

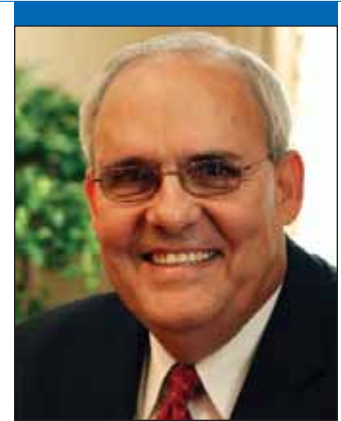
# Georgia Bar Journal

April 2010 ■ Volume 15 ■ Number 6



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by Bryan M. Cavan

# Georgia Lawyers Do Make a Difference

**F**or too many members of the public, the only image they have of lawyers is rooted in the TV shows like *L.A. Law* or *Ally McBeal*, where

the lawyers spend their workdays making hefty fees on high-profile cases, and the rest of their time at posh country clubs, trendy nightclubs or out on their yachts.

Just as I learned long ago that few, if any, of us were able to pry confessions out of witnesses in the courtroom like Perry Mason, I found these perceptions of lawyer lifestyles to be far from reality. My observations over the past 10 months since taking office have further confirmed for me that, in the vast majority of cases, my fellow lawyers fill their hours outside the courtroom and their client conferences in much more productive ways for their communities.

One of the greatest pleasures I have had while serving in this position is the opportunity to witness and/or receive first-hand accounts of the good work our fellow lawyers and judges are performing in their communities all around state. Prime examples are the 10 recipients of the 11th annual Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service, which were presented at the Bar Center on Feb. 16, including:

**“One of the greatest pleasures I have had while serving in this position is the opportunity to witness and/or receive first-hand accounts of the good work our fellow lawyers and judges are performing in their communities all around state.”**

■ **Jonathan Alderman** of Macon, for his service in organizing First Choice Primary Care Inc., a medical facility that serves many uninsured persons, his leadership in the Macon Rotary Club, Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia and the Macon-Bibb County Workforce Investment Board and his work with the Human Rights Committee of Wesley Glenn Ministries.

■ **William D. “Bill” Barwick** of Atlanta, a past president of the

State Bar of Georgia, for his advocacy of Everybody Wins! Atlanta, a student literacy and mentoring program, and his work with the High Museum of Art, Zoo Atlanta, Habitat for Humanity, Atlanta Botanical Gardens, Atlanta History Center, Historic

Oakland Foundation and Buckhead Baseball.

- Rockdale County State Court Judge **Nancy Nash Bills** of Conyers, for her service in helping develop a playground in the Hispanic community, her support of the Students Against Destructive Decisions organization in the local schools and her work with the Task Force Against Family Violence, the United Way and the Rotary Club, all in Rockdale County.
- **Angela M. Hinton** of Fayetteville, for her service on the Fayette County Department of Family and Children Services Board and her work with the Georgia Women Lawyers Foundation to help Promise Place, a battered women's shelter in Fayette County, as well as Leadership Fayette and the Arts Leadership League of Georgia's Leadership Council.
- **Michael D. "Mike" Hobbs Jr.** of Atlanta, for his leadership with Imagine It! The Children's Museum of Atlanta, and his service to Hammonds House Museum, Central Presbyterian Church Outreach and Advocacy Center Inc., Georgia Lawyers for the Arts and the Top Hat Soccer Club.
- **Amy J. Kolczak** of Smyrna, for her leadership as president of the Georgia Association of Women Lawyers Foundation and its support of numerous worthy causes, as well as her individual involvement with Atlanta Legal Aid's Breast Cancer Project, CHRIS Kids Inc., the Georgia chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Families First, Project Night and the Nicholas House.
- **Charles W. Lamb Jr.** of Albany, for his work with the Albany Advocacy Resource Center, Leadership Albany, Leadership Lee, the Lee County Chamber of Commerce, the National Rehabilitation Association and the Georgia Rehabilitation Council, as well as his chair-

manship of the Georgia Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission.

- **Justin O'Dell** of Marietta, for his work with the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Cobb, MUST Ministries, Sweetwater Clinic, Reconnecting Families, YWCA, The Extension, the Marietta Kiwanis Club and the Cobb Community Collaborative.
- **Mark O. Shriver IV** of Woodstock, for his service as president of Optimist International, one of the largest organizations in the world serving youth, in addition to his local efforts in chairing the Optimist Club's Peachtree Junior Road Race, co-sponsored by the Atlanta Track Club for more than 2,000 children.
- **Nancy J. Whaley** of Atlanta, for her service on the Georgia Breast Cancer Coalition Fund Board of Directors and as team captain for the Susan G. Komen 3-Day 60-Mile Walk for the Cure, individually raising \$10,000 toward the cause, in addition to her 23 years of service in the Air Force Reserves, where she achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel.

While we are fortunate to have these honorees to inspire us with the positive contributions they have made this year and in previous years through their volunteer efforts and community spirit, there are countless other Georgia lawyers and judges who quietly and without acclaim devote their personal

time to civic organizations, non-profit groups, youth activities, the cultural arts, faith-based initiatives and other beneficial endeavors. They are all deserving of recognition and thanks (see page 72 for additional information).

In addition to the exemplary community service being carried out by so many individual Georgia lawyers and judges, a great deal of work is also done through the collective efforts of our local and specialty bar associations. This includes support of existing community causes as well as new projects spearheaded and maintained under the auspices of the local bar association.

Here are just a few of the local bar initiatives that have been brought to my attention this year:

- The Douglas Bar Association hosted a food drive and distribution;
- The Jesup Bar Association sponsored and presented an educational scholarship;
- The Savannah Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division hosted a golf tournament, using the proceeds to make a significant contribution to the Chatham County Superior Court's guardian ad litem program;
- The Gwinnett County Minority Bar Association co-hosted a community event aimed at increasing public awareness of the criminal justice system;
- The Waycross Bar Association completed its 13th annual Community Christmas Project, providing food, clothing and toys for families in need.

## A Special Thank You to Jesse H. Diner

I wish to thank Jesse H. Diner, president of The Florida Bar for attending our Executive Committee/Supreme Court Retreat, where he shared Florida's struggle for judicial funding in these tough economic times and some of his initiatives. It was a good reminder that Georgia is not alone in this economic tsunami, as we all look for hard-to-find answers. Thank you, Jesse, for sharing with us, and you are most welcome to visit with us anytime. – *Bryan M. Cavan*



Of course, there are many, many more examples.


A major component of lawyers' service to the community at large is, of course, the pro bono contributions of professional service to fellow citizens who are unable to afford the representation needed to realize the concept of equal justice. The State Bar's Pro Bono Project is aided by our partners in this effort, Georgia Legal Services Program, Atlanta LegalAid Society, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, Clayton County Pro Bono Project, Cobb Justice Foundation, DeKalb Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, Effingham County Victim Witness Program, Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates, Georgia Justice Project, Gwinnett County Pro Bono Project, Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta, Southside Legal Clinic as well as the several projects of our State Bar YLD. Additionally, there are untold numbers of local bar associations, volunteer lawyers' organizations and individual lawyers across the

state who make possible the delivery of legal services to the poor in their areas.

Citizens across the state of Georgia also owe a debt of gratitude to those lawyers who make public service their full-time jobs. Indeed, all three branches of government at the local, state and federal levels benefit from the expertise and dedication of those who serve as judges, prosecutors, public defenders, law clerks, county and city attorneys and as legal counsel to any number of public-sector agencies and departments of government.

A few years ago, as an initiative of our Cornerstones of Freedom® public education program, we began a practice of recognizing Bar members for good works in their communities via a news release or letter from the State Bar president to the editor of their local newspapers. I am proud to report that between July 2009 and February 2010, there have been at least 80 such publications in newspapers in all corners of Georgia, reaching a

total of nearly 2.2 million readers. When these letters are published, not only are the individual lawyers, judges or local bar associations receiving well-deserved pats on the back, it sends an important message to the public about their respective legal communities.

The message is loud and clear: Georgia lawyers are enlisted in the service not only of our clients, but of the public good as well. Now, perhaps more than ever, following the examples we have read or heard about as well as those that take place behind the scenes, we should all recommit ourselves to that principle, which will result in a personal satisfaction that comes from helping others and, at the same time, strengthen the public's perception of the legal profession and trust in the justice system. 

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