

President's Message

Partnerships are the Lifeblood of an Organization

By Deidre Deculus Robert, 2023-24 President

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the president of the Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF). For more than 30 years, this organization has been a vital source of funding for civil legal aid, supporting vulnerable citizens in various crucial aspects of their lives. Addressing the challenges posed by rising poverty levels and decreasing funding for civil legal aid is indeed a crucial mission. We know we cannot do it alone. Partnerships are the lifeblood of an organization. I believe in the words of Mother Teresa, "I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things."

Throughout this year, we have worked hard cultivating our current partnerships and building new relationships with like-minded organizations. We had the privilege of collaborating with the Louisiana State Bar Association for various events this year, working together to train our leadership, extend a warm welcome to new bar members, engage with the justice community and their crucial efforts, and impart valuable insights to law students about the significance of civil legal aid. This partnership plays a pivotal role in advancing our

shared mission of ensuring civil legal aid for all by expanding our collective impact.

We traveled across the state to visit with our counterparts. Our goal was to meet them where they are and to bring their foundation to them. We met with local lawyers, grantees, judges, shared a meal, and gained meaningful insight to regional needs.

We also had a great meeting with the Louisiana Supreme Court and shared our vision to ensure access to equal and fair representation of the poor in Louisiana. We thank the Louisiana Supreme Court for its continued support.

We fostered our collaboration with the State of Louisiana through an agreement with the Office of the Louisiana State Treasurer. This partnership enables the LBF to secure funding for legal representation of children in child protection cases and adult civil legal services to the indigent. We expanded our relationship with the State with an agreement with the



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Louisiana Housing Corporation. The LBF receives funding for education, counseling and direct representation of impoverished citizens in matters of title clearing (homeowner foreclosure), foreclosure prevention, mediation, and mortgage loan modifications.

I firmly believe that each of these partnerships and collaborations, among many others, constitutes the very foundation of our success.

To quote my favorite child author Dr. Seuss, "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

Thanks to all of you who contribute to the important work of the LBF. I hope to see you this year at the 38th Annual Gala on Friday, April 19, at the World War II Museum in New Orleans. I would like to thank the amazing LBF staff and the dedicated LBF Board for their unwavering passion and commitment to realizing equal access to justice in the State of Louisiana. Engaging with the civil legal aid community in Louisiana has been a humbling experience, and I am immensely proud of the outstanding work being accomplished. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

LBF Announces New and Returning Fellows

The Louisiana Bar Foundation announces the Fellows who have renewed their membership or joined between Oct. 14-Dec. 14, 2023:

Marguerite L. Adams, New Orleans; James A. Anderson, Denham Springs; Hon. Mary Becnel, LaPlace; Jack C. Benjamin Jr., New Orleans; Barton W. Bernard, Lafayette; Jared T. Blackburn, Baton Rouge; Laura M. Blockman, New Orleans; Patricia R. Bonneau, Mandeville; Dan M. Boudreaux, Baton Rouge; Charles C. Bourque, Jr., Houma; Nicholas S. Bouzon, New Orleans; Mary Brandon, New Orleans; Stephen C. Braud, Belle Chasse; Melanie K. Breaux, Harahan; Hon. Camille G. Buras, New Orleans; Yasha L. Clark, New Orleans; Stephen K. Conroy, Metairie; Christy A. Culver, Houston; Shereba L. Diaz, Monroe; Hon. Dee D. Drell, Alexandria; Julie-Ann Duhe, Mandeville; James M. Edwards, Monroe; Jerry Edwards,

Shreveport; Hon. Daniel J. Ellender, Shreveport; Leah N. Engelhardt, New Orleans; Thomas H. Fields III, Monroe; Hon. Tiffany Foxworth-Roberts, Baton Rouge; Vance Gibbs, Baton Rouge; McKenna R. Giovingo, Metairie; Rudy W. Gorrell, New Orleans; William J. Guste III, New Orleans; Mark E. Hanna, New Orleans; Erah Harper, Baton Rouge; Camille Jackson, Alexandria; Jonathan L. Johnson, Lake Charles; Mark Judson, Lake Charles; Hon. Kinasiyumki T. Kimble, Baton Rouge; Hon. William J. Knight, Covington; Hon. Nancy Amato Konrad, Metairie; Jennifer A. Lee, Hammond; Georges M. Legrand, Metairie; Hon. Marg Lauren Lemmon, Hahnville; Hon. Joy Cossich Lobrano, New Orleans; Ashley K. Longwell, New Orleans; Erin M. Lorio, Mandeville; Hon. Jennifer Luse, Baton Rouge; Tanner D. Magee, Houma; John T. Mandeville, Baton Rouge;

Sidney A. Marchand III, Donaldsonville; Timothy J. Martinez, Baton Rouge; Suzanne C. Myers, Covington; Colvin G. Norwood, Jr., New Orleans; Blaike L. Ordes, Slidell; Hon. Jimmie C. Peters, Jena; Kevin T. Phayer, Mandeville; John Pieksen, New Orleans; Laura Plunkett, New Orleans; Tammy Pratt, Lafayette; Fredrick Preis Jr., New Orleans; Brittney M. Reed, Baton Rouge; Daniel Rees, Breaux Bridge; Leon J. Reymond, Jr., Metairie; Charles A. Riddle III, Marksville; Daniel C. Rodgers, New Orleans; Christopher Schwartz, Prairieville; John D. Sileo, Santa Rosa Beach; Susan Skidmore, West Monroe; Hon. Raymond S. Steib, Jr., Gretna; Hon. Ford E. Stinson, Jr., Benton; Mary Terrell Joseph, Baton Rouge; Connor Thomas, Baton Rouge; Brett Venn, New Orleans; Hon. Miriam G. Waltzer, New Orleans; and Jon D. Wasielewski, New Orleans.