President's Message

Starting a New Year of Goals and Accomplishments

By Deidre Deculus Robert, 2023-24 President

The Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF) has been fortunate to have extraordinary leadership over the past three decades and I am honored to serve as the 30th president. I am proud to be a Fellow of an organization that brings members of our profession together, maximizing our efforts to better the profession, our communities and ourselves. Thank you to all of our Fellows for your time, talent and treasure. If you are not an LBF Fellow, I invite you to join us.

To kick off this exciting year, I am thrilled to announce that, in April, we awarded more than $7.5 million in annual sustaining grants and we anticipate awarding approximately $12 million for next fiscal year, which begins on July 1. These funds, along with countless volunteer hours, allow the LBF to continue its commitment to ensuring that Louisiana's civil justice system is truly accessible.

Over the next year, we plan to accomplish many things:

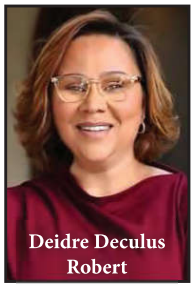
► The My Community Cares Project is a community-driven, neighborhood-based approach to preventing child abuse and neglect in Louisiana, and provides legal representation, advice and expertise to families before moving into the DCFS system.

► The Legal Navigator (formerly known as the Justice Bus) is a mobile, rolling legal resource created through a partnership with Lagniappe Law Lab to bring civil legal services through virtual self-help tools and physical resources to those who need them the most. Look for us in your community.

► Activation of the Northeast Louisiana Bar Foundation to establish an organized pro bono project in collaboration with the 4th Judicial District Bar.

► Through our DEI workshops, each approved for 1 hour of professionalism CLE, we continue to build capacity and identify strategy through research, learning and analysis of internal protocols and processes, leadership and volunteer engagement practices, and client community advocacy and support efforts.

► We continue partnering with the Louisiana Supreme Court and the ATJ Commission, as well as working with the Governor's office and the Legislature, to improve the delivery of legal representation across the state.


Deidre Deculus Robert

► We are expanding LBF's reach by working directly with law schools to engage law students and focus on outreach opportunities to promote and educate the work of the LBF.

► Catch us in November for an hour of professionalism CLE and attend one of our nine regional events during the statewide Pop-Up Tour.

► We created an Emergency Funding Policy to aid in the funding of civil legal aid needs due to natural disasters and other emergency situations.

On another note, I am pleased to announce that our 2022 Economic Impact Study proved, once again, that investing in civil legal aid is a great investment! The total net social return on investment for Louisiana's civil legal aid programs is 1,799%. In other words, for every $1 invested in Louisiana's civil legal aid services, these programs deliver $17.99 in immediate and long-term consequential financial benefits. The analysis revealed that the net economic impact value resulting from Louisiana civil legal activities during the year totaled $148,755,000. When you consider these results, it's hard to imagine a better investment of time or money than the LBF.

The Foundation's first president, the late Dermot S. McGlinchey, said it best, "The tradition of service by lawyers is as old as the law itself. We need not be reminded that the practice of law was considered a privilege long before it became a paid profession so that the concept of service is innately part of our tradition." Please join me in making a statement of commitment to fairness and equal access for all in the justice system and become a LBF Fellow. Contact the LBF at (504)561-1046 or visit *www.RaisingTheBar.org* and find out how you can join today.

LBF Seeks Content Contributors for 2023-24 Speak Out for Justice! Focus on Civil Legal Aid

The Louisiana Bar Foundation (LBF) is seeking proposals for content creators for its Speak Out for Justice! Focus on Civil Legal Aid program.

Speak Out for Justice! Focus on Civil Legal Aid is a program of the LBF's Education Committee. The purpose of this program is to support the LBF's educational goals and show how vital the need for civil legal aid is to those who need it most. The LBF simultaneously engages multiple content creators for this program.

Proposals are being sought for:

► Proposals for Public Awareness of the vital need for civil legal aid services for those who cannot afford them. Media types may include (but are not limited to) podcasts, series of written content such as stories, articles, interviews, blog posts, publications, video, PSAs, social media content, and/or art.

► Proposals for Research to measure the effectiveness of ongoing civil legal aid programs. Formats may include (but are not limited to) economic analyses, series of written content (blogs, news articles, interviews, reports), publications, extrapolations from Census data and related materials, social science articles, hypotheses and surveys affirming or disproving current beliefs and approaches, and other formats to effectively discuss civil legal aid with those less familiar with it.

For the full proposal requests, go online to: *www.raisingthebar.org*.

For more information, contact Dee Jones at (504)561-7303 or email dee@raisingthebar.org.