

Advancing Justice, Restoring Hope













Dear Friends of MVLP.

We are pleased to release to you the 2018 Impact Report for the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project. This past year was certainly a year of growth and tremendous impact for MVLP which you will learn about in this report. This year, we broke our 2016 pro se clinics' record with regard to the number of people served. In 2016, we assisted 263 clinic participants, which, at that time, was the largest number of individuals assisted at MVLP clinics since 2011. In 2018, however, we assisted 362 clinic participants, which is the largest number of individuals assisted at MVLP clinics. We are grateful to our partners who helped us expand our reach into untapped counties. In addition to our success with our clinics, we increased the number of cases we closed through legal judgments by 5%. We also saw a record number of attorney volunteers take on cases with MVLP, which allowed us to place more cases this year. Finally, we put the finishing touches on the Mississippi Settlement Assistance Program (MSAP), and we have certified our first panel of attorneys who will begin assisting prose litigants in federal court. MSAP is a program designed to provide free legal assistance to low-income pro se litigants in civil matters filed in the United States District Court. Specifically, volunteer attorneys will provide assistance for Magistrate Judge-led settlement conferences, only. For years, MVLP's work has been limited to state court work. We are proud to extend our reach into the federal courts.

Finally, 2018 brought us the redevelopment of our organization's website. We have begun the initial phase of the website, and we are slated to have it completed by June 2019. The new website promises to be more user friendly for attorneys and the general public. It will allow our clients to check on the status of their cases 24/7.

As you read our 2018 Impact Report, our 2019 clinics have begun, new relationships have been forged, new cases are being filed and other cases are being resolved. Your resources have been and are continuing to be at work. Thank you for your impact!

Sincerely,

Begler Cepher Soder

Gavla Carpenter-Sanders Executive Director/General Counsel Junie Broch

Jennie Eichelberger **Board Chair**

MISSISSIPPI VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROJECT An Organizational Overview

The Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, or "MVLP," is a 501(c) (3) non-profit legal aid organization. Formed in 1982, MVLP is the nation's first formal association of a state bar association, the Mississippi Bar Association, and the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). MVLP's long-standing relationship with the Mississippi Bar and the LSC has resulted in a professional and productive partnership, with attorneys unselfishly offering their time and talents to serve Mississippi's poor and less fortunate.

Even before completing its first year of operation, the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project was cited by the American Bar Association and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association as the country's single most outstanding program among state bar associations.

Since 1982, MVLP has helped more than 40,000 clients with a wide array of legal matters. More recently, the organization has narrowed its services to assisting clients with domestic matters exclusively. MVLP is grateful to its volunteers for the sacrifices they make to change the lives of those in need. Without the contributions and support of volunteers and partners, MVLP could not have reached out to so many Mississippians in the broader effort to ensure equal access to justice for all.

In addition to offering direct legal assistance to clients through our volunteer attorneys, MVLP hosts legal clinics throughout the year. The clinics, which include training seminars for the volunteer attorneys who assist, are designed to help the public meet directly with attorneys to discuss their legal matters.

THE MVLP STAFF

Gayla Carpenter-Sanders, Esq. Executive Director/General Counsel

Sara Cotten, Esq. Case Referral

Coordinator

Deborah Hicks

Legal Intake Coordinator

Eden Pepper, MPPA Administrative

Support Specialist

Robyn Kennebrew, MBA

Development Coordinator

2018 MVLP SNAPSHOTS

5,148

Total number of individuals & their families impacted by MVLP's assistance in 2018

32

Total number of clinics hosted by MVLP in 2018

362

Total number of individuals assisted at 2018 legal clinics

28

Total number of CLE trainings offered by MVLP

270

Total number of judges, attorneys, & law students who attended 2018 CLEs

2018 Pro Bono Reception Awards & Honorees

The Pro Bono Awards

The 2018 Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLP) Pro Bono Awards recognized individual lawyers, law firms, law students, law schools and other institutions in the legal profession throughout Mississippi that were involved in significant pro bono efforts from June 1, 2017 through June 1, 2018.

Meredith Brasfield, Esq.Weaver & Craig, PC
Cordova, TN

Amanda Proctor, Esq. Wright Gregg & Proctor PA Ridgeland, MS

Harrison County Bar Association Gulfport, MS

The Beacon of Justice Award

The Beacon of Justice Award recognizes an individual who has exhibited outstanding leadership in promoting and supporting equal access to justice, particularly as it relates to *pro bono* services in Mississippi.

Honorable Jaqueline Mask Chancellor, Chancery District 1 Tupelo, MS

Curtis E Coker Access to Justice Award

The Curtis E. Coker Access to Justice Award is presented to an individual, law firm or other organization that has provided or helped to provide outstanding *pro bono* legal services during the previous year. The main purpose of this Award is to foster awareness of the need for involvement of the private bar in delivering legal services to the poor, particularly through MVLP.

The Award was originally established as the *Pro Bono Project's President Award.* However, in 2002 after the death of former Mississippi Bar President Curtis E. Coker, the name was changed in his honor. Mr. Coker was a leading advocate in the cause of making legal services available to all without regard to need. MVLP was established during Mr. Coker's term as Bar President.

Colleen Welch, Esq.
Maron Marvel Bradley Anderson & Tardy LLC

Jackson. MS

Chairman of the Board's Torchbearer Award

This award honors firms and individuals who have financially contributed to MVLP's mission throughout the years.

Butler Snow LLP

MVLP MAKING AN IMPACT IN MISSISSIPPI

"Helping Mississippi's most vulnerable children secure safe, loving homes is deeply rewarding for me, as it is for the many other attorneys who donate their time and legal talents to the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers that the children of today will be the society of tomorrow. People always think 'somebody' else will do it.' But we are the somebody else. The only way to make the society we all want to live in possible is to step up and help these needy children and families. Without obtaining quardianships or being able to adopt these children, often the grandchildren of the person seeking the guardianship or adoption, these families are unable to make decisions for many of these children. To protect the future of these children, and therefore, our society, we as attorneys and counselors need to step in and assist these families through the MVLP right now.

C. WELCH - MVLP VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY

"MVLP is a remarkable organization. They take you step by step through each item of the process sharing what documents are needed and legal advisement at the clinics. I was so elated to have been referred. From the moment I walked into my appointment, I felt at ease. After leaving, I felt the anxiety roll away. All the tools I needed to complete my service was available. Everyone was professional, taking the time to work thoroughly through each step and even having a notary onsite. That was amazing!

Before finding MVLP, I was in despair and felt trapped in an unsafe marriage. I was without the funding necessary to alleviate my legal matter, but I found people who care to sponsor organizations like this. I am so very grateful to all Sponsors, MVLP and Attorney Gayla Carpenter-Sanders; they gave me hope again. You all gave me my life back. Thank you!"

MVLP CLIENT: Desertion Divorce

MISSISSIPU VOLUNTER LAWYER PROJE

This little girl is standing with her grandma, telling the judge she wants to be a judge see you in that black robe one day. That's why I do this; for that little girl, who now has a place that is home after foster home. She won't be pawned off to foster us. I want to leave society better for my kids and that's one way I can do that."

MYLP Volunteer Attorney Colleen Welch some shares favorite adoption case memory

"Working with MVLP was an amazing and instructional experience. It's many opportunities have prepared me with an insight of the different aspects of practicing law as well as the expectation of the courts and peers, allowing me to better serve as a Chancery Court law clerk."

D. Richardson – 2018 MVLP EXTERN

"I love working with MVLP because they let me make a direct and significant impact on peoples' lives. The clients I've met through MVLP just want to care and provide for their families, but face barriers to doing that. Through MVLP, I can help remove those barriers so that those families can thrive. A chancellor once thanked me for volunteering, but he said the real heroes were the adoptive parents I was representing. He was absolutely right, and it was because of MVLP that they were able to fully accomplish that role. MVLP makes volunteering and serving others accessible. Whether its attending a clinic or reviewing a case, they allow me to use the time I have available to focus on doing the work that interests me. At the same time, they are helpful and attentive when issues arise and need to be addressed. MVLP allows me serve others, which is a blessing to me and them, and I am incredibly appreciative to MVLP for that." S. SHANNON – MVLP VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY

"I would suggest anyone who is having issues being able to see their child/children to contact MVLP for all your needs, questions, and concerns! As a father, I am very grateful and thankful for the work my attorney provided. I now have a regular routine visitation schedule to see my child and it's creating the bond that is much needed for everyone."

MVLP CLIENT: Visitation Case

Thank You to Our Volunteer Attorneys!

2018 Attorney Volunteers

Les Alvis, Esq. Torri Armstrong, Esq. Mimi Arthur, Esq. Payne Atkinson, Esq. Larry Baker, Esq. Ann Bailey, Esq. Carshena Bailey, Esq. Martha Barnes, Esq. Monique Barrett, Esq. Ja'Nekia Barton, Esq. Debbie Bell, Esq. Lori Bell, Esq. Luke Benedict, Esq. Megan Bennett, Esq. Sheryl Bey, Esq. Heather Blansett, Esc. Ncki Boland, Esq. Jay Bolin, Esq. Trey Bourn, Esq. Meredith Brasfield, Esq. Danielle Brewer, Esa. Wesley Broadhead, Esq. Lindy Brown, Esq. Tracey Brown, Esq. Dana Bumpardner, Esq. Thomas Busby, Esq. Marjorie Busching-Self, Esq. Zakia Butler, Esq. David Calder, Esc. Donald Campbell, Esq. Roy Campbell, Esq. Tiffany Carey, Esq. Amelia Carter, Esq. Jeremy Chalmers, Esq. Elliott Clark Esc. Ben Claxton, Esq. Rhonda Cooper, Esq. Pepper Cossar, Esq. George Culpepper, Esq. Margaret Cupples, Esq. Lisa Dale, Esq.

Frank Dantone, Esq. John Allen Derivaux, Esq. Michael Dickinson, Esq. R Lane Dossett, Esq. Mtchell Driskell, Esa. Bill Eckert, Esq. Alexis Farmer, Esq. Emily Fertig, Esq. James Findley, Esq. Miles Forks, Esq. Austin Frye, Esq. Chris Gamillion, Esq. Patti Gandy, Esq. Leslie Gates, Esq. Martin Genter, Esa. Cory Gerber, Esq. Debra Giles, Esq. RaToya Gilmer, Esq. Tiffany Graves, Esq. Steven Gray, Esq. Venecca Green, Esq. J. Lane Greenlee, Esq. Cory Griffin, Esq. Tiffany Grove, Esq. Alicia Hall, Esq. Jennifer Hall, Esa. John Hall, Esq. N Cheryl Hamby, Esq. Shawn Harris, Esc. C. Hugh Hathorn, Esq. Charles Haug, Esq. Erica Haymer, Esq. Steve Headrick, Esq. Joel Henderson, Esq. Catherine Hester, Esc. Carlyn Hcks, Esq. Bobby Hgginbotham, Esq. Tametrice Hodges, Esq. Glenn Holman, Esq. Cynthia Carson Howell, Esq. Aa'Keela Hudnall, Esq.

Josie Hudson, Esq. Shalanda Hudson, Esq. Stella Hurtt, Esq. Rebecca Hutchins, Esq. Elizabeth Hyde, Esq. Julia Jimenez, Esq. Caroline Johnson, Esq. W.Mackin Johnson, Esq. Brenda Jones, Esq. Connie Jones, Esq. Danielle Jones, Esq. Melissa Jones, Esq. Rosalind Jordan, Esq. James Justice, Esq. Briana Keeler, Esc. Deborah Kennedy, Esq. Terri Kings, Esq. Kiley Kirk, Esq. Edward Lamer, Esq. Noble Lee, Esa. Thomas Lee, Esq. Meagan Linton, Esq. Eddie Littlefield, Esq. Perry Littlefield, Esq. John C Love Jr., Esa. Zack Madison, Esq. Sarah Mann, Esq. Alexander Martin II, Esq. Crystal Martin, Esq. Gerald Martin, Esq. Greta Martin, Esq. Caleb May, Esq. Carolyn McAlister, Esq. Michael McCabe, Esq. Vernon McFarland, Esc. Mtch McGuffey, Esq. Kathryn McNair, Esq. Kimberly Merchant, Esq. David Mller, Esq. Kyle Miller, Esq.

SamMorris, Esc. BJ Morrow, Esq. Wendy Mullins, Esq. Dinetia Newman, Esq. Timothy Ngau, Esq. Ammie Nguyen, Esq. Kevin Null, Esq. Alison Oneal, Esq. Jason Owens, Esq. Brant Pettis, Esq. Darnell Pratt, Esq. Amenda Proctor, Esq. Alex Purvis, Esq. Bradley Rath, Esq. Brooke Reeves, Esa. Lisa Repoeto, Esc. Ellen Robb, Esq. KeNosha Robinson, Esq. Lindia Robinson, Esc. Mandie Robinson, Esa. Charliene Roemer, Esq. Gregg Rogers, Esq. Wes Ryals, Esq. Janeah Sakalaukus, Esq. Charles Sandal, Esc. Karen Sawyer, Esq. Tara Scruggs, Esq. Steve Settlemires, Esq. Seth Shannon, Esq. Chris Shaw, Esq. J. Mark Shelton, Esq. David Shoemake, Esc. Ncole Short, Esq. Derrick Simmons, Esq. Kris Simpson, Esq. Constance Slaughter-Hervey, Esq. Margaret Smith, Esq. Tammy Smith, Esq. Todd Sorey, Esq.

Robert Spillmen, Esq.

Frankie Springer, Esq.

Sandra Stasher, Esq. Tracy Steen, Esq. Frances Stephenson, Esq. Ncole Sullivan, Esq. Wesla Sullivan Leech, Esq. Judy Sutton, Esq. Mike Tarleton, Esq. Amy Taylor, Esq. Shakita Taylor, Esq. April Taylor-Bryant, Esq. Carnet Taylor Tucker, Esq. Robert Lee Thomas, Esa. WilliamThomas, Esq. Evan Thompson, Esq. Amenda Tollison, Esq. Kay Trapp, Esq. Albert Turnage, Esq. Caroline Ubchurch, Esq. Slates Veazey, Esq. Joshua Wallis, Esc. Gerald "Jess" Waltman, Esq. Laura Webster, Esq. Colleen Welch, Esq. Laura Welikson, Esc. O. Renee Wells, Esa. Marvin Wiggins, Esq. Louwlynn Williams, Esq. WesWilliams, Esq. Corv Wilson, Esa. Malissa Wilson, Esq. Mark Woods, Esq. James Wright, Esq. Steve Wright, Esq. Harry Yoste, Esq. Kasey Young, Esq. Charles E Yow, Esq. Susan Zachos, Esc.

Rule 6.1 Voluntary *Pro Bono* Public Service

 Professional Responsibility. Each member of the Mississippi Bar in good standing and not exempt hereunder, as part of the member's professional responsibility, should

Mary Clay Morgan, Esq.

- a. render pro bono legal services to the poor and
- b. participate, to the extent 102 possible, in other pro bono service activities that directly relate to the legal needs of the poor.
- 2. Discharge of the Professional Responsibility to Provide Pro Bono Legal Services to the Poor. The professional responsibility to provide pro bono legal services to the poor may be discharged by:
 - a. annually providing at least 20 hours of pro bono legal services to the poor, or
 - b. annually providing at least 20 hours of pro bono legal services to charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental or educational organizations for the purpose of providing legal counsel and representation to the poor, or
 - c. making an annual contribution of at least \$200 to the Mississippi Bar, which will be used by the Bar to provide legal services to the poor through legal aid organizations.

MVLP Externs & Law Student Volunteers







Steven Adams Danielle Banks William Biddy Danielle Bowles Jason Brookins **Brittany Brown** Jim Burris Jon-Paul Bushnell Laura Cooper C. Crawford Cassandra Crosby Hallie Donaldson **Brittney Eakins** Makenli Essert Michelle Freeman Martin Genter

Stephanie Gobert Shaneice Gordon Conisha T. Hackett Ellen Haick Jessica Hept Taheera Hoskins Cymber Hubbard Terrence Hunter MelissaJones Rebecca Keith Shirley Kennedy Michael Lambert Anthony Liberto Karen Lott B. Kyle Malone Lindsey Massey

Krystal Matoke Kavondra McCauley Rachel Meadows Christina Nunez **Emily Payne** Sarah Phillips Anne Piervil Jennifer Prater Pranati Puri **Damion Richardson** Rimen Singh **Amber Stewart** Dennis Tchir Bri Warner Marnise Webb **Trey Williams**







MVLP 2018 Community Partners

- All Saints' Episcopal Church Lawyers in the Parish Hall
- Baker Donelson
- Black Law Student Association (BLSA) - Ole Miss
- Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP
- Capital Area Bar Association (CABA)
- Department of Veterans Affairs: Healthcare for Homeless Veterans' Program & Voluntary Services
- Entergy Mississippi
- Families First for Mississippi Resource Centers
- Federal Bar Association: Mississippi Chapter
- Forman Watkins
- Genesis Light Center
- Harrison County Bar Association
- Hinds Community College

- Hinds County Chancery Court
- Indian Run Estates
- Jack and Jill of America,
 Jackson MS Chapter
- Jackson Run
- Jackson Young Lawyers (JYL)
- Lafayette County Bar Association
- Lauderdale County Bar Association
- Life Core
- Madison County Bar Association
- Magnolia Bar Association
- Mission First
- Mississippi Access to Justice Commission (MSATJC)
- Mississippi Center for Legal Services (MCLS)
- Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence (MCADV)

- Mississippi College School of Law
- Mississippi Women Lawyers
 Association (MWLA)
- Mississippi 6th Chancery District
- Mississippi 11th Chancery District
- Mississippi 13th Chancery District
- Mississippi 18th Chancery District
- North Mississippi Rural Legal Services (NMRLS)
- Scott County Bar Association
- Southern Bancorp Bank
- The Mississippi Bar Association
- Two Mississippi Museums
- University of Mississippi School of Law: Pro Bono Initiative (PBI)
- Washington County Chancery Court
- Washington County Bar Association

Thank You to Our Donors!

The Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLP) would like to thank the following individuals, businesses, organizations and agencies that helped to make MVLP's 2018 fundraising efforts a huge success, including those who donated to the Pro Bono Awards Reception. Because of your support, MVLP can continue to advance justice and restore hope in the lives of many Mississippi residents in need of legal services. We appreciate your investment in MVLP's programs.

BENEFACTOR

Butler Snow LLP
Jackson Young Lawyers Association (JYL)

PARTNER

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Litigation Section of the Mississippi Bar
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Mississippi Women Lawyers Association (MWLA)
Origin Bank
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Ben J. Piazza, Jr., Esq.
Honorable Betty W. Sanders

FRIEND

ACLU of Mississippi Alexander Law, PA Appellate Practice Section of the Mississippi Bar The Honorable Haley Barbour & Mrs. Marsha Barbour BeCloud, LLC Bucky and Catherine Bell Walter Boone, Esq. Carby & Carby P.C. Carson Law Group, PLLC Courtney Cockrell, Esq. Eichelberger Law Firm, PLLC Christopher Espy, Esq. Family Law Section of the Mississippi Bar Steven T. Gray, Esq.

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Honorable Derrick T. Simmons Simmons and Simmons PLLC Springer Law Office, PLLC Stracener & Neely Taxation Section of the Mississippi Bar Teller Hassell & Hopson, LLP Lynn Watson (In Honor of Christy D. Jones) Debbie Bell & Neil White William E. Whitfield, III, Esq. Honorable Marie Wilson Wise Carter Child & Caraway, P.A. Women in the Profession Committee of the Mississippi Bar Workers' Compensation Section of the Mississippi Bar Wright, Gregg & Proctor, PA

Susan G. Zachos, Esq.

<u>Irreconcilable Differences Divorce:</u> Both parties must want to be divorced and agree to all terms of the divorce. The waiting period before the divorce can be final is sixty (60) days.

<u>Desertion Divorce</u>: To obtain this type of divorce, a spouse must have left the marital home, been gone for one continuous year and not tried to return to the marriage. A witness is required to support claims of desertion.

<u>Sentenced to Penitentiary Divorce</u>: To obtain this type of divorce, a spouse must be or have been incarcerated in a state or federal prison.

<u>Visitation</u>: A noncustodial parent may seek visitation with a minor child if he/she is paying child support or has a desire to do so.

<u>Child Support Modification</u>: Child support awards may be modified, either upwards or downwards, if there has been a substantial and material change in circumstances after a child support order has been entered that affects one's ability to pay.

<u>Guardianship</u>: Aguardian other than the parents may be appointed over a minor child where either of the child's parents is deceased and/or the minor's parents or a surviving parent is unable to fulfill the obligations of a parent.

<u>Conservatorship</u>: Conservatorships are granted when a person, by reason of advanced age, physical incapacity or mental weakness, is no longer able to properly care for his or herself.

<u>Adoption</u>. A person may be adopted regardless of age. If the natural parents of the person to be adopted are still living, then the parents must either consent to the adoption or their parental rights must be terminated.

Emancipation: The age of majority in Mississippi is twenty-one (21). To become emancipated before twenty-one (21), a minor must file a petition in writing and join a "next friend", typically a biological parent or next of kin.

<u>Birth Certificate Correction/Name Change</u>: For the procurement of benefits, identification documents or other needs, Mississippi allows changes/alterations to birth certificates at the discretion of courts and the state's vital records agency.

<u>Wills:</u> A will is a legal document that states one's desires concerning what will happen to assets after death. A will also contains other specific directions concerning who is to follow the instructions of the will and who will care for minor children that may be left behind.

Advanced Healthcare Directives: An advanced healthcare directive, sometimes referred to as a "living will", allows one to appoint an agent to make health care decisions for you when you are unable to do so for yourself as well as set forth your wishes as to end-of-life decisions.

<u>Power of Attorney:</u> A power of attorney is a document by which one person appoints another as his or her agent and allows that agent in certain circumstance specified in the document to act on his or her behalf. Power of Attorney enables one to appoint an agent to act on your behalf in financial and/or economic matters.

2018 SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The numbers below are unaudited. There will be a 2016 audit completed mid-year. A copy of the audit will be available upon request.





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lackson MS

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P.O. Box 1503 Jackson, MS 39215 Phone: 601-960-9577 Fax: 601-944-9678 www.mvlp.org **CONNECT WITH US:**



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