



Catholic Charities Legal Network

Newsletter Spring 2024

Volunteer Attorneys, Submit Your Volunteer Hours!

To improve our services, we need you to submit your hours for fiscal year 2024. Click the button below and fill out the form by Wednesday, July 17, 2024.

[SUBMIT YOUR HOURS](#)



In Memoriam:

This edition of Catholic Charities Legal Network's newsletter is dedicated to the

memory of A. Duncan Whitaker, Esq., who was a former member of the Advisory Council and a devoted volunteer attorney.

Welcoming Staff Attorney Nam Mee Cho



Catholic Charities Legal Network welcomes Nam Mee Cho as its new Staff Attorney, replacing Carolyn Ruyak.

Nam Mee's legal career has been focused on representing abused persons. She has experience in scaling up services to low-income individuals by leveraging the power of *pro bono* attorney support at private law firms.

After taking time off from practicing law to move abroad and raise her now-grown children, Nam Mee most recently served as Senior Staff Attorney at The Torture Abolition Survivors Support Coalition (TASSC), which was founded by Sister Dianna Ortiz, OSU and is located on the campus of The Catholic University of America. There, Nam Mee helped to re-start TASSC's asylum representation program for survivors of torture.

Nam Mee has worked or volunteered as an attorney at Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services, Just Neighbors Legal Services, and Boat People SOS, as well as been an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Tahirih Justice Center. At Tahirih, she trained and supervised *pro bono* attorneys to represent individuals under the Violence Against Women Act. In addition, Nam Mee worked for five years at Polaris, an anti-human trafficking non-profit.

Nam Mee received her B.A. from Emory University in French Literature and Political Science, an M.A. from The University of Chicago in International Relations, and a J.D. from The George Washington University Law School. She is admitted to practice law only in Maryland; practiced supervised by D.C. Bar Members.

Farewell to Staff Attorney Carolyn D. Ruyak

The Legal Network bids a heartfelt farewell to Carolyn D. Ruyak, Staff Attorney, whose impact on our program cannot be overstated. Carolyn successfully recruited and maintained *pro bono* relationships with hundreds of attorneys and trained them to serve the underrepresented low-income residents of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Carolyn was the organizer of the Legal Network's Golf Tournaments, managed grant reporting, and assisted clients in their legal intakes and referrals. Carolyn worked as a staff attorney from 2006-2009, later served as a volunteer, and then worked again for the Legal Network from 2021-2024.

The Legal Network thanks Carolyn for the first-rate legal services she helped provide to thousands of clients in need. She was a kind and generous attorney, and we are grateful for her service.



CCLN Director Jim Bishop to Receive 2024 Good Samaritan Award from SOAR

CCLN Director Jim Bishop is set to receive the 2024 Father Bob Brown,

OSFS Good Samaritan Award from Support Our Aging Religious (SOAR). He will be given the award acknowledging his near 40 years of outstanding service to those in need on November 1st. He will be among 4 award recipients honored, including President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, Kerry Robinson. Please click on the following link to learn more about all the awardees: [2024 Washington DC Awards Gala - SOAR! - Support Our Aging Religious \(soar-usa.org\)](https://www.soar-usa.org/2024-Washington-DC-Awards-Gala-SOAR-Support-Our-Aging-Religious)

Beyond directing Catholic Charities Legal Network, Jim was also a family mediator in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia's Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division for over 30 years. He has served on the Board of Governors of The John Carroll Society, the Civic Board of Directors of the Council for Court Excellence, and the District of Columbia Bar Foundation's Scoutt Prize Committee. Among Jim's honors include the Equal Justice Award from the University of the District of Columbia's David A. Clarke School of Law, the Bar Association of the District of Columbia's Suzanne V. Richards Award, the Jerrold Scoutt Prize from the DC Bar Foundation, The John Carroll Society Medal, The Archdiocese of Washington's 75th Anniversary Cardinal's Award, and Catholic Charities' Griffin Award.

Jim is *magna cum laude graduate* of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. He was President of Lincoln's Alpha Chi Honor Society, and a graduate of Howard University School of Law. Jim holds a certificate from the University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business for completing the Nonprofit Business Excellence Program for Catholic Leaders. Jim is a member of the Knights of Columbus, Council 224. He is a member of the United States Supreme Court, District of Columbia, and Pennsylvania Bars.

Legal Network Success Story: Brian Stolarz

A recent case demonstrates the critical representation that a Legal Network attorney can provide.

Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP Senior Counsel Brian Stolarz (left) and Associate Ian Slingsby (below, right) agreed to take on a case for a client who sought the aid of the Catholic Charities Legal Network to pursue a condominium warranty claim related to significant repairs needed after acquiring a low-income condominium unit that had serious construction defects. Brian and Ian were instrumental in facilitating a successful confidential resolution through mediation. The client was absolutely



thrilled with the result. The case demonstrated that when the balance of power in a case is brought to a level playing field, with both parties having counsel, the client feels empowered to pursue their claims and seek vindication.



Damarr M. Butler, Associate at Jones Day (left)
Ian Slingsby, Associate at Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP (right)

We asked Brian Stolarz and Damarr M. Butler, two of our best volunteer attorneys, a few questions about what pro bono work through the Legal Network is like:

Why is it important to accept pro bono civil law cases from legal services programs such as Catholic Charities Legal Network?

"It has been a true honor and blessing in my career to work on many pro bono cases from the Catholic Charities Legal Network. I believe that the law is a calling to use your talents for good, and there is no better way to do that than to accept a case from the Catholic Charities Legal Network. They screen the cases very well, and the clients are very much in need of assistance on critical matters to them and urgently need access to good counsel. An attorney can make a real impact in the life of another when you say yes to the Legal Network." - **Brian Stolarz**

"I went to Howard University School of Law, where we were taught that a lawyer is either a social engineer or a parasite on society. Along with being from Mississippi, when I received the call regarding possible representation, I felt a sense of urgency to assist someone with limited means that may have otherwise gone without representation in a very critical matter. Representing the client here was also a great avenue to hone certain lawyering skills." - **Damarr Butler**

Is direct representation of a pro bono individual different from your practice in a large law firm?

"Obviously the work at a large international law firm involves complex cases for clients in various industries across the country and globe, and we are proud of the best of class service that we provide to our clients. The Catholic Charities Legal Network cases involve a case for an individual client facing an individual crisis whether in housing, public benefits, family law, or another kind of civil matter. I serve all clients with the same zealous advocacy and passion whether they are a large corporation or an individual from the Legal Network. That is the dedication you have to have as an attorney who seeks to be a servant leader for the causes of others." - **Brian Stolarz**

"It depends. My practice is employee benefits, where I represent corporate clients in various ways, one of which includes representation before governmental regulatory agencies. Here, I represented an individual before a governmental agency regarding

entitlement to benefits. While the client entity may have been different, the avenues for relief were generally the same." - **Damarr Butler**

Additional Thoughts?

"I encourage every attorney to accept a pro bono case from the Catholic Charities Legal Network. You will be very happy you did. I believe that "for it is in giving that we receive" and in giving your time to a client in need of assistance, you will receive something that will remind you why you went to law school in the first place! Also, Jim Bishop is a D.C. Legal Legend and you should get to know him!" - **Brian Stolarz**

"Say yes, you will not regret it." - **Damarr Butler**

Deacon Darryl A. Kelley, Esq. to be the Red Mass Homilist



The 72nd Annual Red Mass will be held on **October 6, 2024**, at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the

Apostle in Washington, D.C. His Eminence, Wilton Cardinal Gregory will be the Principal Celebrant and Deacon Darryl A. Kelley, our own staff attorney at the CCLN's Mona Center, will be the homilist, the first Deacon to do so.

Deacon Kelley also has a general practice at Kelley Law, LLC in Camp Springs, Maryland. He serves on the Advisory Council as Chaplain for the Kennedy School of Catholic Charities. Maryland Governor Wes Moore recently appointed Deacon Kelley to the Juvenile Services Education Board. He is a former Maryland State Delegate of the 26th Legislative District and previously served on Capitol Hill as a Legislative Assistant for Education and Labor to late United States Senator Paul S. Sarbanes. Deacon Kelley served as an Inspector/Deputy United States Marshal for many years in federal law enforcement in the District of Columbia and managed the International Fugitive Program in Arlington, VA. Deacon Kelley received his law degree from the University of Maryland School of Law and earned a B.A. in History from the University of Virginia. Deacon Kelley is licensed to practice law in both Maryland and the District of Columbia, a United States Air Force Veteran, and a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. **Deacon Kelley is the current Deacon at Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Clinton, Maryland.**

John E. McCarthy Jr., Esq. Recognized as D.C.

Bar Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year

On Thursday, June 20th, 2024, John McCarthy was honored with the D.C. Bar's 2024 Laura Rinaldi Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award. He was recognized at this year's D.C. Bar Celebration of Leadership at the Westin Washington, D.C. Downtown Hotel.



Mr. McCarthy has been a longtime volunteer attorney with the Legal Network. He has accepted pro bono cases from the Legal Network in such areas as child custody and consumer matters, as well as assisting the staff with legal ethics issues. He has served on the Advisory Council, is a member of the Golf Tournament Committee, and is currently Honorary Chairman Emeritus of the Legal Network's Advisory Council.

Community Education Seminars Held

DC Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs

On March 7, the Catholic Charities Legal Network hosted a "Know Your Rights" seminar at the DC Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs. Shirley Diaz, the immediate past president of the Hispanic Bar Association of DC (HBA-DC) and attorney at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, spoke to Spanish-speaking residents about tenant rights. She provided excellent information to the group and encouraged them to spread the word to neighbors, family, and friends. She also encouraged attendees to seek help from a lawyer when facing tenant issues and recommended the Legal Network.



Shirley Diaz, Immediate Past President of the Hispanic Bar Association of DC and Associate at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP



Legal Network Director **Jim Bishop** (left) with **Ricardo E. Espitia** (right), Grants Manager at the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs.



Emma Johnston, Legal Network Bilingual Paralegal and Director **Jim Bishop**, with **Noemi Mendez** (far left), Activities Coordinator at the Vida Senior Center with attorneys from the Legal Counsel for the Elderly, including **Samora Bazil** (far right). Emma organized this Know Your Rights event on Social Security benefits for Spanish-speaking seniors.

Upcoming Summer Trainings

The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center is pleased to announce its upcoming training schedule. The training sessions prepare attendees to accept pro bono assignments. If you are interested, please let the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center know you will be accepting pro bono matters from Catholic Charities Legal Network. For most trainings, attendees agree to accept 2 cases from a sponsoring organization (i.e. Catholic Charities Legal Network) following training.

Pro Bono Future (Estate) Planning Training

Part 1: Thursday, June 27, 2024 **(Past)**

Part 2: Thursday, July 11, 2024

Pro Bono Probate Training

Part 1: Wednesday, July 17, 2024

Part 2: Wednesday, July 24, 2024

Bankruptcy Training for Pro Bono Attorneys, 3-Part Series (Pre-Approval Required)**

Part 1: Thursday, August 22, 2024

Part 2: Thursday, August 29, 2024

Part 3: Friday, September 5, 2024

Please be advised that training sessions offered by the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center are not CLE accredited nor will attendees receive CLE credit for attending.

For further information about the Pro Bono Center's Training Program, please email probonotraining@dcbar.org or [click here](#)

21st Annual CCLN Golf Tournament



Come support us and play on September 23 at the Bretton Woods Country Club in Germantown, Maryland!

For 20 years, our annual golf tournament has supported the pro bono legal services that the CCLN provides to low-income people in the greater D.C. area. More than 100 supporters are expected to play this year.

[Register Here!](#)



We thank our members of the Golf Tournament Committee:

- Denis C. Mitchell, Partner at Stein Mitchell Beato & Missner LLP
- Robert Shaffer, Partner at O'Melveny & Myers LLP
- Andrea Halverson Harper, Assistant General Counsel at Pepco Holdings
- Kristine Dunne-Maher, former General Counsel at Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School
- Thomas J. Kelly, Jr., Senior Counsel at Faegre Drinker
- Miguel Eaton, Partner and Practice Leader at Jones Day
- Daniel P. Archuleta, Partner at Troutman Pepper

Will you Volunteer?

We are actively seeking volunteers to represent low-income clients in DC and Maryland. If you are an attorney who wishes to volunteer, scan the QR code below with your camera app, or click the Volunteer Today button.

[VOLUNTEER TODAY](#)



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Thank you, as always, for your support for our organization. Your generous support helps us to assist those in need of legal representation in the Washington, DC, area.

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