

# WHERE HEALTH MEETS JUSTICE

A fellowship program to build healthcare expertise and resources in the legal aid community

## 2014 Fellow Biographies

### **Jonathan Asher**

Executive Director, Colorado Legal Services

Jon Asher is the Executive Director of Colorado Legal Services. He was the Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Denver from 1980 until 1999 when the Legal Aid Society merged with the other two federally funded programs to become Colorado Legal Services. He began his legal services career as a staff attorney with Colorado Rural Legal Services in Greeley, Colorado in August, 1971. Jon graduated from Harvard College and Harvard Law School. Jon currently serves on the Colorado Judicial Advisory Council. He also is a member of the Colorado Access to Justice Commission, is a member of the Colorado Bar Association's Board of Governors and Chairs the Colorado Bar Association's Availability of Legal Services Committee.

### **Carol Ashley**

Vice President of Advocacy, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Carol Ashley heads the Shriver Center's Advocacy Program, which actively pursues justice and opportunity on behalf of low-income families and individuals, representing them in a wide range of policy and legal matters including housing, employment, public benefits, community and criminal justice, education, and health care. She has a distinguished record in court and extensive experience representing community-based organizations and solving tough policy and systemic problems. As the president of Futterman, Howard & Ashley, she headed the firm's civil rights and school equity practice and oversaw corporate and personnel matters. Her broad experience includes serving as lead counsel in federal education equity class action lawsuits and as an adjunct professor and clinical supervisor at Loyola University School of Law, Child Law and Education Institute.

### **Jeffrey Been**

Executive Director, Legal Aid Society, Louisville, Kentucky

Jeffrey A. Been is an attorney and Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society. Jeff previously served as Project Director for the HIV/AIDS Legal Project. Prior to his work with Legal Aid, Jeff served as a prosecutor, judicial law clerk, staff attorney for the US Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit, and on the faculty at the Indiana School of Law. He was also Director of the AIDS Legal Project for Indiana Legal Services. He currently serves as an adjunct faculty member for the University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law. Jeff is an author of several articles on constitutional rights. He is a member of the Indiana and Kentucky Bar Associations and has served as a board member on various civic and professional organizations, including the Louisville Bar Association and the Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission.

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Jeff is the recipient of several awards for his professional service, including the Brandeis School of Law's Dean Service Award and the Louisville Bar Association's Justice Martin E. Johnstone Special Recognition Award.

## **Daniel Bruner**

Director of Legal Services, Whitman-Walker Health

Daniel Bruner is Director of Legal Services at Whitman-Walker Health, a community-based nonprofit health clinic in Washington, DC, with a special mission to people living with HIV and to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities. Prior to joining Whitman-Walker's staff in 1995, Dan was a partner at the Washington, D.C. law firm of Spiegel & McDiarmid. At Whitman-Walker, Dan's practice has concentrated on discrimination in health care and employment; on insurance and employee benefits; and on health privacy.

Dan received his law degree, magna cum laude, and a Master's in Public Policy from the University of Michigan. He is the author of the "Forward" in David W. Webber et al., *AIDS AND THE LAW* (4th ed. 2007); and the author of *High-Risk Sexual Behavior by Persons Living With HIV/AIDS, and Failure to Disclose HIV Infection to Sex Partners: How Do We Respond?* 19 *J. AIDS & Public Policy* 11 (2004). He has been an Adjunct Associate Professor of Law at American University's Washington College of Law, teaching courses on Public Health Law and HIV and the Law. He serves on the Steering Committee of the District of Columbia Consortium of Legal Services Providers and is a past Co-Chair of the Consortium. He is a recipient of awards for distinguished service from the Washington Council of Lawyers, a voluntary bar association dedicated to pro bono and public interest law, and from the LGBT Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

## **Caroline Chapman**

Director, Public Benefits Practice Group, LAF

Caroline Chapman is the Director of the Public Benefits Practice Group at LAF. Her practice includes affirmative and defensive litigation, primarily involving Social Security and Medicaid with an emphasis on health-care access issues. Prior to law school, Ms. Chapman worked in direct social-service provision as a VISTA volunteer, and in policy/legal assistant positions with a New York City Councilmember, the U.S.

Department of Justice, and the Federal Election Commission. She received an M.A. in American Studies from Yale University and a J.D. from the University of Texas. After law school, she clerked with the Illinois Appellate Court and then maintained a part-time practice in adult guardianship cases. She joined LAF in 2008 as a general practice, neighborhood attorney, and became a member of the Public Benefits Practice Group when it was formed in 2011.

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## **Regina Daniels Thomas**

Deputy Chief Counsel Broad Based Advocacy, Legal Aid and Defender Association, Inc.

Regina Daniels Thomas graduated cum laude from Tennessee State University in 1991 and was awarded a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from Vanderbilt University School of Law in 1994. She began her legal career at Legal Aid and Defender Association assigned to the Civil Law Group representing children in child protective proceedings as well as juvenile delinquency proceedings in the Third Circuit Court, County of Wayne. In 2002, Ms. Thomas joined the Michigan Department of Attorney General as an Assistant Attorney General assigned to the Children and Youth Services Division representing the Department of Human Services in Child Protection Proceedings in the Third Circuit Court, County of Wayne. Attorney Thomas rejoined LAD in January 2013 after having served as chief counsel of its Juvenile Law Group from 2004 to 2009. As Chief Counsel for the Juvenile Law Group of Legal Aid and Defender Association, Attorney Thomas testified before the United States House of Representative Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security March 26, 2009 at a hearing on Representation of Indigent Defendants in Criminal Cases: A Constitutional Crisis in Michigan and Other States? From 2010 to 2012 she was an assistant prosecuting attorney in the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. Since 2010 she has also been an adjunct faculty member of Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Attorney Thomas is currently responsible for the development and implementation of broad based advocacy initiative. She is also responsible for the overall management of LAD's Private Attorney Involvement Unit.

## **Beth Engels**

Managing Attorney, Community Legal Services Yavapai County

Prior to law school Beth Engels was an Intelligence Officer in the United States Army and a police officer with the Honolulu Police Department. Beth lobbied on behalf of victims of domestic violence at the Minnesota Coalition Against Battered Women while in law school and worked at the County Attorney office. After law school, Beth continued her work for victims of domestic violence at the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Beth transitioned to Iowa Legal Aid then managed Legal Aid offices in New Mexico and Arizona. Beth has a Master degree in Public Administration. Beth works closely with local and state domestic violence agencies and serves on numerous committees. Beth is a full-time single mother and derives great joy from spending time with her twins, Morgan and Makenna, as well as competing in triathlons and remodeling houses.

## **M. Nalani Fujimori Kaina**

Executive Director, Legal Aid Society of Hawaii

Nalani Fujimori Kaina is the Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, Hawai'i's oldest and largest statewide non-profit organization providing free legal services to the poor. Ms. Kaina joined Legal Aid in 1999 as a Staff Attorney on the island of Moloka'i, was the Managing Attorney for the Maui County

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offices and has also held the position of Deputy Director. She is a Commissioner on the Access to Justice Commission, past President and current Director of Hawai'i Women Lawyers, is a member of the ACLU of Hawai'i's Litigation Committee, Secretary of the Rural Community Assistance Corporation and the Chair of the Hawai'i State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. Ms. Kaina graduated from New York University School of Law and received her B.A. from Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

## **Dennis Groenenboom**

Executive Director, Iowa Legal Aid

Dennis Groenenboom is the Executive Director of Iowa Legal Aid, the statewide LSC funded legal services program in Iowa. Dennis has been with Iowa Legal Aid his entire legal career and has served as the program's Executive Director for over 20 years. Dennis currently serves as Chair of NLADA's Civil Policy Group, a position he has held since June, 2012. He has been a member of the Civil Policy Group since 2008. Iowa Legal Aid has operated a Health and Law Project since 2006, working primarily with federally qualified health centers.

## **George Hausen, Jr.**

Executive Director, Legal Aid of North Carolina

## **Charles Hey-Maestre**

Executive Director, Puerto Rico Legal Services Inc.

Charles S. Hey-Maestre is the Executive Director of Puerto Rico Legal Services, Inc. (PRLS), the primary provider of legal representation in civil matters for legal representation, advice and counsel in civil matters for approximately half of Puerto Rico's population who live at or near federal poverty levels. In his position he directs a program with 17 direct service offices around the island, several projects including those which serve special education students, victims of domestic violence and migrant farm workers, some 280 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$18,000,000. PRLS is among the largest recipients of funds from the Legal Services Corporation and provided services in about 24,000 cases in 2013. Mr. Hey-Maestre has been its E.D. since May, 2006.

From 1989 through 2006, Mr. Hey-Maestre was an attorney in private practice in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He has primarily litigated civil rights and employment discrimination cases, in addition to general civil litigation. He is admitted before the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, the Supreme Court of the United States, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico. He was also been a lead attorney for plaintiffs in the historic "subversives list" cases in the courts of Puerto Rico from 1990 through 2008. Among his reported cases are: *Lipsett v. University of Puerto Rico*, 864 F.2d 881 (1st Cir. 1988) (sexual harassment in higher education), *Sánchez de León v. Srio. De Justicia*, 157 D.P.R. 360 (2002)

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(sexual orientation discrimination), and *Otero-Burgos v. Inter American University*, 558 F.3d 1 (1st Cir. 2009) (rights of tenured faculty).

Mr. Hey-Maestre worked as a Reginald Heber Smith Community Law Fellow with PRLS for over two years (1980-83) and as a staff attorney and administrator of the Puerto Rican Civil Rights Institute (1983-89). In addition to his legal work and community involvement, Mr. Hey-Maestre chaired the Board of Directors of the Funding Exchange from 1994 to 1996; is a member of the New World Foundation's Board in New York City (which he chaired from 1994 to 2000); and from 1994 to 2008 was on the Board of Directors of the Center for Constitutional Rights, all of which are headquartered in New York City. He was named by the Governor of Puerto Rico to the Advisory Board of the Women's Advocate Office, where he served from 2002 through 2009. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of Management Information Exchange (M.I.E.).

Mr. Hey-Maestre is a graduate of Agustín Stahl High School in Bayamón, Puerto Rico (1973), Princeton University (A.B. - Political Economy, 1977) and New York University School of Law (J.D. - 1980).

## **Yvonne Mariajimez**

Deputy Director, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County

Yvonne Mariajimez is Deputy Director for Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA). She helps to oversee a budget of \$13 million and a staff of 100, including 40 lawyers. As a member of the NLSLA senior team, she also focuses on fund development and project sustainability. She began her legal services career in 1978 at San Fernando Valley Neighborhood Legal Services where she specialized in federal subsidized housing and equity fraud cases. She currently focuses on policy advocacy projects related to housing/foreclosures, health care, domestic violence, workforce development and immigration. She holds a B.S. from USC in Business Administration and a J.D. from Loyola Law School. She has dedicated her entire professional career as a lawyer to advocating for and on behalf of the poor.

## **Ed Marks**

Executive Director, New Mexico Legal Aid Inc.

Ed Marks has been Executive Director for New Mexico Legal Aid since November 2011. Between 2004 and 2011, Ed was Litigation Director for Legal Aid of Western Ohio. Ed also has been a national trainer and consultant for legal aid technology since the early 2000's. Ed began his legal services career in 1988 as a staff attorney with DNA Legal Services on the Navajo and Hopi Nations in Arizona.

## **Margaret Middleton**

Executive Director and Co-Founder, Connecticut Veterans Legal Center

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Margaret Middleton serves as Executive Director of Connecticut Veterans Legal Center (CVLC), which she co-founded in 2009. CVLC helps veterans experiencing homelessness and mental illness overcome legal barriers to recovery. CVLC was the first medical-legal partnership established with a VA health-care facility and has served over 900 veterans. Margaret also co-teaches the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School. Previously, she was an Emerson Fellow at David Rosen and Associates in New Haven and a law clerk to The Honorable Janet C. Hall of the U.S. District Court in Bridgeport, CT. She graduated from Cornell University with a degree in mechanical and aerospace engineering and worked at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory before attending the New York University School of Law.

## **Adam Mueller**

Staff Attorney/ILS Director of MLP Initiatives, Indiana Legal Services

Adam Mueller is a staff attorney at Indiana Legal Services – a state-wide non-profit legal services provider in Indiana. Since 2009, Adam has moderated the public benefits round-table for ILS and concentrates his practice in this area. In addition to his case-handling responsibilities, Adam facilitates two medical legal partnerships. In 2012, Adam was named an Up and Coming Lawyer by Indiana Lawyer.

## **Nikole Nelson**

Executive Director, Alaska Legal Services Corporation

Nikole Nelson is the Executive Director of Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC), Alaska's only statewide provider of free civil legal assistance to low-income Alaskans. Nikole oversees ALSC's 11 offices and a 40 member staff that are scattered across the vast and remote State of Alaska. She joined ALSC in 1998 as a staff attorney shortly after graduating from Willamette University College of Law and became ALSC's Executive Director in 2010. Throughout her legal career much of Nikole's advocacy work has focused on assuring access to health care for low-income and disabled Alaskans as well as systemic advocacy on behalf of children in Alaska's foster care system. She is a member of the Alaska Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Access to Civil Justice, the Alaska Bar Association's Pro Bono Services Committee, she was appointed by Anchorage's Mayor to the Housing and Neighborhood Development Commission in 2012, and currently Co-Chair's that Commission's Oversight Subcommittee on Homelessness.

## **Beth Orlansky**

Advocacy Director, Mississippi Center for Justice

Beth serves as advocacy director with the Mississippi Center for Justice. In this capacity, Beth manages the Center's policy campaigns and oversees the work of the staff attorneys. Beth is also the Center's child care advocate, working closely with the Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative to improve access to child care subsidies for low income Mississippi parents. She holds a bachelor's degree in Anthropology from Stanford University and a law degree from the University of Tennessee. Prior to joining the Center, Beth

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practiced law with Butler Snow, Ott & Purdy, and McGlinchey Stafford law firms in Jackson, and she has been involved as a volunteer with a wide variety of organizations. She and her husband Steve, also an attorney, have raised three sons, Abram, Jonathan, and Benjamin, and they are the delighted grandparents of Samuel Isaac.

## **David Pantos**

Executive Director, Legal Aid of Nebraska

Dave Pantos, 44, is the Executive Director of Legal Aid of Nebraska. Dave has been a licensed attorney for 17 years, over 14 of which has been in the area of poverty law. Prior to becoming Legal Aid's executive director in January of 2009, Dave was Legal Aid's Director of Litigation for over two years.

In addition to his role as Executive Director at Legal Aid, Dave is the Board Chairperson of the Domestic Violence Council of Greater Omaha, and a Board Chairperson of the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands. Dave also serves on several Nebraska Supreme Court Committees and Commissions, including the Commission on Children in the Courts and the Minority Justice Committee. Dave also served on the national Legal Services Corporation Pro Bono Task Force and on the American Bar Association Pro Bono advisory group. Dave also is on the national Management Information Exchange Journal editorial committee. Locally, Dave pens the In the Trenches column for the Omaha Daily Record.

Before Dave moved to Nebraska in 2006, he was the statewide supervisor of Legal Services of New Jersey's Supplemental Security Income Project. Dave received his JD and Masters of Science in Environmental Science at Indiana University in Bloomington in 1996, and acquired his BA in Political Science and History at Rutgers College in 1992. Dave is married to Kristin Girten who is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and has twin seven-year old boys, Miles and Lyndon.

## **Alison Paul**

Executive Director, Montana Legal Services Association

Alison Paul is the Executive Director of the Montana Legal Services Association in Helena, Montana. Prior to coming to Montana, Alison attended law school at the University of Kansas, where she was a member of the Law Review. Upon graduating from law school, Alison went into private practice in Chicago, Illinois, primarily advising tax-exempt organizations on tax and corporate issues. Alison joined the Montana Legal Services Association in 1998 as an attorney with its Domestic Violence Unit. Alison is a member of the Montana Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission, and the current co-chair of the NLADA Technology Committee. Alison received the 2005 NLADA Innovations in Equal Justice Award for her innovative use of technology to serve MLSA's low income clients.

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## **Anne Rubin**

Managing Attorney, Ohio State Legal Services Association

Anne Sessums Rubin is Managing Attorney of Southeastern Ohio Legal Services' Athens area office. She came to the region to study fine art at Ohio University and made rural Appalachian Ohio her home. Presently, she manages daily operations of an office serving seven counties and a robust general poverty law practice. She co-leads SEOLS' Administrative Law team responsible for implementing the program's priority plan focused on public benefits and health advocacy; and is also active on the Ohio Poverty Law Center's statewide Health and Welfare Task Force. She currently chairs the Board of Directors of IPAC (Integrating Professionals for Appalachian Children), a regional non-profit rural health network. Anne has a B.S. degree in Social Work from Ohio University and obtained her J.D. at Ohio State University.

## **Rodolfo Sanchez**

Deputy Director, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid

Rodolfo "Rudy" Sanchez graduated from Brown University in 1983 and from the University Of Texas School Of Law in 1989. Rudy has been employed at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid - commonly referred to as "TRLA" and formerly known as Texas Rural Legal Aid - since his graduation from law school. Rudy currently serves as TRLA's Deputy Director. Prior to being appointed Deputy Director, Rudy served as Director of TRLA's Farmworker Division, as Coordinator of TRLA's Labor and Employment Practice Group, and as manager of TRLA's Weslaco Texas Branch office. Rudy is licensed to practice law in Texas, and he is admitted to practice before the Fifth and Seventh U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of Texas, and the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois.

## **Anne Swerlick**

Deputy Director of Advocacy, Florida Legal Services

Anne L. Swerlick is the Deputy Director of Advocacy for Florida Legal Services, Inc., (FLS) a state support center for legal aid/legal services providers throughout Florida. She oversees and coordinates FLS' policy advocacy and litigation on a broad range of poverty law issues. For a number of years, her advocacy work has focused on health and disability issues. Ms. Swerlick was formerly employed as Managing Attorney with the Advocacy Center for Persons With Disabilities, Inc. (1987- 1991), (Florida's Protection and Advocacy agency), and as staff attorney and Deputy Director with Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. (1977-1987). Ms. Swerlick received her B.A. from the University of Virginia and her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law.

## **Rhodia Thomas**

Executive Director, MidPenn Legal Services



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Ms. Thomas serves as Executive Director of MidPenn Legal Services, a non-profit law-firm that provides civil legal services to low-income individuals and domestic violence survivors in 18 counties in central-Pennsylvania. She graduated magna cum laude from Syracuse University, with a B.S. in Education, and received her J.D. from Widener University School of Law. Ms. Thomas is active in the Pennsylvania Bar Association and currently serves as a member of the PBA Constitutional Review Committee and until recently she served as Co-Chair of the PBA's Access to Justice Committee. She is also a member of the Minority Bar Committee and for three years she co-chaired the MBC's Diversity Summit. Ms. Thomas is also a member of the PBA's Immigration Law, and Legal Services to the Public Committees. In July 2012, Ms. Thomas was elected to the Board of the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, and currently chairs the Audit Committee of PBI. Currently, Ms. Thomas serves as President of the Pennsylvania Project Directors Association. Ms. Thomas has received several awards including the PLAN Excellence Award, the Outstanding Minority Scholar Award, Women of Excellence Award, and in 2002 she was named as one of 50 Minorities of Influence by the American Lawyer Media. Ms. Thomas has over 25 years of experience in public interest law.

## **Valerie Zolezzi-Wyndham**

Managing Attorney, Community Legal Aid Inc.

Valerie Zolezzi-Wyndham is the Managing Attorney for Community Legal Aid's Worcester County office. Valerie co-founded and directs Community Legal Aid's medical-legal partnership Family Advocates of Central Massachusetts. She received her J.D. from Boston University School of Law in 2002 and her B.A. in Political Science and French Literature at Boston College in 1995. Prior to serving as managing attorney she served as Director of Training and Professional Development from 2007-2011. She worked at Legal Assistance Corporation of Central Massachusetts for over 7 years before the program joined with Western Massachusetts Legal Services to form Community Legal Aid in 2011. In 2004 Valerie Zolezzi-Wyndham received the Innovations in Legal Services Award in recognition of her vision in creating the Family Advocates of Central Massachusetts. From 2004-2007 Valerie was the Regional Training Director at the Center for Legal Aid Education, a Boston-based organization that provides continuing education and training to equal justice attorneys and staff across the country. An immigrant from Mexico, Valerie is fluent in Spanish and French. Valerie serves as Vice-Chair of the board of directors of the Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center and as a board member of the Worcester County Food Bank.