

poetic justice

Volume 5
Issue 3
Fall 2008

Legal Aid Board Member honored for *pro bono* service

The American Bar Association Standing Committee on *Pro Bono* and Public Service recently honored Jones Day attorney and Legal Aid's current Board Vice President David Kutik with its *Pro Bono Publico Award*. Mr. Kutik received the award, which recognizes outstanding commitment to volunteer legal services for the poor and disadvantaged, at the August ABA Annual Meeting in New York City. Mr. Kutik's initiative *Our Commitment to Our Community* was created during his 2004-2005 term as Cleveland Bar Association President and encouraged 2,000 bar members to log 70,000 hours of *pro bono* service. Mr. Kutik continues to advocate for a culture of service across Cleveland's legal community; he chairs the Legal Aid Board's *Pro Bono* Committee and volunteers for Legal Aid's Brief Advice Clinics. In addition to the ABA honor, Mr. Kutik was selected as the first recipient of the John and



David Kutik, Esq., mentors fellow Jones Day attorney Josephine Noble, Esq., at a Legal Aid Brief Advice Clinic.

Ginny Elam *Pro Bono* Award, which was presented at the 2008 Ohio State Bar Association Convention. The Elam Award included a \$5,000 gift which Mr. Kutik could designate for a non-profit of his choosing.

With the gift, Mr. Kutik established the Sgt.

Harry Fund at Legal Aid, in memory of his father Harry Kutik, to benefit Legal Aid's Volunteer Lawyers Program.

"David exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism in the legal community," says Ann McGowan Porath, managing attorney of the Volunteer Lawyers Program. "He understands that *pro bono* efforts are of critical importance to the increasing number of people in our community who are in need of legal representation to improve their lives. He tirelessly challenges and encourages others to see the value for the wider community."

To learn more about the Sgt. Harry Fund, which benefits the Volunteer Lawyers Program at Legal Aid, call 216-861-5217 or watch for details in Legal Aid's Winter 2009 issue of *Poetic Justice*. ●



Charles Pugh, Esq., Jones Day



Dustin Rawlin, Esq., Jones Day

Project Profile: Private Tenant-Landlord Project Jones Day volunteers preserve housing

Robert Peterson*, an SSI recipient, was paying rent to live in a house. One day in August 2007, his landlord evicted him. The locks on the house were changed, and Mr. Peterson's belongings were set out on the street. The Cleveland man was facing homelessness and came to Legal Aid for assistance. The case was referred to the Private Tenant-Landlord Project, a collaboration between Legal Aid, the Cleveland Mediation Center and the Cleveland Tenants Organization which matches *pro bono* attorneys with private tenant cases.

Charlie Pugh, an attorney with Jones Day, took Mr. Peterson's case. The landlord was resistant, and Mr. Pugh fought a long fight. The case was referred to the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas' "non binding" arbitration, where a panel of three attorneys issued a one word decision against the client.

Mr. Pugh then appealed to the trial court. The defendants did not appear at

the trial. Mr. Pugh and his Jones Day colleague Dustin Rawlin were required to prove damages, which they did successfully; Mr. Peterson's housing was preserved and he was awarded \$21,000 in compensatory and punitive damages and \$10,000 in attorney's fees in August 2008. Says Mr. Pugh, "It was satisfying to obtain a favorable result for our client. The Tenant-Landlord Project is an excellent way to help serve the needs of the community."

Legal Aid's Private Tenant-Landlord Project is a partnership with the Cleveland Tenants Organization and the Cleveland Mediation Center. Jones Day and Hahn Loeser + Parks provide volunteer support. Legal Aid's Private Tenant-Landlord Project is funded by United Way of Greater Cleveland and the Sisters of Charity Foundation. ●

