

Passing the Baton: Louisiana Bar Foundation's Commitment to the Profession

By Edmund J. Giering IV, 2025–26 LBF President



Some roles remind you why institutions matter. Serving as President of the Louisiana Bar Foundation has been one of those experiences for me. It has been both an honor and a privilege to serve this remarkable organization and the mission that binds us together: ensuring meaningful access to justice for all Louisianans.

While we celebrate the Foundation's 40th Anniversary this year, we reflect not only on our history but also on the people who have built and sustained this work. For four decades, the Louisiana Bar Foundation has quietly transformed generosity into justice, turning the commitment of the legal community into life-changing support for people across our state. Our Fellows, grantees, donors, board members, and partners are the heartbeat of the Foundation. Because of their commitment, families facing eviction have found stability, survivors of domestic violence have secured protection, veterans have accessed the benefits they earned, and children and seniors have received the legal advocacy they deserve.

Serving as President has given me a front-row seat to the extraordinary impact of our work. I have witnessed firsthand how strategic funding strengthens legal aid organizations across Louisiana and transforms individual lives in profound and meaningful ways. Every grant we award is more than a check; it represents hope restored, dignity protected and opportunity renewed.

During the 2025–26 year, the Foundation granted \$14.4 million to support law-related education, domestic violence services, children's legal advocacy,

and direct legal aid. These programs go to the very heart of the health, safety, and security of citizens across our state. We are committed to maintaining this level of funding for the 2026–27 fiscal year.

We are also investing in the future of our profession through collaborations with Louisiana law schools. These partnerships help educate the next generation of lawyers and create a vital pipeline for public interest attorneys. We have provided funding to Loyola University College of Law to establish the Loyola Child Welfare & Domestic Violence Clinic, led by Professor Tim McEvoy, and Southern University Law Center to strengthen its Clinical Education Program and expand services to the surrounding community. We are soon to finalize our support to LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center to establish the Public Interest Law Initiative under the Pugh Institute for Justice, and we look forward to partnering with Tulane University School of Law in the coming year.

These initiatives reflect an important truth about leadership and service: none of us accomplishes everything we hope to during our time in a role like this. Institutions like the Louisiana Bar Foundation move forward through the dedication of many people over many years. Leadership is like a relay race—each of us carrying the baton for a time before passing it to the next steward. For forty years, the Foundation's growth has progressed exactly this way, with generations of lawyers and leaders advancing the mission step by step, year by year.

What remains most meaningful are the people and partnerships built along the way. I am deeply grateful to our Board

of Directors for their dedication and leadership, to our Fellows for their steadfast investment in justice, to the Louisiana Supreme Court and the State of Louisiana for their enduring and steadfast support, and to our grantee partners who do the challenging and often unheralded work on the front lines every day.

The Foundation's impact continues to be recognized across our community. Last fall, the Loyola Gillis Long Poverty Law Center honored the LBF with its 2025 Social Justice Champion Award, the New Orleans Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals recognized the Foundation as Outstanding Foundation at its Philanthropy Awards luncheon, and in December, LBF was inducted into the Loyola 1912 Society. These honors belong to the entire Fellows community.

As my term as President draws to a close, my belief in the future of this organization has never been stronger. The need for civil legal aid continues to grow, but so does the determination of those who support this mission.

Serving as President has been one of the great privileges of my professional life. While the title now passes to the next steward, the work continues—and so does The Foundation's commitment to the mission we share. The Louisiana Bar Foundation's story has always been written by lawyers who believe access to justice matters and who step up to carry the mission forward. I am proud to have carried the baton for a time, and even prouder to know that many others will continue the race. Because when a community invests in justice, the impact endures far beyond any single term of service.