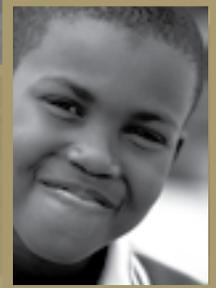




Legal Aid Society  
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

1932 **75** 2007

2007 ANNUAL REPORT



1932  
**75**

YEARS OF MAKING

JUSTICE

**REAL**

1932

The Legal Aid Bureau is founded as part of the Department of Social Services.

1956

Legal Aid establishes a marriage counseling program.

DC Bar's Legal Assistance Office merges with Legal Aid.

1964

The Legal Aid Bureau is incorporated as an independent agency.

1934

1980

Legal Aid starts project to represent indigent parents charged with neglecting their children.

1999

Legal Aid goes online at [www.legalaiddc.org](http://www.legalaiddc.org)

Legal Aid celebrates 75 years of making justice real.

2007

Legal Aid establishes social work program.

1992

2007

## MAKING JUSTICE REAL FOR SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS



The Legal Aid Society was formed in 1932 to “provide legal aid to indigent persons” and “to encourage measures by which the law may better protect and serve their needs.” Over the years, Legal Aid has pursued this mission with vigor. Hundreds of thousands of District residents living in poverty have obtained assistance from Legal Aid lawyers.

Our lawyers make a dramatic difference in the outcome of cases. When an anti-poverty lawyer is available to help, she or he can:

- ensure that a family with children is not evicted because they complained of dangerous health conditions in rental housing;
- help a disabled veteran obtain medical benefits after having been terminated from the program in error;
- prevent an elderly couple from losing their home because their building is being converted to condominiums; and
- assist a woman fleeing violence with her children to secure a safe place to live.

Legal Aid is the law firm for clients who cannot afford a lawyer. Our staff and volunteers work each day to make the justice system work. For 75 years, with the support of the legal community, we have ensured that the promise of equal justice for all is kept. With continued support, we will sustain and strengthen this commitment for the years to come.

### MAKING JUSTICE REAL Our Work Today

In calendar year 2006, more than 2,700 people came to Legal Aid and more than 5,200 people called us seeking help. We were able to provide help to more than 1,600 families and individuals, and we gave legal rights education and referrals to thousands of others. In addition to direct client services, Legal Aid staff advocate for systemic change on matters that grow directly out of our individual cases.

Legal Aid works primarily in the following areas of law:

- preventing evictions and homelessness
- preserving affordable housing
- ensuring a safe and decent place to live
- securing access to health care, nutrition and public benefits
- protecting families against domestic violence
- promoting family stability through appropriate child support and custody

While the demand far outstrips our capacity, we attempt to take those cases in which an attorney can make the most difference. Our core priorities include:

■ *Keeping People Housed:* Hundreds of tenants each year avoid eviction or have serious housing conditions corrected as a result of Legal Aid’s work. Our housing lawyers defend against improper evictions in court, assist public housing tenants to preserve subsidies, fight illegal rent increases and work to ensure that tenants are not improperly displaced by development.

■ *Securing Access to Health Care and Public Benefits:* The District “safety net,” while tattered, is the last and only hope for many of the District’s poorest residents. Whether a small cash payment, medical care, or Food Stamps, participation may mean the difference between housing and homelessness, treatment and neglect, or food and hunger. Legal Aid assists clients who have been wrongfully denied enrollment, improperly terminated, or unjustly denied services. Through direct representation in administrative litigation, training of clients to advocate on their own behalf, and advocacy with agency officials to achieve reform, Legal Aid works to ensure that necessary benefits and services are available to all who qualify.

■ *Securing Safety from Domestic Violence and Finding Family Stability:* Poverty has a profound effect on families. Not surprisingly, most cases handled by Legal Aid touch on the lives of children in some way, either because they directly involve issues of family violence, custody or child support, or because they address conditions in a child’s home or income for a child’s family. Legal Aid gives priority to those issues most severely burdening poor families. Domestic violence, child custody and visitation, and child support make up the core of our family law practice.

#### CASE STATS

	2006
Litigation/Full Representation	427
Limited Assistance/Advice	1,028
Pro Bono Placements	88
Assistance to a Member of the Private or Public Interest Bar handling a Pro Bono Matter	105
Community Outreach/Client Rights Education Sessions	56
Training Sessions for Private Bar or Social Services Providers	20
Persons attending Outreach/Training Sessions	3,182
Full Interview Intakes	2,733
Telephone Requests for Help	5,276

*Legal Aid values its partnership with its clients. Below is a letter we received from a mother we helped keep in housing.*

Dear Legal Aid Society,

In my case, it was the government accusing me of violating guidelines under the Section 8 program. Thanks to the Legal Aid Society helping me prove that I never violated any codes, guidelines, or anything else that would make me lose my housing. The Legal Aid Society are such wonderful people who help low income families keep their way of living going. It helps me keep myself and my three children in our lovely house. When the thought of losing my house was over my head; it was like the end of the world for us. I hope that no other families have to go through. Once again thank you too all the staff of the Legal Aid Society for giving a needy family like mines a second chance of continuing to have a better life.

Sincerely,  
D.J.

## MAKING JUSTICE REAL

### Building for the Future



Legal Aid is working hard to meet the legal needs of individuals, families, neighborhoods and communities living in poverty in the District. As we look to the future, we are organizing our practice and growing to be more accessible and responsive. The following are initiatives we have undertaken to rise to the challenge:

**Offices East of the River:** Significant numbers of Legal Aid clients live in neighborhoods in the Southeast quadrant of the District, an area disproportionately burdened by poverty and a lack of services. Legal Aid's main headquarters are downtown. To reach clients in neighborhoods of highly concentrated poverty, we have made an effort to establish satellite community offices. Over the last year, with support from the D.C. Bar Foundation, we have been able to expand these offices significantly. Currently our lawyers are working in the following locations:

**Domestic Violence Intake Center at the Greater Southeast Community Hospital:** Since 2003, we have collaborated with other domestic violence programs, District agencies and the District of Columbia Superior Court to provide comprehensive services to survivors of domestic violence living in Wards 7 and 8. The Center is a one-stop shop where victims can obtain legal assistance, file protective orders, meet with police and prosecutors, and obtain other supportive services. We provide legal staff to the center.

**Town Hall Education, Arts and Recreation Campus (THEARC):** Legal Aid has partnered with the Children's Health Project located in THEARC. Several Legal Aid lawyers work out of this pediatric clinic in far Southeast Washington. This collaboration allows us to serve the children and families who come to the clinic for care as well as residents in the surrounding communities.

**Anacostia Office:** Legal Aid has established a presence in the historic Anacostia neighborhood by partnering with Advocates for Justice and Education – a non-profit that works to empower parents and reform the school system. This office places us in the heart of an underserved community.

**Court-Based Legal Services Project:** The Superior Court provided space near the Landlord and Tenant Branch to create a legal services office. The lawyers that staff the office assist tenants who need immediate representation at a critical stage of their case. These lawyers appear in court, often on the same day, to prevent an avoidable eviction or to ensure that a tenant's rights are preserved. Legal Aid serves as the lead partner in this collaboration with Bread for the City and the Neighborhood Legal Services Program.

**Office Move:** After 39 years in the same location, Legal Aid moved its offices in August 2007. Our new offices at 1331 H Street, N.W., provide additional space to accommodate the growth in our staff and will be our home for many years to come.

## MAKING JUSTICE REAL

### A Continuum of Services

Clients come to Legal Aid with a range of needs. While most people who seek our help need a lawyer to appear in court or to advocate with an agency to resolve a dispute, many simply need advice. Others have issues that illustrate a widespread problem in need of a structural or systemic solution. Legal Aid applies all the tools available to lawyers to help our clients and their communities find justice.

Litigation and advocacy on behalf of individual clients makes up the core of our work. We appear in the Superior Court and before administrative tribunals hundreds of times each year. However, in many cases, a client needs only a little help or can solve a problem on his or her own with advice. In more than 1,000 cases each year we assist clients on matters short of full representation.

Among the largest barriers that persons living in poverty experience in obtaining assistance is a lack of understanding that a problem has a legal solution and that lawyers are available to help. Legal Aid is committed to bringing legal information to the community and several times a month conducts outreach sessions to community groups.

Where we identify an issue that has an impact beyond an individual client, we will often seek a structural solution, a change or clarification in the law, or a reform of a government practice. Our systemic practice includes:

- **Appellate Advocacy Project:** Each year, we are involved in important, often precedent-setting cases before the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Our Appellate Advocacy Project staff, assisted by private law firm volunteers, works on cases designed to improve the decisional law to protect poor and disadvantaged litigants. In the three years since the project began, we have obtained important decisions, some creating precedent that is now being cited in other jurisdictions.
- **Advocacy with Agency Officials:** Legal Aid staff have working relationships with key District of Columbia agency officials. Through our advocacy with housing, health care, income maintenance and other agency heads, we are able to work together with the District to ensure that the rights of our clients are protected in rulemaking and program operation.
- **Advocacy with the District of Columbia Council:** Sometimes, the only remedy is a change in the law. On key bills affecting our clients – child support, child custody, rent control, health care funding – Legal Aid has played an important role.

*"I turned to Legal Aid for help. Your help was very important to me."*

After fleeing an abusive husband with her child, an immigrant client came to Legal Aid seeking assistance. Not only had our client suffered profound physical abuse, but her husband controlled every aspect of our client's life; she had no keys to the house and was not permitted access to any of the couple's money. As she spoke no English, she relied heavily on her husband.

One day her husband was particularly violent, hitting and choking her. After hearing her screams, the maintenance man called the police. She was taken to the emergency room for her injuries. That day she decided to leave her husband. She obtained a protection order, temporary

child support and custody of her son. However, three hospital bills incurred for the treatment of the injuries she sustained that day continued to come. One had gone to collections. She was very worried about having bad credit and did not know what to do.

Legal Aid was able to apply for and obtain Emergency Medicaid to pay for the medical bills. The medical providers agreed to bill Medicaid and to release her from any liability. "When I came to this country, I was counting on my husband for support. I found I could not count on him. So, I turned to Legal Aid for help and advice. Your help was very important to me. You have done so much for me."

## 2007 GENEROUS ASSOCIATES CAMPAIGN: GIVING FOR JUSTICE

Generous associates from all over the District of Columbia raised over \$700,000 from their colleagues and firms to support the work of Legal Aid during its 75th anniversary year.

A spirit of friendly competition has long been the hallmark of the Generous Associates Campaign. The following are the top-contributing firms in each size category in order of the amount raised:

### 251+ Attorneys

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP  
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP  
Hogan & Hartson LLP  
Dickstein Shapiro LLP  
Arnold & Porter LLP

### 201-250 Attorneys

Williams & Connolly LLP  
Latham & Watkins LLP  
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP  
Jones Day  
Crowell & Moring LLP

### 151-200 Attorneys

Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw LLP  
O'Melveny & Myers LLP  
Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP  
Hunton & Williams LLP  
Bingham McCutchen LLP

### 101-150 Attorneys

Baker Botts L.L.P.  
Dow Lohnes PLLC  
Alston & Bird LLP  
Kelley Drye Collier Shannon  
McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP

### 51-100 Attorneys

Epstein Becker & Green, P.C.  
Van Ness Feldman, PC  
Reed Smith LLP  
Dechert LLP  
Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP

### 1-50 Attorneys

Gilbert Randolph LLP  
Baach Robinson & Lewis, PLLC  
Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP  
Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

Legal Aid offers its heartfelt thanks to our Campaign Honorary Chairs for their support:

### Donald B. Ayer

Jones Day

### Deborah Brand Baum

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

### David R. Berz

Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

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### Scott D. Gilbert

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### Steven H. Schulman

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

### Steven W. Stone

Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP

In addition, the leadership of the Campaign truly did a remarkable job. Thank you to all the Campaign Co-Chairs:

### Thomas G. Allen

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

### Wesley D. Bizzell

Altria Corporate Services, Inc.

### Randall A. Brater

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### Kevin S. Willen

Hogan & Hartson LLP

### Howard A. Wolf-Rodda

Epstein Becker & Green, P.C.

## Kami E. Quinn, Generous Associates Campaign Co-Chair



Each year that I have been involved with the Generous Associates Campaign, I have been inspired by the willingness of the young attorneys of the District of Columbia to rise to the occasion and to surpass the expectations of even the most optimistic and hopeful of Legal Aid supporters with their donations. Since my service as District-wide Co-chair began, the campaign's fund-raising goal has increased over 200%, and each time we set these ambitious, seemingly unattainable goals, the generous associates and the partners and firms that support them surpass those goals. This 75th anniversary year was no exception. The campaign raised an astonishing \$712,000 and garnered the participation of over 2,500 attorneys (about 75% of them associates) representing 61 law firms.

This brings the Campaign's lifetime total to nearly \$4 million raised, and more importantly, hundreds of lives changed by the legal representation these millions have made possible over the last 17 years.

Thus far, the support that the attorneys of the District will provide to ensure equal access to justice for all has been limited only by our imaginations. I look forward to what the Generous Associates campaign and its supporters can dream up next year!

## ANNUAL SERVANT OF JUSTICE AWARDS DINNER Celebrating Legal Aid's 75th Anniversary



The Honorable Adrian M. Fenty (left), Mayor of the District of Columbia, presenting the proclamation to Anthony T. Pierce, Legal Aid Board President



Senator Warner (center) with Servant of Justice Award Recipients S. White Rhyne (left) and E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr.

Legal Aid celebrated its 75th anniversary with over 550 of its best supporters and alumni on April 17, 2007. The Servant of Justice Award was presented to E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr. of Hogan & Hartson LLP, the first president of the DC Bar Foundation, and S. White Rhyne, an attorney whose work with Legal Aid has spanned five decades.

Dinner Co-Chairs Deborah Brand Baum of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, David Florin of Crowell & Moring LLP, Steven G. Forsyth of Exxon Mobil Corporation, and John M. Nannes of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, along with the Dinner Steering Committee, successfully raised over \$900,000. A remarkable way to celebrate 75 years!

*"I could not have gotten better services, excellent! I would not have known how to do this, how to represent myself."*

A woman came to Legal Aid distraught after the father of her child filed a complaint for custody of their son. The father had a long history of domestic violence and our client's son, a ten year-old boy with severe autism, had been one of his victims.

After the end of the relationship between our client and the boy's father, the father failed to demonstrate any desire to be part of his life. He had no contact with his son for five years. He only sought custody after the Court ordered that he pay child support. The custody complaint was a ploy to avoid paying the ordered support.

The boy's autism made it difficult for him to meet new people and he would sometimes express his frustration with emotional, and occasionally violent, outbursts. Our client was terrified that the combination of the boy's disability and the father's history of violence would place her son in danger if custody was granted to the father. With the help of Legal Aid she was able to obtain an order granting her sole legal and physical custody. Legal Aid was also able to ensure that any court ordered visitation with the father was supervised. Our client described her attorney as "great!" She went on to note: "I could not have gotten better services, excellent! I would not have known how to do this, how to represent myself."

## PARTNERING WITH THE PRIVATE BAR

Legal Aid partners with the private bar in a variety of ways to expand services and provide assistance to a greater number of District residents in need. Here are some examples:

- Legal Aid's Pro Bono Program connects private practice and government agency attorneys with low-income persons who need representation in the areas of housing/landlord tenant law, family law and public benefits. Clients who are served through the Pro Bono Program are eligible for representation by Legal Aid attorneys but would otherwise be turned away because our staff simply cannot take on every case that comes to us. The private bar plays a critical role in addressing this unmet need.
- Three law firms – Arnold & Porter LLP, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Steptoe & Johnson LLP – have made an extraordinary, ongoing commitment to Legal Aid and the District's poorest citizens by participating in Legal Aid's Loaned Associate Program. Each of these firms "loan" Legal Aid an associate to work full-time in Legal Aid's offices on a six-month rotation, providing us with resources comparable to three additional staff attorneys.
- Potential clients may come to Legal Aid's offices three afternoons a week without an appointment and meet with an attorney for an initial interview. Attorneys from the law firms of Arent Fox PLLC, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, Hogan & Hartson LLP, and Steptoe & Johnson LLP have the opportunity to meet clients and conduct these interviews through their participation in Legal Aid's Volunteer Intake Program.

*"Partnering with Legal Aid has been great for our firm."*

### Small Firm Makes Big Pro Bono Commitment

Upon receiving Legal Aid's 2005 Annual Report, Tom Judge, a partner in the 10-lawyer firm of **Thompson, Loss & Judge**, contacted Legal Aid to find out how his firm could make a difference. The firm ultimately agreed to represent clients referred from Legal Aid who need representation at Administrative Law Judge hearings to secure Social Security disability benefits. The firm accepts new cases on a regular basis and already has taken on seven individual cases, resulting in several of the clients who are disabled and unable to work being awarded full benefits by the Social Security Administration.

"Partnering with Legal Aid has been great for our firm," said Tom Judge. "Legal Aid helped us develop a pro bono program that best suits a firm of our size. Through close coordination with Legal Aid, we have helped some of D.C.'s poorest disabled citizens obtain essential government benefits and have found that most rewarding. We hope to expand our relationship with Legal Aid as our firm grows."

## AT A GLANCE - LEGAL AID'S CLIENT COMMUNITY

Percentage of District Residents Living in Poverty	19.8%
Number of District Residents Living in Poverty	115,000
Percentage of District Children Living in Poverty	32%
Poverty Line for a Family of Three	\$17,170
Annual Cost of Average Two Bedroom Apartment in the District	\$15,432
Monthly Cash Welfare Payment	\$406
Number of Eviction Cases Filed Each Year	46,000
Number of Domestic Violence Cases Filed Each Year	3,960

## LEADERSHIP CABINET

### Annual Gift Recognition Program

The Legal Aid Society created the Leadership Cabinet in order to recognize those donors who support the organization in significant ways. We are proud to recognize our Leadership Cabinet members for their support this anniversary year.

#### PLATINUM PATRON

**\$75,000 and above**

Covington & Burling LLP  
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#### GOLD PATRON

**\$50,000 - \$74,999**

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#### BRONZE PATRON

**\$20,000 - \$29,999**

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The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia extends its gratitude to the following supporters for their generous gifts:

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## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### REVENUE (7/1/05 to 12/31/06)\*

Grants and Contributions	\$ 1,960,026
Contributed Services	2,937,874
Special Events	526,555
Interest	45,555
Miscellaneous	2,138
Total Revenue	5,472,048

### EXPENSES

Program Services	\$ 4,690,814
Management and General	325,435
Fundraising	340,718
Total Expenses	5,356,966

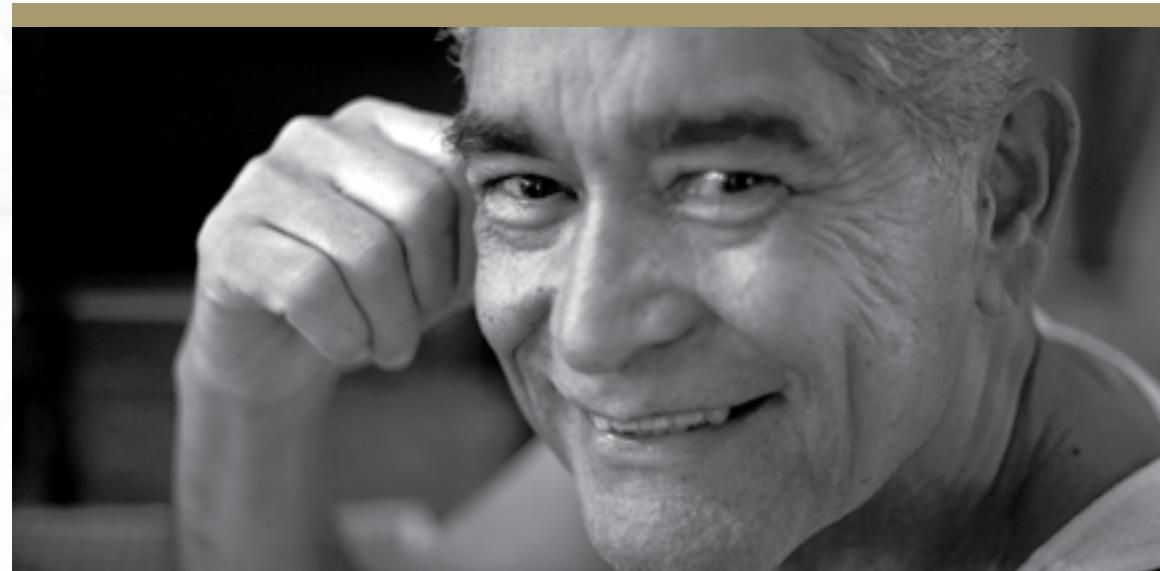
Change in Net Assets	\$ 115,082
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Net Assets Beginning	\$ 901,088
Net Assets Ending	\$ 1,016,170

\* The audited financial statement presented is representative of the eighteen month period of activity from July 1, 2005 through December 31, 2006 as a result of the change in the organization's fiscal year from July-June to a calendar fiscal year.

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1956

Legal Aid establishes a marriage counseling program.

The Legal Aid Bureau is incorporated as an independent agency.

1934

DC Bar's Legal Assistance Office merges with Legal Aid.

1964

1980

Legal Aid starts project to represent indigent parents charged with neglecting their children.

1999

Legal Aid goes online at [www.legalaiddc.org](http://www.legalaiddc.org)

Legal Aid establishes social work program.

1992

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2007



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