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Other AVLF News!



o AVLF's Guardian ad Litem and Domestic Violence Programs have each been awarded a 2011-2012 Fulton County Human Services Grant! We will continue to be able to advocate for the best interests of low income children whose parents are engaged in high conflict custody litigation, as well as victims of domestic violence seeking assistance at our Safe Families Office.

o AVLF volunteer W.J. Ziegler, of Arnall Golden Gregory, obtained and successfully collected on a \$4,000 judgment for an AVLF client who was forced to live under horrific conditions due to the landlord's failure to maintain the premises.

Firm Associates Demonstrate Passion for Pro Bono Service!

By: Brian Smith, Associate, Arnall Golden Gregory

I recall a distraught young lady walking into the office provided to me by The Atlanta Volunteer Lawyer Foundations' pro-bono Saturday Lawyers Program. Like the three other Associate volunteers in attendance that day, I was there to evaluate the pre-screened legal case of the young woman about to walk through the door.



A young, live-at-home college student soon emerged - only 18 years old. She explained to me that she had been constantly harassed by creditors attempting to collect upon a \$5,000.00 bill which resulted from her mother's unauthorized use of her credit card. She feared prosecution of her single mother, and losing her home. She did, however, feel strongly about working out a repayment plan with her creditor, and she, like so many others with nowhere else to turn, called upon AVLF for help. I accepted her case and, nearly two weeks later, was able to secure a zero percent interest re-payment plan on an aging credit card balance. I found myself wishing that my credit cards had such reasonable rates. When I informed the young lady of the settlement result that I had obtained in her favor, she gave me one of the most gratifying "thank-you's" I'd ever received. She told me that I had saved her credit, and possibly her home.

My story is fairly typical. Settlements like this are obtained every week due to the efforts of countless AVLF attorney volunteers. And it's no secret that Associates are the lifeblood of AVLF's Saturday Morning Lawyers Program's positive impact. Through the generosity of their respective law firms, and their individual conviction to equal access to justice, Associates at firms all around Atlanta routinely give selflessly of their time and talents. Their service enables AVLF to serve.

Because Associates play such an integral role in its day-to-day operations, AVLF has decided to launch an exciting new initiative to honor the valuable contributions of Associate attorneys from various Atlanta-area firms who have demonstrated a passion for pro-bono service, and a desire to lead.

AVLF is excited to announce the establishment of a Junior Board. The Junior Board will consist of 16 attorneys who have emerged as pro-bono leaders in

o Volunteer John Allen from McKenna, Long & Aldridge has accepted his third One Child, One Lawyer case. His two previous clients are living permanently with relatives after a stay in foster care. John will be advocating for a similar happy result for his new client.

o AVLF volunteer attorney Denienne Steele obtained the full dismissal of a debt collection lawsuit filed against a low-income senior with very limited income.

o AVLF volunteer Chris Armor, of Armor Law, LLC, secured the dismissal of a debt-collection suit by a debt-buyer against a low-income AVLF client.

o AVLF volunteer Melissa Segal, of Swift, Currie, McGhee & Heirs, stopped the collection activities of a debt collector against a low-income senior.

o AVLF volunteer Rob Elliott, of Troutman Sanders, secured the dismissal of an eviction filed against a low-income senior who came to Fulton County's new Self-Help Center and was assisted by AVLF's part-time attorney, Jennifer Hubbard.

o AVLF Deputy Director, Tamara Serwer Caldas, secured the dismissal of an eviction filed against low-income, Spanish-speaking, father of three young children.

o A TPO can't erase the initials a client's husband carved into the back of her hands with a boxcutter, but hopefully it's the first step in restoring her and her children's safety and sanity. AVLF thanks DLA attorney Franklin Trapp, legal secretary Jody Chadwick & summer associate Gavin Reinke for giving their client that opportunity by securing her that TPO

Atlanta's legal community. Each of them could likely share a story similar to my own.

The Junior Board's purpose will be two-fold: to increase awareness among Associates of the pro-bono projects of AVLF, and to assist AVLF with its fundraising efforts. The Junior Board will work to recruit even more talented Atlanta-area attorneys to help feed Atlanta's under-served, and seemingly insatiable, need for quality legal representation.

The Junior Board's first major fund raising effort will be to recruit more Associates to attend AVLF's annual Wine Tasting event. The Wine Tasting has been a major source of AVLF operational funding, and we hope to make this year's event better (and younger) than ever. We've already begun our work to this end.

Pro-bono, public service is a mandate of all Georgia lawyers, and a habit best instilled young. AVLF, its Board of Directors, Marty Ellin, as Executive Director of AVLF, and myself, as the first President of the Junior Board, thank you, in advance, for your support of this new Associate-driven initiative to expand the services and broaden the reach of the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation.



Each year, AVLF's Domestic Violence Project's Safe Families Office provides **free** legal representation and supportive services to more than 2,500 victims of domestic violence. Your support makes a huge impact on our ability to continue serving these men, women and their children, as well as their ability to provide stability for their families. On their behalf and that of AVLF, we thank you for your donation!

Disclaimer: A one-time donation of \$5.00 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Messaging & Data Rates May Apply. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. All donations must be authorized by the account holder. Service is available on most carriers. Donations are collected for the benefit of the AVLF by the Mobile Giving Foundation and subject to the terms found at www.hmgf.org/t. You can unsubscribe at any time by replying STOP to short code 20222; Reply HELP to 20222 for help.

Client Testimonial

and child support.

o After police and DFCs involvement, 109 volunteer hours, and testifying at trial, AVLF Guardian ad Litem volunteer Mindy Pillow wrote a recommendation for primary custody to one parent so the minor children could stay together, which was accepted by the judge.

o Robert Luskin, a volunteer with AVLF's Guardian ad Litem program advocated for the best interest of two young children. Mr. Luskin feels strongly that his involvement as a Guardian ad Litem in this case contributed to the parties' ability to settle.

o Long time GAL volunteer Greg Golden testified on behalf of children in a highly contested custody dispute, and GSU School of Law intern Marina Bushkanets was able to observe the trial.

o AVLF volunteer attorney, Rob Elliot of Troutman Sanders negotiated a Dismissal in an Illegal Eviction case for an elderly and very frustrated client who was referred to the Eviction Defense Program by one of AVLF's newest initiatives, the Fulton County State Court Self Help Center!

o AVLF volunteer attorney Jared Miller, of Parker Hudson Rainer & Dobbs, won a \$1,000 judgment and collected for a client whose security deposit was wrongfully withheld.

o AVLF volunteer attorney Shakara Barnes, of Troutman Sanders, secured the return of a \$800 security deposit wrongfully withheld from an AVLF client.

o AVLF volunteer attorney Jonathon

"The attorney for me was 100% thorough and congenial --Everything/ every step/ every note was explained in a language I could understand and then she would go over it again.

The lawyer I had, Nancy Mau, left nothing to be made better. She was EXCELLENT and precise and amiable and expedited everything quickly. I am saying your Lawyers Foundation is tops!!!

Thank you for your service."

-M.D. Darricks, 80 year old wills on wheels client

AVLF By Any Other Name

By: Martin Ellin, Executive Director, AVLF

We have been the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation for 32 years, and we are not going to change a name that is widely known and respected. But our name does not fully convey who we are, and if we were starting again, perhaps we should attempt to be more descriptive...

We are the Atlanta Domestic Violence Prevention Foundation (ADVPF), established to give victims of intimate partner violence access to the civil legal representation that has the most impact on a survivor's ability to make a permanent break from her abuser.

We exist because such help is not otherwise easily and at no cost available to victims, and therefore in 2009 we opened our DV Project's Safe Families Office, the only courthouse-based free legal support program of its kind in Georgia. The Safe Families Office serves survivors of domestic violence, dating violence and stalking, and since its opening in early 2009 more than 4,500 women have visited the Office. In that time, volunteer attorneys recruited, trained and supervised by the Atlanta Domestic Violence Prevention Foundation have secured not only critical Twelve-Month protective orders but also financial awards for their victim-clients in the amount of \$147, 109.27. Because our partner, the Fulton County Superior Court, has dedicated distinct space with protective support from Fulton County Sheriffs, because our Safe Families Office colleague Partnership Against Domestic Violence (PADV) staffs the Office to offer safety planning to victims, and because ADVPF coordinates the provision of quality, free legal support, the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence last year designated the Safe Families Office as a national model for the delivery of these services.



We are the Atlanta Tenant Support Center (ATSC), founded to coordinate the delivery of legal services to those who need help to encourage or if necessary force their landlord to honor the provisions of any lease and/or the jurisdiction's Housing Code. In Fulton County

Fligg, of Womble Carlyle, settled the case and collected \$900 for a client who was defrauded by a unscrupulous computer training school.

o Rebecca McFadyen and Brian Meadows of Ballard Spahr secured the rescission of a lease agreement and return of a \$500 security deposit to their clients, who never moved into the rental property because the landlord failed to make necessary repairs.

o Attorney Phil Weltner observed the Fulton Juvenile Family Drug Court on Wednesday, June 22nd in preparation for accepting an appointment as a volunteer child attorney.

o AVLF volunteer Jennifer Smith, of David & Rosetti, settled a case to recover damages caused by her client's landlord's negligence and stopped collection activities and settled the debt of a client being wrongfully pursued for medical-related debt that was not her responsibility.

o AVLF volunteer Warren Ott, along with AVLF staff Michael Lucas and Amanda Donalson, put on an event at the Asbury Harris Epworth Towers to provide free Wills, Advance Health Care Directives and Powers of Attorney to ten low-income seniors.

o AVLF volunteer attorney Cindy Gunnemann, of Howard A. Gold, PC, secured unpaid wages for an AVLF client denied her last paycheck.

o AVLF volunteer attorney Sarah Babcock, of Alston & Bird, settled a landlord tenant dispute for \$800, securing the deposit owed to her client.

alone last year, there were more than 51,000 dispossessionary warrants sworn out by landlords: more than 18,000 of them were answered by tenants seeking to contest the landlord's effort to expel them from their home. Perhaps because the legal process demands that the tenant's answer be filed within seven days of being served an eviction warrant, and that trial be held not more than 14 days after the filing of an answer- and certainly because poor tenants cannot pay for legal assistance, and there are far too few free legal service providers for this population- far less than 1 out of every 100 tenants is represented by counsel at the contested hearing. The ATSC attacks the problem in three major ways:

1) The Housing Advocacy Resource Center places an attorney in the Fulton County Self-Help Center four days each week. That attorney counsels low-income tenants as they consider how best to respond to a Proceeding Against Tenant Holding Over, or discusses with tenants how to prepare as well as possible for an upcoming mediation or trial. Having a lawyer to whom to speak is a tremendous benefit to a tenant uncertain about the legal process and the law that will determine their right to remain in the premises, their ability to force a landlord to make demanded repair, their obligation to continue to pay full rent to a defaulting landlord etc.

2) The Eviction Defense Program offers direct representation by an ATSC-trained private attorney at the contested trial on the merits of the landlord's claim and any tenant set-off or counterclaim.

3) The federal Protecting Tenants in Foreclosure Act offers real assistance to tenants being illegally pushed to leave their home by a foreclosing entity. ATSC lawyers not only have been working to educate the Courts and the tenant population about their legal rights in these circumstances vis a vis the old owner/landlord and the new owner/landlord, they have also partnered with a local law school to craft and promote legislation to confirm and to expand the rights of tenants in this state pursuant to that Act.

4) Many tenants are frustrated by their landlord's refusal to make repair to their home or to otherwise honor an existing lease. These tenants have not received a dispossessionary warrant, but need legal assistance nonetheless to force compliance with the law. Other tenants are constructively evicted by their landlord's termination of utilities or changing of locks, and need help to address these illegal activities and to return them to their homes and their status. For these tenants who have a legal claim that may be furthered by meeting with a lawyer, we offer our Saturday Lawyer Program, where volunteer attorneys from private firms meet with clients to assess their concerns, to offer brief advice and counsel and, as necessary and appropriate, agree to serve as counsel for the full, direct representation of the claim.

Read the article in its entirety [here](#).

"Dine Out for AVLF" @ La Tavola a Huge Hit!

o Long time volunteer GAL Greg Golden testified on behalf of children in a highly contested custody dispute, and GSU School of Law intern Marina Bushkanets was able to observe the trial.

o GSU Law student Shelia Manely is 2 for 2 - she negotiated her 2nd TPO by Consent of the summer to protect her 19-year old client and baby from the man who broke her tooth and blacked her eye in front of a group of friends. Luckily, he'll also be picking up the dental bill.

***** AVLF is seeking volunteers to help with our first silent auction which will be held in conjunction with the 2011 Winetasting. Interested in joining the committee? Have donations you'd like to contribute? Please contact Monique Henderson @ 404.521.3319 or mhenderson@avlf.org**

Save the Date for the 20th Annual Winetasting!

AVLF is seeking donations for our first silent auction which will premiere at this year's Winetasting. To make a donation or for additional information, please contact Monique Henderson: mhenderson@avlf.org, or 404.521.3319

Thanks to our Funders!

AVLF would like to thank the following funders for their ongoing commitment and support of the Foundation:



Dine Out Night at La Tavola



On behalf of the staff and Board of the Atlanta Volunteer lawyers Foundation, we'd like to thank each of you who were able to join us for "Dine Out for AVLF" @ La Tavola on June 28th. The turnout was more than double the anticipated showing. As a result, 20% of the entire restaurant's food sales for the night was donated back to the Foundation. This fundraising event benefited AVLF's Domestic Violence Project which provides free legal representation and supportive services to more than 2,500 victims each year!

"This was one of the most successful Dine-Outs we've done. 99 people came out to support AVLF. That is a huge accomplishment. As much as we'd like, we can't take all the credit. You have to give yourself a pat on the back as well.

I think the biggest win last night was the fit of the guests with La Tavola. Everyone really seemed at home. For us, it's such a pleasure to see

- Fulton County Human Services
- Atlanta Bar Foundation (Lawyer Referral Information Services Grant)
- Georgia Bar Foundation
- Mary Allen Lindsey Branan Foundation
- Lawyers Foundation of Georgia
- Georgia Dept. of Human Services PSSF (Promoting Safe and Stable Families)

Funding of the domestic violence project and Safe Families Office provided in part by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Housing and Human Services Department's Grant Program.

Quick Links

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Contact Us:

Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation
 235 Peachtree Street NE
 Suite 1750
 Atlanta, GA 30303
 Phone: (404)521.0790

folks mingling through the restaurant and tables talking to each other. The restaurant turned into one big dinner party. The atmosphere it created was very special and I think everyone felt it."

--Chris Dean, General Manager, La Tavola

Visit our Photobucket [page](#) to view additional photos from the soiree.

Missed this event? Don't worry, we had such a good turnout we're planning this event again for the fall. Check your email regularly--additional details are forthcoming!

AVLF's Toni Roberts Wins Powerhouse Paralegal of the Year

at the Georgia Association of Paralegals ("GAP") 1st Annual black tie fundraising and awards event "Casino de Jure". Held on Saturday, June 18th at Cox Enterprises' Rotunda Ballroom, Toni beat out more than ten other nominees from various law firms and Fortune 500 companies for this prestigious title. During the presentation of the award, GAP's current President, Paezle Harris, related that the nomination letter submitted by AVLF's Liz Whipple on behalf of Ms. Roberts *"was so touching and moving, that it brought tears to my eyes when I read it."*

The time and effort put into planning the event by the GAP members was evident throughout the evening. Attendees dined on chicken and salmon during dinner, had the option of participating in an extensive silent auction, and were given \$1,000 in faux casino chips to play table games, roulette, and slot machines staffed by real dealers.

Hats off to GAP for a stellar evening. And congratulations again to AVLF's Liz Whipple and Toni Roberts for a job well done. AVLF is proud of you both and honored to have you on our team.

Georgia's Powerhouse Paralegal Criteria

Takes Accountability for Own Performance and Performance of the Team

- Involved in Company Volunteer Efforts
- Continuously Seeks Out Educational Opportunities
- Mentors Other Professionals in the Legal Community
- Presents a Professional Image When Communicating With Others and is Perceived by Others as a Mentor
- Supports the Professional Development and Continuing Legal Education Efforts of Their Support Staff
- Meets the Definition and Qualifications of a Skilled & Experienced Paralegal as Defined by the Georgia Association of Paralegals, Inc.

Fax: (404)521.3434

www.AVLF.org

**Help AVLF Continue to Provide Free
Legal Assistance to Metro Atlanta
Residents!**

Now more than ever, AVLF depends on the in-kind and financial contributions from friends of the Foundation like you. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to help us continue to provide FREE legal services and programs for our community's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you!

\$15.00

\$50.00

\$100.00

\$250.00



In 2009, Toni joined AVLF as Paralegal and Project Coordinator of its Domestic Violence Project, through which survivors of intimate partner violence and stalking receive safety planning and legal assistance in obtaining civil temporary protective orders against their abusers. She is currently the Project's Administrator. Toni is a member of the Fulton County Domestic Violence Task Force and serves on the Board of Directors of Quest 35, Inc., a nonprofit organization which develops and implements affordable supportive housing programs that service the special needs population of homeless and/or chronically homeless adults with substance abuse and mental health concerns.

For additional information on how to support or become a member of GAP, please email president@gaparalegal.org or visit their website:

www.gaparalegal.org

AVLF would like to thank the following volunteers for their service during the month of June:

Domestic Violence Project

Rachel Ashe, Georgia State University College of Law

Steven N. Cayton, Esq.

Valerie L. Combs, Esq., Troutman Sanders

Alexandra V. Garrison, Esq., Alston & Bird LLP
James A. Gober, Arnall Golden Gregory, LLP
Sheila Manely, Georgia State University College of Law
Ana Maria Pacholick, DLA Piper LLP (US)
Franklin A. Trapp, Esq., DLA Piper LLP (US)

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Saturday Lawyer Program

Al Lurey, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Heather Heindel, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Sally Ridenour, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Mike Breslin, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Julia Seider (summer associate), Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Laura Kolesar (summer associate), Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Sam Diamant (summer associate), Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Liza Crabtree (summer associate), Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton
Adam L. Hoipkemier, Carlton Fields
Ashley Kilpatrick, Emory University
Tameka Phillips, Paul Hastings
Ankit Shrivastava (summer associate), Paul Hastings
Heena Ali (summer associate), Paul Hastings
Jin Yoo, (summer associate), Paul Hastings
Jon Fligg, Womble Carlyle
Leandre Anthony, Womble Carlyle
Sarah Parker (summer associate), Womble Carlyle
Derek Wu (summer associate), Womble Carlyle
Rebecca McCorvey (summer associate), Womble Carlyle
Denienne Steele, Attorney at Law
William Traylor, Attorney at Law
Rebecca McFadyen, Ballard Spahr
Winston Folmar, Ballard Spahr
Gibson Lanier, Ballard Spahr
Gustavo Narvaez, Ballard Spahr
Ann Ferebee, Bryan Cave
Justin Barry, Bryan Cave
Edwin Cook, Bryan Cave
Molly O'Connor, Mabry & McClelland, LLP
Roger Lang, Merchant & Gould P.C.
Jane Warring, Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi
David Kuklewicz, Alston & Bird LLP
Michael Bixon, Reynolds Law Group LLC
Michael Frankson, Huff, Powell & Bailey

Eviction Defense

Brad Breece, Troutman Sanders
Neeli Shah, Smith Gambrell & Russell
Rob Elliott, Troutman Sanders
Jason Edgecombe, King & Spalding
Tom Reilly, Troutman Sanders
Jarrod Loadholt, Troutman Sanders

Dollars for Judgements

Jan Rosser, Rosser Law, PC
Harriet Isenberg, Isenberg & Hewitt, P.C.

About AVLF: *The Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation (AVLF) coordinates the provision of free civil legal services for low-income greater Atlanta residents by private lawyers. In 2009, AVLF advised more than 28,500 callers and secured representation or other forms of legal information and support for more than 2,500 eligible clients through volunteer attorneys.*

Yours in service,

Monique Henderson

Development Director

Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation

Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation | 235 Peachtree Street NE | North Tower, Suite 1750 | Atlanta | GA | 30303