

*A publication of The Florida Bar Public Interest Law Section***Inside this Issue:**

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Message from the Chair

Anthony Musto
2013–2014 Chair
The Florida Bar Public Interest Law Section

As this Bar year nears its end, so does my tenure as Chair of the section, and so does the first quarter-century of PILS' existence. That's right. It is our silver anniversary (and I want everyone to know that I have dyed my hair that color solely to commemorate that fact—it is actually a deep and lustrous brown).

We began our life as the Bar's 17th section on July 1, 1989. The Bar procedures apparently operated a bit quicker in those days. The petition to create the section had been filed only two months earlier, on May 1, and the Board of Governors gave its approval during its May 25-26 meeting.

Our "Founding Parents," the eight lawyers who signed the petition to create the section were Richard Belz, Kathy Geller Chinoy, Tom Ervin, Robin Hassler, Treena Kaye, Brent Taylor, and Henry George "Skip" White.

That group constituted our initial executive council, with Ms. Chinoy serving as our first Chair.

They laid a strong foundation for today's section. And, when I think of today's sec-

tion, the thing that immediately comes to my mind is the dedication and the passion of our members. We are made up of people who are devoted to doing the right thing, who don't play games, who don't like to compromise. We may take on quixotic quests, sometimes succeeding, sometimes making some level of change, sometimes failing, but always fighting the good fight.

Our attitude was perhaps best summed up by former Bar President, and former section liaison to the Board of Governors, Michele Cummings, who said that "PILS is the conscience of the Bar."

Think about that for a moment. It is hard to imagine higher praise. We're Jiminy Cricket! We've been whispering (and sometimes shouting) in ears since 1989 and we're not going to stop.

It has been a remarkable 25 years. We will celebrate them and look forward to the future at our 25th Anniversary Breakfast on June 27 at the Bar Convention. It will be a landmark moment and I hope many of you will be able to attend.

The most recent of our remarkable years will be also be coming to an end on that date, at our executive council meeting in the afternoon. I won't dwell on what we have accomplished over the past 12 months. That is set forth in our annual report, which can be viewed on the Bar website, and which will be published belatedly in *The Florida Bar Journal*. Why belatedly? The *Journal* inadvertently omitted it from the issue dedicated to such reports, but they have assured me that it will run in the issue to follow.

I will take this opportunity, however, to express my appreciation to the many members of our section, our committees, and our executive council for the great job they did in making our accomplishments happen. A chair is only as effective as the members of an organization allow and you have allowed a great deal. I thank you for all your efforts and for affording me the wonderful privilege and great honor of heading this unique and vibrant group. I look forward to continuing to be a contributing member of the section under the leadership of Laura Boeckman next year and that of her successors in the years to come. ■

Hot Topics: News from Practice

Children's Law Certification Clears More Hurdles

The effort to create board certification for lawyers who handle matters relating to children has cleared several more hurdles.

The matter was considered by a subcommittee of the Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) of The Florida Bar Board of Governors (BOG) during April and May.

That group recommended approval with the proviso that the name of the certification area be changed from "Children's Law" to "Juvenile Law."

The subcommittee's recommendation was ratified by the PEC on May 22. The following day, the BOG approved the matter on first reading. Two readings are required and the matter will come back before the BOG at its July meeting.

These various groups acted with commendable urgency to make sure that the proposal can be included in the Bar's upcoming two-year cycle report regarding the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar. That report will be filed with the Florida Supreme Court in October.

A significant portion of the credit for the expedited approach goes to Bar President-elect Greg Coleman. PILS Chair Tony Musto and Chair-elect Laura Boeckman brought to his attention the concern that the normal Bar processes might not allow for all the required steps to be completed in time for the October filing.

Coleman responded by strongly urging the PEC to consider the matter in a timeframe that would allow for the two BOG readings to occur in May and July. He also personally participated in the PEC meetings regarding the matter and advocated effectively for approval.

Assuming the proposal is included in the October filing and that the court approves it, certification in Juvenile Law will likely become a reality in 2015 or 2016. ■

PILS Welcomes New Bar Administrator

We thank our former bar administrator, Mary Ann Obos, for her years of service to our section and welcome Calbrail L. Bennett as our new administrator.

You can contact Calbrail at 850-561-5623 or at cbennett@flabar.org. ■

Up to date: Committee Reports and Awards

Public Interest Law Section Honors Jaqueline Dowd with Outstanding Homeless Advocate Award

The Florida Bar's Public Interest Law Section has selected Jacqueline Dowd to receive the 2014 Jane Shaeffer Outstanding Homeless Advocate Award. This award recognizes outstanding achievement in advocacy for homeless persons by an individual who has meaningfully improved conditions or treatment of homeless persons through litigation, policy advocacy, direct service or otherwise, either in a specific locale or throughout the state of Florida.

Dowd graduated with a juris doctorate cum laude from the University of Florida in May 1987. After graduation she worked for 11 years as an Assistant Attorney General. It was during this time that she began to focus her professional career on those whose voices were not heard in the justice system.

In 2005 she became the Acting Director of Clinical Programs at the Florida A&M College of Law, where she developed a unique program focused on homeless legal issues that is still operating today. In 2006, Dowd fully dedicated her professional career to addressing the legal needs of the local homeless and poor by founding the non-profit law firm Legal Advocacy at Work. She uses an outreach-based approach, meeting clients in camps and parks or on the streets and at food pantries to assist them with a variety of legal problems.

Dowd is also a founding manager of IDignity, a nonprofit agency committed to ensuring that eligible homeless individuals gain access to identification so that they may obtain employment, secure housing, open a bank account, cash a check, apply for social services or overcome other obstacles to self-sufficiency. Access to identification is essential but has grown increasingly complex. IDignity utilizes an innova-

tive model that relies on volunteers and cooperation from government agencies to assist homeless individuals to obtain the documents necessary to receive identification.

"Jackie Dowd's dedication to improving the lives of homeless members of our community is truly outstanding. She has made a meaningful impact in the lives of so many homeless people through her direct service, litigation efforts and advocacy for systemic change," said Kirsten Clanton, chair of the Public Interest Law Section's Committee on Homelessness. "Ms. Dowd is a tremendous example of how members of the legal profession can make a difference in the efforts to end the inhumane conditions of homelessness."

She will be honored at the Public Interest Law Section's 25th Anniversary Breakfast on Friday, June 27, in Orlando, Florida, at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center, in conjunction with the Annual Convention of the Florida Bar.

The Jane Shaeffer Outstanding Homeless Advocate Award is given biennially by PILS, and was established in 2010 to honor the memory of distinguished attorney and advocate Jane Hunter Shaeffer. Shaeffer was the founder of the PILS Committee on Homelessness and was a longtime advocate for homeless persons. The presentation of this award is partially supported by the generosity of donors to the Jane Shaeffer Memorial Award Fund.

Florida continues to have the third largest homeless population in the country. Since 2007, Florida had the largest increase in the rate of homelessness when compared with all other states. Amidst this epidemic of homelessness, PILS is committed to honoring outstanding efforts in homeless advocacy through the presentation of the Jane Shaeffer Outstanding Homeless Advocate Award. ■

Consumer Law Committee Annual Meeting

By **Alice Vickers, Esq.**
Committee Chair

The Consumer Protection Committee will be meeting in Orlando during the upcoming Bar meeting. We were engaged as a group in following the session, so we look forward to a full session report on the consumer-related issues and a discussion of our plans for the 2015 session. We also hope to appear as amicus in a case addressing the issue of the statute of limitations period for filing a foreclosure action, *U.S. Bank v. Bartram*, and considering issues we might raise in an amicus. Finally, we will have a discussion of the CFPB new servicing regulations and the circuit court administrative orders meant to assist in implementing the regulations. Anyone is invited to join us. ▪

The Florida Bar 2014 Annual Convention

Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center,
Orlando, FL

PILS Meetings Friday, June 27, 2014

- 8:00am - 10:00am: 25th Anniversary Breakfast including
Presentation of Shaeffer Award
- 10:00am - Noon: Committee Meetings
- 1:00pm - 3:00pm: Executive Council Meeting

Homelessness Committee Annual Meeting

By **Kirsten Clanton, Esq.**
Committee Chair

The Committee on Homelessness will be meeting in Orlando during the annual Bar meeting from 10:00am-12:00pm. On behalf of PILS, the Committee will be presenting the Jane Shaeffer Outstanding Homeless Advocate Award to Jacqueline Dowd for her outstanding achievement in homeless advocacy during the PILS 25th Anniversary Breakfast from 8:00am-10:00am. The Award is named for our Committee's late founder, Jane Hunter Shaeffer, and is presented biennially to honor her legacy of homeless advocacy. During the Committee meeting, we plan to discuss initiatives for the upcoming year and current topics of interest including the criminalization of homelessness and access to identification. We invite all who are interested in advocating for our state's poorest residents to join us. Leadership positions are available for the upcoming year. ▪



The Florida Bar
Public Interest Law Section
25th Anniversary Breakfast
Registration Form



Public Interest Law Section's 25th Anniversary Breakfast
At which the Section will celebrate 25 Years of Dedication and Service
And Present the 2014 Jane Shaeffer Outstanding Homeless Advocate Award

Date and Time: Friday, June 27, 2014 - 8:00 am to 10:00 am
Location: The Florida Bar Annual Convention,
Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center
6000 W Osceola Parkway
Kissimmee, Florida 34746
Phone: (407) 586-0000
Villa De Flora Restaurant

Registration *All Prices Include Appropriate Sales Tax

- (qty) _____ X **\$25.00/person (Section Member)** (Item Number 8170011)
- (qty) _____ X **\$35.00/person (Non section Member)** (Item Number 8170012)
- (qty) _____ X **\$60.00/person (join section)** (Item Number 8170011 and 8171001)

Attendee Name: _____
Attendee Name: _____
Attendee Name: _____

Total: \$ _____

Payment Information

TO REGISTER, SEND THIS COMPLETED FORM TO:

The Florida Bar, 651 E. Jefferson Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-2300 with a check in the appropriate amount payable to The Florida Bar or complete the credit card information at the bottom on this page.

Name: _____ **Florida Bar Number:** _____

Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

City/State/Zip: _____ **Email:** _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

_____ **Check enclosed made payable to The Florida Bar**
_____ **Credit Card (email to registrations@flabar.org)**

_____ **Master Card** _____ **Visa** _____ **Discover** _____ **AMEX** **Exp. Date:** _____ / _____ (month/year)

Signature: _____

Name on Card: _____

Billing Zip Code: _____ **Card Number:** _____

Get on board: *Join a Committee*

The Executive Council of PILS has established a **Long-Range Planning Committee** to develop a strategic plan to guide our Section over the next several years. Contact Anthony Musto, Chair, for more information (amusto@stu.edu).

The **CLE Committee** works to put together quality continuing legal education as a section service. Additional programs are in the planning stages. Contact Anthony Musto, Representative, if you are interested in joining the Committee (amusto@stu.edu).

The **Legislative Committee** is responsible for the Section's legislative advocacy efforts. Contact Lisa Devitto, Chair, if you are interested in joining this Committee (lisadevitto@gmail.com).

Our substantive committees are an excellent way to connect to other public

interest lawyers and work together on relevant legal issues.

Please contact the Chair of the Committee you wish to join for further information:

Consumer Protection

Alice Vickers: alice.vickers623@gmail.com

Disability Law

Sarah Sullivan: ssullivan@fcsf.edu

Homelessness

Kirsten Clanton:
Kirsten.clanton@southernlegal.org

Children's Rights

Jessica Rae: jrae@lawprogram.org

Interested in developing a new committee in an area of law not listed here? Contact Anthony Musto, Chair of the Section. ▀

The Florida Public Interest Journal: *Call for Submissions*

Do you have a topic you want to write about? PILS is seeking interested members willing to write about public interest law issues. Send us tips about cases, issues, or topics we should be covering.

Contact Kirsten Clanton, Esq. if you are interested at Kirsten.clanton@southernlegal.org.

Membership in the Public Interest Law Section

is open to all who have a common interest in advocacy and enhancement of constitutional, statutory or other rights that protect the dignity, security, justice, liberty or freedom of the individual or public. PILS provides a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas leading to increased knowledge and understanding of the areas of public interest law. PILS celebrates 25 years of service to the legal profession this year.

The Florida Public Interest Journal

Executive Editors:

Kirsten Clanton, Esq. &
Jennifer Portwood Gordon, Esq.

Views and conclusions expressed in articles herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editorial staff, or of the Public Interest Law Section of The Florida Bar.

The Florida Bar Public Interest Law Section

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For more information please visit us at:
[The Florida Bar Public Interest Law Section](#)