

## President’s Message

# Darkness Isn’t An Old Friend: How Civil Legal Aid Brings Hope for Those in Their Darkest Hour

By Alan G. Brackett, 2022-23 President

My introduction to “grown-up” music came from my older brother. He left most of his albums behind when he went to college in 1972, and it was an eclectic collection — everything from Deep Purple to Simon & Garfunkel. One of my favorite Simon & Garfunkel songs was “The Sound of Silence,” which begins with the iconic lines: “Hello darkness, my old friend. I’ve come to talk with you again . . .”

As I think about the Mission of the Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF), it’s to remove the darkness from the lives of so many. In our country, legal representation is only ensured in criminal cases. Many of our neighbors do not have the means to secure legal representation when they need assistance in civil matters. Too often, they are forced to represent themselves or go without representation and their legal problems are unresolved or compounded.

The LBF is committed to ensure no citizen faces the shadows alone.

Through our grants program, we assist women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, the newly unemployed, those facing loss of their homes, disaster victims, veterans and military families, and many others in need by funding direct service providers who work to protect the health, safety and security of the people of Louisiana. We strive to bring light and access to justice to the darkest corners of Louisiana.

Given the all-too-frequent and pervasive barriers and challenges we face as a state, the reality is that the need for LBF’s resources is growing while shadows of inequality continue to spread. If we work together, we can help to bring our neighbors the hope of a brighter future.

The LBF is working to increase funding and services statewide, especially in areas with extreme poverty, to provide civil legal services in those resource “deserts” more than a 45-minute drive away. To do this, we must focus our efforts on increasing our sources of revenue so we can continue to help those who struggle in poverty.

The task is simple. The more resources and funds we raise, the more lives we touch, and the more services we can fund to provide meaningful access to civil legal aid to those who would otherwise go without. Building the LBF’s resources will allow the LBF to collaborate with innovative organizations with problem-solving solutions for complex and hard problems. Our latest collaboration with Lagniappe Law Lab is a shining example of how resources



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and collaboration create solutions. The LBF is proud to announce the creation of the LBF and LLL Justice Bus. This joint project has financed a mobile, rolling legal resource that will bring civil legal services through virtual self-help tools and physical resources to the public who need them the most. The retrofitting of the Justice Bus is expected to be complete early next year and, once completed, will be “in service” each week for outreach and providing access to legal resources in underserved areas.

There are many ways you can help build hope for a brighter future for our neighbors. Through membership, major gifts, planned giving, sponsorships and volunteering, our resources will grow and our reach will shed more light on more people in need.

For more information on how you can participate in the work of the LBF, contact the Development Department at (504)561-1046 — Donna Cuneo, Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer; Tina Dixon, Major Gifts Officer; Meghan Van Alstynne, Development Manager; and Danielle Marshall, Events and Sponsorships Manager.



## LBF Announces New Fellows

The Louisiana Bar Foundation welcomed the following new Fellows:

- Kyle J. Koch .....New Orleans
- Kaleb M. Livingston..... Monroe
- Emily Alyse Montgomery .....Lafayette
- Christopher Ashton Procell ..... Shreveport
- Wynnifred L. Sanders..... Bossier City