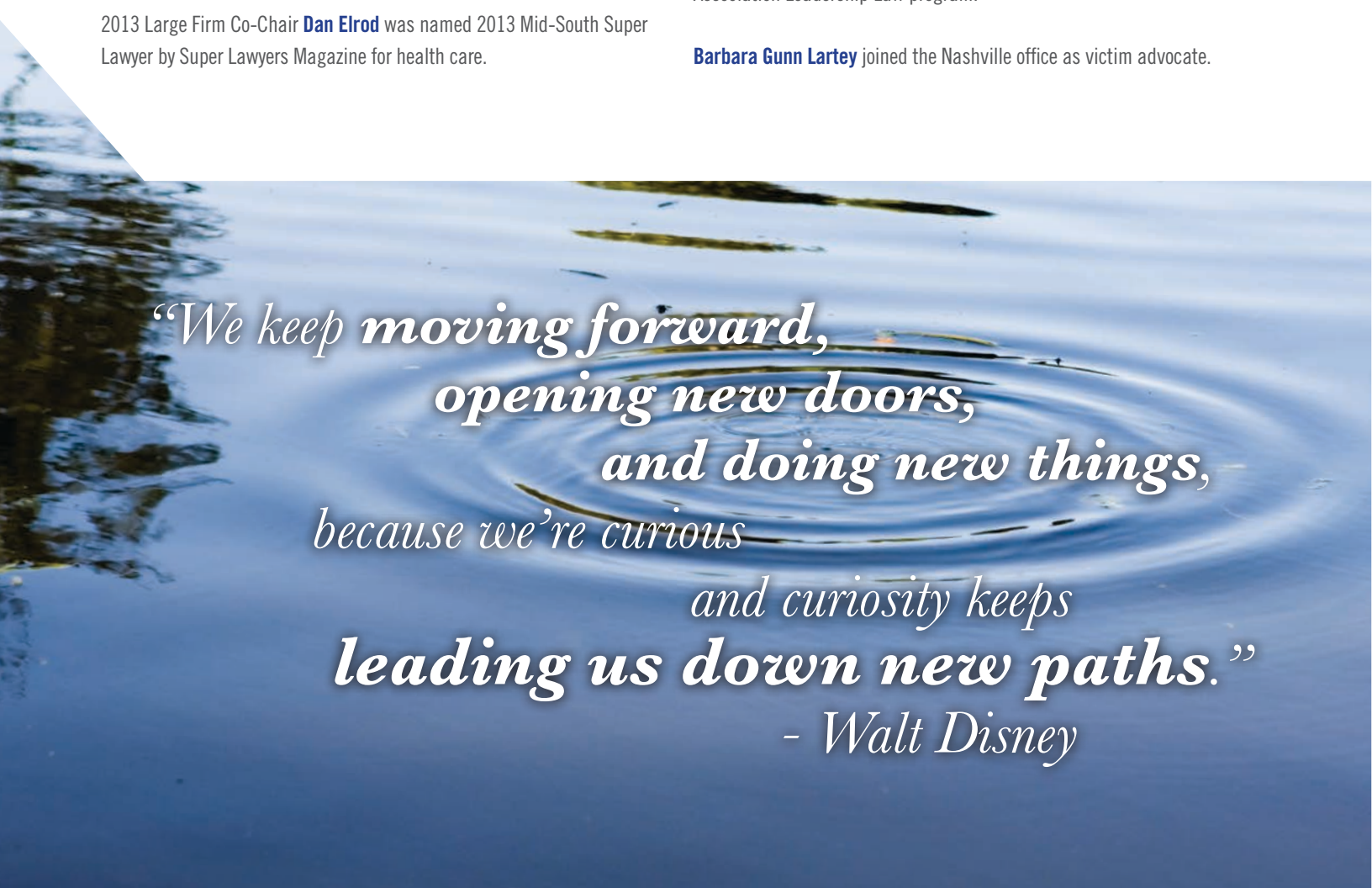
**Iska Hoole** joined LAS as managing attorney of the Tullahoma office. Iska had previously worked in our Murfreesboro office from 1998-2003.

**Cherrelle Hopper**, Gallatin staff attorney, was named to the governing board for VSA Tennessee.

**Gary Housepian**, executive director of LAS, was chosen to participate in Baptist Healing Trust's Executive Peer Circle Program.

LAS board member **Caroline Knight** graduated from the Tennessee Bar Association Leadership Law program.

**Barbara Gunn Lartey** joined the Nashville office as victim advocate.



*“We keep moving forward,  
opening new doors,  
and doing new things,  
because we’re curious  
and curiosity keeps  
leading us down new paths.”  
- Walt Disney*



Murfreesboro attorney **Aimee Luna** was elected District 7 representative for the Tennessee Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division.

LAS board member **Bob Martineau** received a 2013 Good Guy Award from the Women's Political Collaborative of Tennessee.

**Whitney McFalls**, victim advocate, was hired by the city of Nashville as the city's first domestic violence coordinator.

NPBP board member **Mark Manner** was named to the *Nashville Business Journal's* Best of the Bar. Mark was also honored by Chambers USA.

Clarksville Staff Attorney **Rachel Moses** received the American Bar Association (ABA) Young Lawyers Division (YLD) National Outstanding Young Lawyer Award. Rachel also was elected vice president of the Tennessee Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division and will serve as president-elect in 2014 and president in 2015. She also served as president of the Putnam County Bar Association during 2013.

**Janet Mynatt** was promoted to managing attorney of the Oak Ridge office.

Tullahoma Staff Attorney **Rae Anne Seay** was named vice president of the Tennessee Joint Task Force on Children's Justice and Child Sexual Abuse.

**Audrey Seamon** joined the Nashville office as a staff attorney in the family law section.

**Nicole Sibilski** joined LAS as grant writer.

Nashville Staff Attorney **David Tarpley** was a finalist for the 2013 Best of Bar Award from the *Nashville Business Journal*.

**Joshua Thomas** joined the Columbia office as staff attorney.

NPBP Board Chair and 2013 Campaign Chair **Thor Urness** was named Litigation Star in the 2014 edition of the Benchmark Litigation Guide to America's Leading Litigation Firms and Attorneys.

## EMPLOYEE STORY

### R.B.J. Campbelle, Jr. *Promoting Dignity and Mentoring*



In 1956, R.B.J. Campbelle, Jr. was the first African American graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Law, having entered the program a year before the landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1960, as part of a team of 13 attorneys, R.B.J. represented 81 Nashville student civil rights activists who had been peacefully conducting a sit-in when they were taunted, attacked and beaten. On Feb. 3, 1969, R.B.J. continued his leadership by helping open the first office of Legal Services of Nashville, the predecessor to Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland. He supervised and mentored current Legal Aid Society Loewenstein Chair attorney David Tarpley who said: "He was a kind and good natured boss, and an astute lawyer. He taught others a lot about the human side of law practice, especially in dealing with clients and other lawyers."

The University of Tennessee College of Law honored R.B.J. for his exemplary service to equality with the creation of R.B.J. Campbelle, Jr. Award, which annually recognizes an alumnus who personifies the quest for equality and justice. Additionally, Middle Tennessee State University remembers R.B.J.'s contribution to law with an annual scholarship.

Since its inception, Legal Aid Society has advocated justice for all, treated clients with dignity and promoted significant advocacy for our clients' most pressing legal needs. We make this a priority every day.

# ENCOURAGING GROWTH: THE 2013 CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL JUSTICE

We exceeded our goal of \$760,000 for the 2013 Campaign for Equal Justice, in large part due to the generosity and hard work of the volunteers and donors in our 48-county service area. The 2013 campaign raised \$766,151.

We are extremely grateful for the time and dedication given by the 2013 campaign committee and their efforts in raising money for Legal Aid Society.



*The Leadership Cabinet*

## **2013 Campaign Chair**

Thor Y. Urness, *Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings*

## **Community Chair**

Vic Alexander, *KraftCPAs*

## **Large Firm Co-Chairs**

Dan H. Elrod, *Butler Snow*, and B. Riney Green, *Bass, Berry & Sims*

## **Small Firm Co-Chairs**

Edgar M. Rothschild, *Rothschild & Ausbrooks*, and  
Emily A. Shouse, *Wadley & Patterson*

## **Government Chair**

Henry A. Martin, *Federal Public Defender*

## **Judges Co-Chairs**

Chancellor Carol L. McCoy, *20th Judicial District Part II*, and  
Judge Daniel B. Eisenstein, *Davidson County General Sessions Court Div. II*

## **Corporate Chair**

Rachel A. Seifert, *Community Health Systems*

## **Williamson County Chair**

Tara L. Swafford, *The Swafford Law Firm*

## **Clarksville Chair**

Mark A. Rassas, *Rassas, North & Associates*

## **Columbia Chair**

Patrick M. Carter, *Hardin, Parkes, Kelley, Carter & Bryant*

## **Cookeville Chair**

William F. Roberson, Jr.

## **Gallatin Chair**

Walter H. Stubbs

## **Murfreesboro Chair**

Kirk D. Catron, *McCarter, Catron & East*

**Oak Ridge Chair:** George H. Buxton III, *Buxton Law Firm*

## **Tullahoma Co-Chairs**

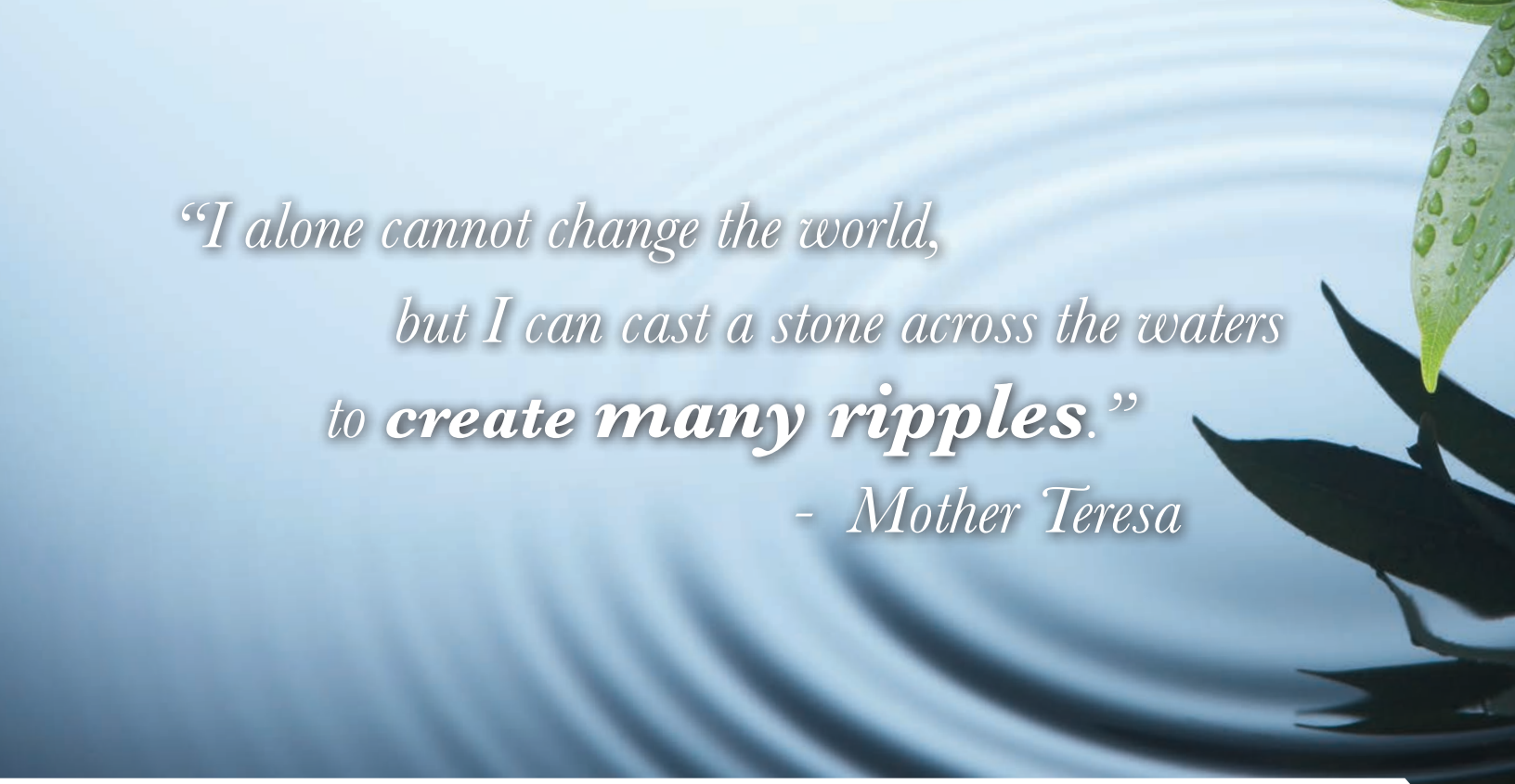
Ralph McBride, Jr. - *Bedford County*

Robert A. Croy - *Coffee County*

J. Mark Stewart, *Stewart & Stewart - Franklin and Grundy counties*

Randall E. Self - *Lincoln County*

John P. Partin, Galligan & Newman - *Warren County*



*“I alone cannot change the world,  
but I can cast a stone across the waters  
to create many ripples.”  
- Mother Teresa*

## **BUILDING ON A STRONG FOUNDATION: VOLUNTEER WORK**

### **NASHVILLE**

*In 2013, the Nashville Pro Bono Program had a record breaking 931 volunteer attorneys handle 2,883 cases. The program added 93 new attorneys.*

*The Nashville office coordinated 72 clinics attended by 1,721 people.*

*In its final year as the Nashville Pro Bono Program, Nashville attorneys worked 6,023.42 pro bono hours, equating to roughly \$1,054,098.50 in free legal help. In 2014 and moving forward, Legal Aid Society's pro bono work will be provided through the Volunteer Lawyers Program – a new regional program designed to connect volunteer attorneys with clients throughout our 48-county service area.*

We are always looking for ways to increase the amount of service we can provide and people we can reach. As in many years before, volunteer support from our offices and the Nashville Pro Bono Program made that possible in 2013.

Thanks to those who have taken the time to help support Tennesseans in need. You help us provide justice to more people each year.

In 2013, a total of 963 *pro bono* attorneys (representing a 3% increase) donated 6,451.63 hours of service, handled 2,935 cases and provided free legal help worth \$1,617,212 throughout our 48-county service area.

# LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE AND THE CUMBERLANDS

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

DECEMBER 31, 2013 and 2012

	2013	2012
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 297,077	\$ 841,054
Investments	4,608,305	3,648,135
Accounts Receivable	3,760	18,734
Federal, State and Local Grants Receivable	106,118	112,504
Contributions Receivable	553,354	495,692
Prepaid Expenses	25,741	80,504
Property and Equipment, Net	296,313	253,459
Client Escrow Funds	26,169	29,723
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 5,916,837</b>	<b>\$ 5,479,805</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$ 43,695	\$ 30,656
Accrued Expenses and Other	428,801	372,837
Client Escrow Deposits	26,169	29,723
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>498,665</b>	<b>433,216</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted:		
Undesignated	2,750,498	2,709,032
Designated for 2014 Operations	276,193	-
Designated for Property and Equipment	296,313	253,459
Total Unrestricted	3,323,004	2,962,491
Temporarily Restricted	2,095,168	2,084,098
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>5,418,172</b>	<b>5,046,589</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITY AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 5,916,837</b>	<b>\$ 5,479,805</b>

The financial statements of Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands for the years ended December 31, 2013 and December 31, 2012 were audited by KraftCPAs, PPC. The audit was completed on April 22, 2014 and in the opinion of the auditors, these financial statements represent fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands. Copies of the complete sets of financial statements, including all footnotes, may be obtained from the Nashville office of Legal Aid Society.

# VOLUNTEERS

The following people donated their time (often in more than one service area) to assist with administrative duties to further the mission of Legal Aid Society. We thank them for their dedication and assistance. Please accept our apologies for any omissions.

## CLARKVILLE

Eva Baker  
Casey Bearden  
Josie Beets  
Melissa Kohlman

## COLUMBIA

Henry Ambrose

## COOKEVILLE

James Bush  
Matt Curtis  
Richard Graves  
Madison Rinio  
Billy Segers

## GALLATIN

Jonathan Adams  
Debbie Ament de Nunez  
Liane Fleshman  
Rachel Foster

Susan Creavin  
Kathryn Haywood Rose  
Shania Dannenmueller  
Perris  
Amanda Martin  
Mike Sandler  
Debriena Settles  
Jake Stein  
Matthew Taylor  
Katie Underwood  
Gretchen Wilson

## NASHVILLE PRO BONO PROGRAM

Sandra Abernathy  
Lara Assaf  
Shetima Baugh  
Seanna Brandmeir  
Alexandra Briesemeister  
Katori Brown  
David Bujdos

John Davidson  
Danielle Drago  
Christopher Draughn  
Brittany Edmondson  
Erin Edgell  
Eljay Elia  
John Elrod  
Tracey Epperson  
Angie Fernandez  
Mary Fleming  
Joy Gallagher  
Thomas Gardner  
Matthew Gaske  
Amanda Gentry  
Alethia Gilmenakis  
Lori Gonzalez  
Dilia Gonzalez-Mann  
Robyn Grant  
William Spencer Green  
Davis Griffin  
Mary Julia Hannon

Jennifer Mosey  
Theeda Murphy  
Cynthia Munoz  
Jennifer Mustain  
Jason Pachter  
Maxwell Palmer  
Natasha Parker  
Teresa Parker  
Andrea Patton  
Melissa Pazdro  
Paul Pope  
Brianna Powell  
Kristie Putman  
Geoff Pyle  
Megan Pyle  
Jeanette Ramer  
Kimberlee Robinson  
Jean Rodby  
Kim Rowland  
Celia Sanchez  
Maria Sanchez

## NASHVILLE PHONATHON

Justin Adams  
George Bishop  
Michael Byrnes  
Stuart Campbell  
Vivek Chandra  
Bethany Clark  
Chase Cole  
Deb Cooper  
Alicia Cottrell  
Caitlyn Davie  
Jim DeLanis  
Judy Dobbins  
Mike Dreyfuss  
Brian Ewald  
Kerry Ewald  
Pete Ezell  
Tom Forrester  
Bob Goodrich  
Riney Green

Bill O'Bryan  
Mike Peek  
Sarah Richter Perky  
Justin Pitt  
Erica Reed  
Edgar Rothschild  
Chris Schmidt  
Emily Shouse  
Matt Sweeney  
Keith Thompson  
Byron Trauger  
Thor Urness  
Bill Walton  
Bill West  
Stephen Young  
Frank Ziegler

## OAK RIDGE

Karen Anderson  
Ting Cheng  
Eugene J. Choi

*“The help I received from Legal Aid was wonderful. There aren’t words to describe this organization – only praise and admiration: excellent!! Janet (Mynatt, Managing Attorney) is so professional and knowledgeable, courteous and compassionate. JANET/LEGAL AID SAVED MY HOME; SAVED MY LIFE. I’ll always be grateful for the help I received from Legal Aid. I’ll never forget you.”*

– Oak Ridge client

Maria Geneveva  
Luna Rosales  
Kim Rowland  
Amy Weaver  
Christina Zeidan

## MURFREESBORO

Gwen Boyd  
Caleb Brooks  
Trent Craig  
Brenda Crismon  
l’Ashea Dihigo  
Charles Ferguson  
Keith Minor

## NASHVILLE

Diana Bradford  
Melissa Burnett

Kristina Cadovec  
Sheila Callaway  
Carlos Chavez-Brin  
Chantel Christian  
Jasmine Church  
John Church  
Mary Church  
Ryan Claxton  
Dominique Coats  
Kris Collier  
Ashley Connell  
Adrienne Coronado  
Michael Cottone  
Trent Craig  
Chris Cronk  
Lawrence Crane-  
Moscowitz  
Donna Crim

Marti Hayden  
Kerry Henson  
Nicole James  
William Jones  
Bethany Kesler  
Natey Kinzounza  
Shana Light  
Rebecca Loegering  
Kaitlin Lolie  
Kelsey Magnuson  
Lindsey Martin  
Rob Martin  
Redmond McGrath  
Dana Meadows  
Denise Mitchell  
Deondra Moore  
Lawrence Moore  
Morgan Morrison

Ann Sharfner  
Andrea Sinclair  
Sandra Sinclair  
Dana Smith  
Alexandra Spartz  
Jacob Stafford  
Jessica Stafford  
Jennifer Stevenson  
Callie Still  
Jane Stumpf  
Elizabeth Swenson  
Aimee Tenaglia  
Melinda Torres  
Kurt Vincent  
Zellena Weakley  
Vakeyda White  
Shekenah Whitney

Carol Hendry  
Martha Henley  
Kevin Howard  
Ben Huddleston  
Stacie Jacobs  
Nicole James  
Lynda Jones  
Hart Knight  
Alex Koval  
Kim Looney  
Iva Mackie  
Nancy MacLean  
Ashley Markham  
Anne Martin  
John McLemore  
Steve Meyer  
Lisa Miller  
Sharon Muller

Joy Henderson  
David Hughes  
Trina Hughes  
Christina Magrans  
Vincent Nord  
Melissa Owens

## TULLAHOMA

Connie Beal  
Ann Crane  
Katherine Knies  
Ruth McNatt

# PRO BONO ATTORNEY HONOR ROLL

The following people have donated their time and legal talents (often in more than one service area) to further the mission of Legal Aid Society. We thank them for their dedication and assistance. Please accept our apologies for any omissions.

Tara Aaron	Gary Beasley	James Bristol	Susan Castle	Gina Crawley	Michael Dreyfuss
Michael Abelow	Caroline Beauchamp	Davidson Broemel	Pretial Caston	Lymari Cromwell	Paul Drozdowski
Joanie Abernathy	L. Russell Belk, Jr.	Jennifer Brooks	Andrew Cate	Diane Crosier	Alexandra Dugan
Diane Adams	Mark Bell	Brian Browder	Charles Caudill	Alexandra Cross	Kelly Duggan
Justin Adams	William Benjamin, Jr.	Amanda Brown	Vivekanand Chandra	Robert Croy	Charles Duke
Gareth Aden	Erin Bennett	Cory Brown	David Changas	Joseph P. Crump, Jr.	Anthony Duncan
Joshua Adkins	Daniel Berexa	Jamie Brown	Cynthia Chappell	Shannon Crutcher	Christina Duncan
Antonio Aguilar	Angela Bergman	Wesley Bryant	Cynthia Cheatham	Brian Cummings	Jad Duncan
Jessie Ray Akers	Lori Bervoets	Alexander Buchanan	J. Taylor Chenery	Matthew Curley	Bonnie Dunlop
Marshall Albritton	Cort Bethmann	Bruce Buchanan	Jeremy Cherry	Lauren Curry	Christopher Dunn
Sawnie Aldredge	Tyson Bickley	Charles Buckholts	Nathaniel Cherry	James Curtis	Joel Eckert
Britton Allan	Robert Bigelow	Leigh Buie	Mitchell Chessman	Fred Dance	Meredith Edwards
Jeffrey Allen	Lisa Binder	Joshua Burgener	Martha Child	Clint Daniel	Steven Eisen
Connie Allison	Gary Blackburn	Derek Burks	Demeka Church	Srijita Dasgupta	Stephen Elliott
Melanie Anderson	J. Matthew Blackburn	Lewis G. Burnett, Jr.	Glen Civitts	Paul Davidson	Shawna Elrod
Robert A. Anderson	Lillian Blackshear	John Burns	Terry Clayton	Phillip Davidson	David Esquivel
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## CASE STUDY • BETTER HEALTH THROUGH LEGAL HELP

Faris Al-Jashami is an Iraqi immigrant who showed signs of a major depressive disorder with psychotic features and components of possible post-traumatic stress disorder. He was at Shade Tree Clinic with chest pains when Legal Aid Society got involved through its Middle Tennessee Medical-Legal Partnership.



Al-Jashami was separated from his wife, Claudia Cruz, and their son because Cruz had entered the U.S. without documentation or inspection and had accrued more than one year of unlawful presence, which bars her from returning to the U.S. for 10 years. Cruz had left for Mexico several months prior to getting her green card and could not return because of the 10-year restriction on re-entry.

A hardship waiver was available, but when the family completed the form and personal statement without an attorney it was denied. Legal Aid Society helped Al-Jashami write another personal statement that specifically described how badly he would fare without his family and how he would do if he moved to Mexico. Legal Aid Society also had a Shade Tree Clinic employee write a letter outlining Al-Jashami's medical conditions and how detrimental to his health his relocation would be.

Legal Aid Society submitted this additional evidence, and Cruz's application was approved the next month. She and her son returned home just two months later.

## CASE STUDY • SAFETY AND STABILITY

“Sharonda” lived with her husband and children. However, her husband sexually assaulted her child from a previous marriage, so Sharaonda contacted law enforcement. Unfortunately, Sharonda was also terminated from her job during this time. In the midst of this time of great challenges, she reached out to Legal Aid Society for help.

First, Legal Aid Society pointed Sharonda and her daughter to The Guidance Center for counseling services.

The staff successfully assisted her in an unemployment case to receive the benefits she needed to get back on her feet.

Finally, Legal Aid Society helped Sharonda get an Order of Protection against her husband and then assisted her in getting a divorce.

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### Margaret L. Behm

#### *Trailblazing Reforms for Justice*



Margaret L. Behm worked for consumer law and family law reform during her three and a half years at Legal Aid Society in the late '70s. While working in the Consumer Law Section, she conducted an intensive case study and drafted the legislation for the foundational Small Insurance Policy Law of 1979, which protected low-income individuals from costly insurance abuses. The law not only reformed the local practices of Life and Casualty Insurance Company of Tennessee, it also garnered national attention in a 60 Minutes exposé that drove changes in federal regulations. Additionally, after witnessing the negative results of the state's enforcement of child support, Margaret researched and drafted Tennessee's first wage assignment legislation that accommodated individuals with low income.

Margaret was recognized for her career-long commitment to justice by being named the first chair of the Tennessee Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission. She also successfully campaigned for six years as the co-chair of the Nashville Local Organizing Committee to bring the 2014 Women's NCAA Final Four and Women's Basketball Coaches Association National Convention to Nashville. Margaret will be the 2015 Campaign for Equal Justice chair.

Today, Legal Aid Society continues to be an important voice and participant in efforts to increase legal services. Legal Aid Society also contributes to reforms through the Access to Justice Commission, Bar Committees and the Tennessee Supreme Court's Court Improvement Committee.

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# EMPLOYEE STORY

## Jean Crowe *Advocating for Safety and Stability*

Jean Crowe served in the Nashville office of Legal Aid Society for 28 years, leading the Family Law Section for 15 of those years. Her profound impact on the family law community across the state has left a legacy that our current family law attorneys are honored to follow. Jean created a program centered on holistic advocacy and helping clients become self-sufficient, with hundreds of victims finding their independence from abuse. She was honored for her commitment with a proclamation from Mayor Karl Dean in October as well as receiving the Ashley T. Wiltshire Public Service Attorney of the Year award from the Tennessee Bar Association.



Jean Crowe and Mayor Karl Dean

Today, Legal Aid Society continues to advocate for domestic violence victims by bringing safety and stability to families.

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# CASE STUDY • OVERCOMING ABUSE FOR A NEW LIFE

“Judy” is a 68-year-old woman who was a victim of verbal and physical abuse that escalated as her long-term marriage faced mounting financial problems. Her husband kept her “in the dark” about their finances and told her it was not of her concern. She did not know that he failed to file income tax returns and he had received IRA distributions of over \$200,000 in 2000. She made efforts to make monthly payments of \$500 a year until she simply could not survive on her own. The debt was in excess of \$137,000.

**She found relief and hope for a new life through Legal Aid Society and our Low Income Taxpayer Project.**

**By detailing the circumstances and the history of abuse, the Internal Revenue Service granted “innocent spouse relief” to Judy for over \$137,000 so she would not have to pay any more towards that debt.**

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*“The help I received at Legal Aid was amazing. I am so happy that there is an organization available like this one. Tabitha (Tackett, Victim Advocate) was there to support me every step of the way, and I am so appreciative of her. Thank you all for your help. I don’t know what I would have done if I didn’t seek help from you guys. THANKS TABITHA FOR ALL YOUR HELP. YOU ARE AN ANGEL!”*

– Clarksville client

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### Judge Walter C. Kurtz *Standing Up for Fairness*



Walter Kurtz started at Legal Aid Society as a legal clerk in 1970 during his second year of law school at Vanderbilt University. Following graduation, he joined Legal Aid Society as an attorney, and within 10 months, he was named executive director and served in the position until his departure in 1976.

At a time when Legal Aid Society faced some heavy resistance from some lawyers and influential adverse parties, Walter successfully litigated high-profile class action lawsuits. It also marked the beginning of strong support from local bar leaders like Joe Cummings and Brad Reed. The lawsuits reformed state welfare practices to help at-risk members of the community, discontinued the unfair imprisonment of indigent offenders and saved countless people with intellectual disabilities from inhumane treatment at Clover Bottom Development Center. Additionally, his work in class action lawsuits resulted in the building of a new Nashville prison with better conditions for prisoners.

Following his work at Legal Aid Society, Walter served as a Davidson County public defender and as a judge for more than 25 years. During that time, he drew on his experiences at Legal Aid Society to ensure that his participation in the legal system created a positive impact and made high quality legal assistance to the vulnerable a reality.

Today, Legal Aid Society continues to advocate for fairness and justice for all, enjoys the strong support and partnership with the legal community, and promotes the Volunteer Lawyers Program, which provides *pro bono* legal assistance to low-income members of the community.

## CASE STUDY • PROVIDING SHELTER IN THE STORM

Mr. Williams is a 53-year-old Army veteran who was working as an auto mechanic at an established garage. His wife receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits due to injuries from two motor vehicle accidents, and the couple rented a home. Mr. Williams experienced heart problems that made him unable to work. He was referred to Legal Aid Society for assistance when he was six months behind in rent and had received multiple eviction notices from the landlord. They struggled to survive with the storms of misfortune that were engulfing their lives.

With the efforts to obtain additional assistance and vouchers to help with housing payments, Legal Aid Society negotiated an agreement with the landlord not to pursue an eviction action, so the Williams would have time to secure housing assistance.

The landlord also agreed to accept \$3,000 as payment in full for the \$5,000 in rent that was past due at the time. Mr. and Mrs. Williams were able to remain in their home.

When the Williams came to the Legal Aid Society office to hear about the negotiated agreements that made them eligible for rent assistance, they said to our attorney: “We had no idea how to handle this situation. We have never in our lives had this kind of problem and thought we would be homeless. We didn’t know how we would survive.”

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## CASE STUDY • SECURING BENEFITS AND RESTORING HOPE

“Betty” was a 57-year-old client who lost her job as a bartender at a club after she had been threatened by a member with physical harm on more than one occasion. After the last incident she told the manager that she would be forced to quit her job out of fear for her safety if the member was not barred from the club. Betty had wanted to call the police after she was threatened but was instructed not to by her manager. The previous bartender had been fired after she was assaulted at the lodge and called the police. The member was not barred. Betty was told that the member would be allowed access to the bar and that she was to serve him. Betty feared for her physical safety so felt forced to leave her job and her only means of support.

While waiting for a decision and not knowing if she would receive the unemployment benefits she deserved, Betty sent a card to the Legal Aid Society office saying: “Thank you so much for believing in me. . . I was so lost and discouraged.” The Appeals Tribunal found that Betty had good cause to quit her employment and that she was eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.

**By having someone “stand for her” and help secure unemployment benefits, this case had a significant impact on Betty.**

She had lost her apartment when she had to leave her job and had been sleeping on a friend’s sofa ever since. These benefits meant an opportunity for Betty to get back on her feet.



*“I first called Pat Sullivan (Receptionist) in the office. She explained to me what was going on and how Legal Aid could help me. She was very compassionate and caring. She then put me in contact with Miss Rae Anne Seay (Staff Attorney). They took care of everything and kept us from losing our home and goods. We were more than pleased with the outcome. **I FOUND EVERYONE WITH LEGAL AID TO BE FRIENDLY, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND CARING.** I am so glad that such an organization exists. Thanks to all and may God bless you.”*

– Tullahoma client

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## CASE STUDY • STOPPING HARM FROM IDENTITY THEFT

“Samantha” contacted Legal Aid Society about an overpayment of benefits notice she received. Her only income was Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which was reduced from \$710 per month to \$86 per month because the Social Security Administration (SSA) showed she had earned income. In fact, she had no earned income but had been a victim of identity theft. Someone had reported self-employment income using her Social Security number and claimed her children in order to get an earned income tax credit for three years, totaling about \$14,000 in refunds. To the SSA, this meant Samantha was working when, in truth, she was only receiving disability benefits.

Samantha attempted to resolve the issue herself, filing an affidavit of identity theft with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Despite this, she could not get the SSA to resolve it. Samantha could not survive on \$86 per month, and it would have had a catastrophic impact on her life. SSA wanted to wait for the IRS issue to be resolved before waiving the overpayment, but Legal Aid Society attorneys convinced the SSA that this could take years.

Samantha's SSI benefits were reinstated just three months after she contacted Legal Aid Society, and the SSA put an alert to monitor her account for this issue in the future.

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