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MESSAGE FROM THE

President of the Board

Dear friends and colleagues:

Some years ago the distinguished jurist Learned Hand said that keeping our democracy depends on one commandment, that we must not ration justice. For 40 years, the Legal Aid Society has pursued the mission of “equal justice for all,” providing a vital safety net for low-income families throughout 48 Tennessee counties.

Thousands of people have better lives today because of the dedicated work of the staff at the Legal Aid Society, the attorneys who provide pro bono legal services, and the broad support of volunteers and donors. Each of those persons gets credit for contributing in essential ways to the very positive impact this organization continues to have every day.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend deep gratitude to all who have, through the Legal Aid Society, advanced the cause of justice. Please join me in recognizing the Legal Aid Society for its distinguished past and its even greater days of service ahead.

Sincerely,

N. Houston Parks

N. Houston Parks, President

MESSAGE FROM THE

Executive Director

Dear friends of the Legal Aid Society and Nashville Pro Bono Program:

This year marks the 40th anniversary for the Legal Aid Society. For four decades we’ve made it our goal to help those with nowhere else to turn – the sick, the elderly, the poor, the battered and abused. We’ve grown from a handful of lawyers sharing a few rooms in the Stahlman Building to having eight offices that provide services in 48 counties. Along the way, the Legal Aid Society has worked to create an avenue where it is possible for anyone, regardless of their situation, to access the justice system.

Because this is a momentous occasion, we want to celebrate our history. But we also are mindful that the work we do is more important than ever before and we will continue to make history as we move into our fifth decade of providing more ripples of hope to our clients and communities.

Gary D. Housepian

Gary D. Housepian, Executive Director
2009 marks the 40th anniversary for the Legal Aid Society.

Throughout this book, a timeline will show highlights from our first four decades of service to our clients in Middle Tennessee. We’d like to hear from you. If you have anything to add to the timeline, let us know by contacting Cindy Durham at 615-780-7125 or cdurham@las.org.

The Legal Aid Society dedicated two conference rooms to LAS alumni and “Champions of Justice.” One conference room was named for attorneys Harris Gilbert and Charles Warfield. Gilbert led the effort to found Nashville’s Legal Aid Society in 1968 and Warfield led the first fundraising campaign. Both men remain active with the Legal Aid Society today. The other conference room was named for Ashley Wiltshire, who served as executive director of Legal Aid Society for most of its history, from 1976 until his retirement in 2007.

Gary Housepian introduces the Champions of Justice: Harris Gilbert, Ashley Wiltshire and Charles Warfield.

Joining the Legal Aid Society this year were attorneys Nikylan B. Knapper (left) [Tullahoma] and Rae Anne Seay (right) [Columbia].

Steven J. Christopher moved from the Columbia office to Gallatin and was promoted to Managing Attorney.

Also joining the staff were Katie Blakemore, Victim Advocate [Clarksville] and Bill Mielke, VOCA Paralegal [Tullahoma].
• 1967 •
The Nashville Bar Association looked at applying for a grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity to start a legal aid service in Nashville. The teamsters union applied to OEO.

• 1968 •
Legal Services of Nashville, Inc. (LSON) was incorporated Feb. 9 by eight members of the Nashville Bar Association. The new organization received a grant from OEO – one of the last OEO grants awarded before the 1968 election of President Nixon.

John Corbitt, former assistant district attorney general, named the first Executive Director.

• 1969 •
LSON opened doors on Feb. 3 in the Stahlman Building in downtown Nashville.

Applied for a Reginald Heber Smith Fellowship for two years, which totaled $12,000. (The starting salary for an attorney at a large Nashville firm at the time was about $15,000.)

• 1970 •
July - David Candish became the second Executive Director.

Tonya Mitchem Grindon, Chair of the Nashville Pro Bono Program Board, was named winner of one of the 2009 Emerging Leader Awards for the Nashville Chamber of Commerce and YP Nashville. She was also recognized as one of the Nashville Business Journal’s inaugural “Forty Under 40” honorees.

ORGANIZATION

The Administrative Office of the Courts awarded $13,500 to the Tullahoma office of the Legal Aid Society to serve domestic violence and sexual abuse victims.

The Baptist Healing Trust awarded the Legal Aid Society a $35,692 grant to fund the Adams Kirshner Medical Legal Partnership for Children (MLPC). The MLPC is a collaboration between the Legal Aid Society and the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt. The MLPC provides free legal aid to patients and families who have legal problems that affect the success of medical treatment.

When tornadoes struck Murfreesboro, attorneys from the Legal Aid Society recruited pro bono lawyers from Blankenship & Blankenship to organize a series of free legal clinics for tornado victims to provide legal advice on insurance policies/claims, contract reviews and general probate document preparation.

Volunteer attorneys and staff from Bradley Arant Boult Cummings and Caterpillar Financial Services Inc. staffed a series of legal advice clinics at FiftyForward Centers around Davidson County.

The Clarksville Office hosted a series of free classes for potential homebuyers who faced impediments to buying a home.

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY HAD A POSITIVE OUTCOME IN 94% OF ALL CASES CLOSED IN 2009.
The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee awarded a $2,500 grant to the Legal Aid Society to provide free legal representation to Middle Tennessee children who have been denied access to needed medical care and also awarded $5,000 for the client assistance fund.

The HCA Foundation awarded the Legal Aid Society $5,000 for health and benefits cases.

Lou McHugh set up a fund to honor her late husband, Nashville attorney William Thomas McHugh, which sponsors a monthly legal advice clinic through the Legal Aid Society. The walk-in legal advice clinics are staffed by volunteer attorneys and offer help on a variety of civil legal issues.

The Legal Aid Society received a Community Enhancement Fund grant of $149,476 from the Metropolitan Government of Nashville/Davidson County to provide free legal services affecting long-term safety, stability and independence of domestic violence victims.

The Public Interest Law Foundation at Columbia Law School provided funding in the amount of $8,956 for the Oak Ridge office to create an Education-Legal Partnership in Campbell County. This partnership, and the one the Legal Aid Society has with Oak Ridge schools, are the only formal legal aid/public school collaborations in the nation. They give free legal help on problems that prevent children from succeeding in school.

All eight offices of the Legal Aid Society participated in the Tennessee Bar Association’s Justice 4 All Day. On April 4, 2009, each office hosted at least one legal clinic.

- The Cookeville office partnered with the Putnam County Bar Association and the Tennessee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division to offer a free legal advice clinic.
- The Columbia office partnered with The Young Lawyers Division of the Maury County Bar Association to offer a free legal clinic.

The Legal Aid Society worked on 8,399 cases, which is an increase of 22 percent over 2008.

- The Clarksville office partnered with the law firm of Runyan and Runyan, the Hilldale Kiwanis Club and the Tennessee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division to offer a free legal clinic for domestic violence victims.

- The Memphis office partnered with the Memphis Bar Association and the Tennessee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division to offer a free legal clinic for domestic violence victims.

- The Johnson City office partnered with the Johnson County Bar Association and the Tennessee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division to offer a free legal clinic for domestic violence victims.

- The Knox County office partnered with the Knox County Bar Association and the Tennessee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division to offer a free legal clinic for domestic violence victims.

- The Nashville office partnered with the Nashville Bar Association and the Tennessee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division to offer a free legal clinic for domestic violence victims.

- The Oak Ridge office partnered with the Tennessee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division to offer a free legal clinic for domestic violence victims.

- The Cookeville office partnered with the Putnam County Bar Association and the Tennessee Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division to offer a free legal advice clinic.
- The Columbia office partnered with The Young Lawyers Division of the Maury County Bar Association to offer a free legal clinic.
The Nashville Pro Bono Program breakfast to honor volunteer attorneys on October 27th.

The staff at the Legal Aid Society gave 145 community education presentations to more than 4,900 people and distributed more than 126,000 self-help brochures. An additional 144,743 self-help brochures were downloaded for free from our website (www.las.org). The website itself received more than 200,000 hits in 2009.

In May, the Legal Aid Society played host to Project Salute for a day of training on how to handle veterans’ benefit cases. More than 30 lawyers attended.

The Legal Aid Society created a series of media guides for issues that clients face including domestic violence, debt collection, predatory lending, equitable spouse tax relief and mortgage rescue scams.

Nashville Pro Bono Program started a blog for pro bono attorneys and clients at nashvilleprobono.wordpress.com.

The Nashville Pro Bono Program held a slate of activities and events for Celebrate Pro Bono Week, October 25-31. These included a series of free legal advice clinics and a breakfast for pro bono attorneys.

Attorneys from Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, along with the Nashville Pro Bono Program, conducted a series of monthly legal advice clinics for low-income families to better understand how to deal with debt problems.

June 1973 – Walter Kurtz and David Tarpley became the Interim Directors.

David Tarpley is still a member of the Legal Aid Society staff, where he now holds the Herman O. Lowenstein Chair of Consumer Law.

July 1973 – Walter Kurtz became the 4th Executive Director.

1976

Ashley Wiltshire became Executive Director.

June 1973 – Walter Kurtz and David Tarpley became the Interim Directors.
IN 2009 THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY RECEIVED 30,239 REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE, WHICH IS A NINE PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR.
regulation was invalid, giving innocent spouses more time to file their claims. This decision will affect thousands of taxpayers and represented a major shift in tax policy.

Ms. Lantz had filed a joint return with her husband. After his death, she learned that he owed much more tax than he reported. She then filed a claim for “innocent spouse relief”, but the IRS denied her claim because of the two-year period in the regulation. Nadler and Kohlhoff argued that Congress did not intend for the IRS to limit innocent spouse relief to a two-year period, when the IRS has ten years to collect the tax. The Tax Court agreed and struck down the two-year limit.

Medical Legal Partnership for Children
“David” is a 16-year-old who was admitted to the hospital for a heart condition. He needed a heart transplant. David moved to Tennessee with his older brothers and sisters after his mother passed away. His sister, “Mary,” was named next of kin on the death certificate. Mary had never been declared the legal guardian of David by a court, but she was able to enroll him into school using the death certificate.

However, with such a major surgery pending, David needed a legal guardian to consent to the medical treatment. His doctor and social worker contacted the MLPC to help his sister obtain legal guardianship of David. Through its network of private attorneys, the MLPC matched David’s sister with a pro bono attorney, Attorney Kristen Amonette of Dodson, Parker, Behm, & Capparella PC quickly met with Mary and filed a petition for guardianship. The judge granted Mary guardianship of her brother the same day the petition was filed.

A match was found for David shortly after Mary was named his legal guardian. The surgery was successful, and he was released from the hospital with a new heart. The MLPC also helped David get Supplemental Security Income for his disabling heart condition.

Healthcare Advocacy
“Mary” and “David” were five and two years old when their grandmother “Rosey” came to the Legal Aid Society. Both children have been diagnosed with phenylketonuria (PKU), a rare genetic disease which prevents an individual from metabolizing a component of protein in foods. If PKU is not properly and consistently treated by an expensive special diet, the result is irreversible and progressive brain damage, including profound mental retardation. Rosey sought assistance from Legal Aid Society when TennCare would no longer cover the special medical diet. The Legal Aid Society
attorney represented the children in an administrative appeal and later challenged the TennCare decision in Chancery Court. The Chancery Court ruled that TennCare must cover the special medical foods for Mary and David under EPSDT, the federal children's health program. The Court concluded that these special medical foods were to be covered under EPSDT and TennCare was ordered to provide coverage for this medically necessary food. Thanks to the advocacy of the Legal Aid Society, Mary and David are assured that they will continue to receive the medically necessary special foods required to treat their PKU and that they will have healthy childhoods.

The Legal Aid Society kicked off its 2009 Campaign for Equal Justice with an important message from Tennessee Bar Association President Buck Lewis: There has been no time in our lives when the poor in our country have needed legal services more. “We think of ourselves as community leaders,” said Lewis addressing a capacity crowd of attorneys, judges, elected officials and supporters of the Legal Aid Society at the Nashville City Club. “This is our cause and now is the time for us to lead.”

Thanks to the generosity of many in our 48-county service area and the hard work of many volunteers, the 2009 Campaign received $682,566 from more than 1,300 donors.

**2009 Campaign for Equal Justice**

The 2009 Campaign for Equal Justice had 17 attorneys. First fundraising campaign in Nashville – Charles Warfield was the campaign chair – raised $62,000 (goal was $50,000).

**Marla Williams, managing attorney for the Cookeville office, joined LAS in 1988.**

- **1985**
  - LSMT Nashville office moved to the Stahlman Building.

- **1986**
  - A feasibility study was done about having a fundraising campaign for LSMT.

- **1987**
  - LSMT had 17 attorneys.

TBA President Buck Lewis speaks with Gary Housepian before the kickoff of the Campaign for Equal Justice.

Charles Warfield

**2009 Campaign Chair**

Mark Manner, Harwell Howard Hyne Gabbert & Manner

**Community Campaign**

Kenny Blackburn, AT&T

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**Williamson County**

E. Lee Davies
The financial statements of the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland for the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008 were audited by KraftCPAs, PLLC. The audit was completed on April 27, 2010 and in the opinion of the auditors, these financial statements represent fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland. Copies of the complete set of the financial statements, including all footnotes, maybe obtained from the Nashville office of Legal Aid Society.
Please accept our apologies for any omissions. We thank them for their dedication and assistance.

The following people have donated their time and talents to further the mission of the Legal Aid Society.

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Tennine Justice Center (TJC) was started because of changes in rules of Legal Services Corporation. Several attorneys from LASMT went to work there.
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Jamey Pratt
Debra Richards
Wendy Winton

Honor Society
Feb. 2 - LASMT celebrated its 30th anniversary.

May - Marla Williams became Managing Attorney of the Cookeville office.

Barbara Futter became Managing Attorney of the Murfreesboro office of LASMT.

Norm Feaster served as interim Executive Director of LSSCT after Bill Haley left.

September–December: Pete Frierson ran the Columbia office.

David Kozlowski returned to LAS at 11:59 pm 12/31/01.

Katie Blakemore was great helping me with my situation. I felt safe and they treated me like anyone else. —Taylor Diane Blake

Thanks legal service for all your help and please continue to give great expert legal aid to those persons who can’t afford to pay for your services. —Loretta Cheairs

Clockwise from above: Herman O. Lowenstein and Ashley Wiltshire; Rachel Moses and Mary Gillum (2000); Kitty Calhoon with client Lynn McGary (2007); David Tarpley, Adinah Robertson and Rozella Peoples (1998).
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Effective January 1, the new name is Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands (LASMTC).

Ashley Wiltshire named Executive Director, Neil McBride named General Counsel & Managing Attorney of Oak Ridge office and David Kozlowski named Assistant General Counsel & Managing Attorney of Columbia office.

Norm Feaster named Managing Attorney of the Tullahoma office.

• 2002 •

April – Lucinda Smith named Director of the Nashville Pro Bono Program.

• 2003 •

As part of a new program to raise public awareness of the work of the Legal Aid Society, the Bradford Group was hired to assist with marketing and public relations.

Bill Haley (standing right) was executive director of Legal Services of South Central Tennessee from 1979-2001.
LasMtc won both the Excellence in Communications Award and CEO of the Year at the Center for Nonprofit Management’s Salute to Excellence Awards.

Gary Housepian was named Executive Director.
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2008

Adams Kirschner Medical-Legal Partnership for Children (MLPC) was established as a collaboration between LAS and the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt.

Tennessee Bar Association named its Public Service Attorney of the Year Award after Ashley Wiltshire. Russ Overby, attorney for LAS-MLTC, received the award this year.

Lucinda Smith became Managing Attorney of Nashville office.
Kevin Fowler named Managing Attorney of Clarksville office.

2009

Steve Christopher became Managing Attorney for Gallatin office.

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—Robert F. Kennedy
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