

## The Legal Aid Advocate- January 2018



**Legal Aid Society**  
of Middle Tennessee & the Cumberland Mountains

Working Together. Doing Justice. Restoring Hope.

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### Why Legal Aid Makes a Difference:

The speaker at our annual Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services (TALS) Equal Justice University conference from 2015, Ramon Arias, former Director of Bay Area Legal Aid, called and said that he was hiking in the California Mountains recently carrying the TALS back pack that was given to him at the 2015 conference. Another hiker, a young man in his 20's, stopped Ramon, pointed at the backpack and asked if Ramon was part of legal aid in TN. The young man explained that as a child, he lived near Nashville, and his mother went to legal aid with what the hiker described as "a problem that had something to do with my father". He got emotional explaining to Ramon that because of what the Tennessee legal aid lawyer did, he and his mom were able to move away and start a new life.

We often talk about "changing the narrative" for individuals and families with our assistance. In this very random moment, years later, we receive a reminder why legal assistance is so important. In the words of Paul Harvey, "Now you know the rest of the story..."

Thank you for your support that provides us the opportunities to make a difference!

### Thank you for All Your Support from Gary D. Housepian:

On September 28, 2017, I announced to the Board and our staff that I was stepping down as Executive Director. It has been an honor to be part of this work for these past 10 years and to see our work expand to meet challenging situations – for youth, the elderly and persons who were formerly incarcerated – to fight barriers and shine the light of justice for all. It has been inspiring to see our staff join together in examining how we can be the very best in our work and in embracing change. The opportunity is ripe for new leadership to join with them and contribute as we go

forward. My heart and mind remain devoted to the important work that needs to be done for these clients who have inspired me with their character and strengths. I look forward to the next chapter of my life to advance the cause for equal justice for all.

For nearly 50 years, the Legal Aid Society has supported low-income Tennesseans in their efforts for equal justice, fairness and better lives. Despite people needing our services more than ever, our core mission remains the same in joining with them in their courageous efforts to rise out of poverty and overcome obstacles. We have been and will always be about finding solutions for them – strengthening families, strengthening communities.

Thank you all for your incredible support for me and Legal Aid Society. As we all go forward with our important work, I am reminded of the quote from Nelson Mandela. Let's not rest!

*“As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.”*

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## Search Process for Next Executive Director:

Under Legal Aid Society's transition plan, a Search Committee of 5 LAS board members, and 4 LAS staff members were named to the committee. The Board will make the final decision and has retained a consultant with Center for Non Profit Management to assist in the national search that began in November. Mr. Housepian is assisting with the transition planning and will continue to act as Executive Director until mid-March.

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## Staff & Leadership Updates

**Mary Gillum** – was awarded The Ashley T. Wiltshire Public Service Attorney of the Year Award by the Tennessee Bar Association. This award is given to an attorney who has provided dedicated and outstanding service while employed by an organization that is primarily engaged in providing legal representation to the poor. She was to receive her award at the annual TBA luncheon, which was scheduled January 13<sup>th</sup> but was cancelled because of weather. The rescheduled date has not been announced. <http://www.tba.org/journal/public-service-award-honorees>

**William Bush**- attorney in Legal Aid Society's Cookeville office since 1982 and Lead Attorney for the firm's Employment Practice Group was recently recognized as Co-editor of the new hardcover 2017 edition of Family and Medical Leave Act, Second Edition. <https://www.bna.com/family-medical-leave-p11943/>.

## New Hires:

**Robert Goodrich** joined Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland's in December 2017 and focuses on Tax and Bankruptcy. Prior to join LAS, Bob was an attorney at Burr & Forman LLP.

**Chris Martin**- joined the Nashville office of Legal Aid Society in October, 2017 and focuses on criminal re-entry cases.

**Linda Blackwelder** joined the Tullahoma office in November as a Staff Attorney.

- Brittany Curry** joined the Nashville office in December as Office Manager.
- Ian Montgomery** joined the Nashville office of Legal Aid Society in May, 2017 as a Housing Paralegal.
- Carol Lambert** joined the Cookeville office in November 2017 as Secretary/Office Manager.
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## Will you Help Bridge Our Funding Gap?

2017 Campaign has been a recorded breaking year for donations. We are working towards closing the books on the 2017 Campaign for Equal Justice which has surpassed our goal of \$826,000! We have received \$855,402.62 as of middle January. Thank you for your donations and support to Legal Aid Society to help provide unrestricted support for our civil legal advocacy, representation and community education.

If you have outstanding pledges, please pay it by January 31. If you didn't give in 2017 but would like to make a gift towards the 2017 campaign, you can go online to <http://las.org/ways-to-give/donate-now/> or send a check payable to Legal Aid Society to 300 Deaderick Street Nashville, TN 37201. Please indicate this gift is for 2017. If you need additional information, please contact Brittney Jerkins, director of development at 615-780-7132 or [bjerkins@las.org](mailto:bjerkins@las.org). All donations are tax-deductible.

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## Status of Congressional Funding for 2018 for Legal Aid Society

Approximately 42% of our funding in 2017 was from the Legal Services Corporation. Our funding from LSC remains at the 2017 level under the Continuing Resolutions from Congress. The Senate recommends continued funding in 2018 at the 2017 level. The House recommends a 22.5% cut. This will require a joint committee to reach an agreed amount. We have been told to be prepared for a 15% cut in federal funding, which would be a **\$480,000 reduction** in revenues for our 2018 budget.

We are so grateful for your generous support in 2017 and your continued support in 2018 as we remain determined to provide access to justice for all.

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## Upcoming Clinics



We are pleased to host many clinics across Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland Plateau in 2018. These clinics are staffed by both Legal Aid Society and *pro bono* attorneys. If you would like

to volunteer at one of the clinics, please contact Lucinda Smith at [lsmith@las.org](mailto:lsmith@las.org) (or 615-780-7127) or call your local Legal Aid Society office.

You can see the list of upcoming clinics, hosted by us and offered by partners, here. [Click here](#)

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## Shop with Amazon or Kroger? Support Legal Aid Society!

Looking for an easy way to support our work? When you shop at Amazon or Kroger, a portion of your purchases can go to support Legal Aid Society. To participate, sign up for [Amazon Smile](#) or [Kroger Rewards](#) (NPO # 98149), select Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the [Cumberlands](#) as your charity of choice and start shopping. A percentage of your eligible purchases will be donated to the organization at no extra cost to you!



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## Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands

1-800-238-1443 | 300 Deaderick Street | Nashville, TN 37201

Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands advocates for fairness and justice under the law. The non-profit law firm offers free civil legal representation and educational programs to help people in its region receive justice, protect their well-being and support opportunities to overcome poverty. We serve 48 Tennessee counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Nashville, Murfreesboro, Oak Ridge and Tullahoma. We are funded by Legal Services Corporation, the Tennessee Bar Foundation, United Way in 16 counties, the State of Tennessee, foundations and donors. For more information about our services or how to donate and to download information about common legal issues, visit us online at [www.las.org](http://www.las.org).

