

President's Message

Q&A with 2022-23 LBF President Alan G. Brackett

Interviewed by 2022-23 Secretary Edmund J. Giering IV

Giering: Tell us about yourself and your family.

Brackett: I was raised in a small town in Massachusetts, the youngest of five children. My sisters and brother all went to college in Massachusetts, but I needed to get away for school. I was accepted to Pepperdine, but, at the last minute, decided to come to Tulane instead. I had never stepped foot in Louisiana before arriving for freshman year and my mother thought I'd be back home in a week. Forty-four years later and I'm still here. I usually tell people that, good or bad, New Orleans gets under your skin. It did for me in a positive way. I met my wife in law school, and we have one son, who's also a Tulane Law graduate.

Giering: How did you get involved with the Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF)?

Brackett: About 20 years ago, David Biennu, who was then an officer, called me and told me I should become a Fellow. I had no idea what the LBF was or did and had never so much as read the articles about the LBF in the *Bar Journal*. But I took his advice and became a Fellow. It was a small financial commitment and I figured, if he believed in the LBF, it had to be doing good work. I've never believed in joining an organization without becoming involved, so I volunteered for a committee and then came to see the importance of the LBF's work. Once you understand the impact of civil legal aid on the people of this state, it's really hard to ignore the LBF's mission.

Giering: Why do you think the LBF is important to the law profession?

Brackett: I think practicing law is more than a job or even a career, it's a privilege. Regardless of your area of practice, we all play a crucial role in our society, ensuring that the rights of the people we represent are protected. There's a responsibility that goes with that privilege, and that's to give

back to our profession and the people who need protection but who aren't being served. That's usually because they don't know what their rights are, or they don't have the resources to seek representation. The LBF helps fill that gap by funding the network of civil legal aid providers across Louisiana.

Giering: Why do you think the LBF is important to Louisiana?

Brackett: The LBF is the largest funding source of civil legal aid in Louisiana. Every year, the funds the LBF grants out serve tens of thousands of our citizens, who otherwise would be at the mercy of physical and emotional abusers, dishonest landlords, and people who take advantage of those less educated or without the financial resources to protect themselves. I've been able to visit a number of organizations the LBF funds across the state and see firsthand the tremendous work they do. While we're fortunate to grant out millions



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each year, the needs in Louisiana are so much greater than our resources allow. I can't imagine where we'd be without the civil legal aid network that helps so many each year.

Giering: What do you hope to accomplish this year as LBF president?

Brackett: I think my most important job is to support our professional staff so they can continue to do what they do so well. I want to focus on continuing to increase the LBF's sources of revenue so we can continue to help the people of our state who suffer below the poverty level. We started an Infinity Fund, our endowment, to establish sufficient funding to support annual operations of the LBF, so that every dollar we receive can be granted out to help others. That's a big goal but I know it's achievable. I also want to continue to educate our legislators and the public about the important work we do and the positive impact it has for our citizens and our society. The return on investment is over 900% on the funds we deploy to our civil legal aid network. It's hard to imagine a better investment of time or money than the LBF when you consider those results.

LBF Hall of Fame Spotlight: Judge James C. Gulotta, Sr.

The Louisiana Bar Foundation's (LBF) Education Committee continues to honor the achievements of former presidents and others who have excelled in their service to the LBF.

Judge James C. Gulotta, Sr. who served as executive counsel of the LBF, died in 2013. His son, James C. (Jay) Gulotta, Jr. provided insight into his life and career.

Better known as Judge Gulotta or sim-

ply Jimmy, he served his community for most of his life. He was a decorated WWII veteran and returned to Tulane to finish his education after the war. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1947 and a law degree in 1949.

He was in the practice of law from 1949-61, then took office as judge of Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, serving there until 1970. In 1970, he was elected to

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