

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM

25 Years of Service

BY MICHELE MIRTO

2006 marks the 25th anniversary of the Volunteer Lawyers Programs (VLP) in Arizona. During that history, the number of volunteer attorneys associated with the VLP programs has grown steadily, as have the services provided. In its anniversary year, the VLP programs worked with more than 3,497 volunteer attorneys to provide services to an estimated 13,373 clients across the state—all of whom faced legal issues and who benefited from VLP counsel and the generosity of our volunteers.

To celebrate this milestone, the VLP programs coordinated three special recognition events last fall. The first took place on October 25, 2006, when nearly 300 attorneys and guests attended the VLP Awards Luncheon at the Fox Theatre in downtown Tucson.

The Southern Arizona VLP celebration saw a surprise visit from former U.S. Senator John Edwards, a longtime advocate for equal justice and legal access for the indigent population. Edwards, who serves as Director of the University of North Carolina's Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity, appeared at the luncheon to extend his thanks to the many who volunteer their time.

This year's awards were presented by Arizona Supreme Court Vice-Chief Justice Rebecca White Berch. Those attorneys who received the Attorney of the Month Award in 2006 were recognized: Shannon Giles, Charles Flett, Emily Dillof, Robert Ferrier, Lisa Schriener Lewis, Chris Mathis, Heather Strickland, Angela Moore, Jeannette Geiser, Alan Solot, Elizabeth Berenguer and James Mather.

In addition, the VLP extended special awards of thanks to several individuals, law firms and organizations who have demonstrated extraordinary service to the program over the past 25 years. Individual award winners were William Bacon, Stacy Rupperecht Butler, Hon. Frederic Dardis, Amy Glicken, Joseph Riley, Jr., and Denice Shepherd. The law firms of DeConcini McDonald Yetwin & Lacy, Fleming & Curti, and Quarles & Brady Streich Lang also received anniversary awards. The VLP recognized several organizations as well: the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, the James E. Rogers College of Law, Pima County Superior Court and the VLP Advisory Board.

The second celebration took place on November 13 at the Sandra Day O'Connor U.S. Court House in Phoenix. Community Legal Service's VLP welcomed 300 guests to the "Thanks to You" celebration, which included remarks by Professor David Hall of

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Northeastern University, a member of the national Legal Services Corporation Board.

The celebration



Elliot Glicksman (L) and Sen. John Edwards (R) in Tucson, Oct. 25, 2006. Tucson attorney Glicksman has served as the master of ceremonies for the VLP's awards events for the last 10 years.

also included the announcement of the 2006 "For Love of Justice" Awards to individuals, law firms and other organizations that provide and promote pro bono service in the five counties served by CLS. The highest honor, the Frank X. Gordon Jr. Traveling Award, was presented to Chief Justice Ruth McGregor for her support for pro bono recruitment and recognition. Awards were presented to attorneys and firms who assist children through VLP's Children's Law Center, provide outstanding community service, assist low-income consumers, provide family law advice and representation, and provide donated support services for cases referred by VLP. Two retired judges, Hon. Robert Pickrell and Hon. Elizabeth Stover, were recognized for their many years of pro bono service since leaving the bench. Charles Arnold, Alena Cantor, Irwin Harris and William Hau were honored with VLP Pro Bono Lifetime Achievement Awards.

More than 100 people attended the third event, DNA's VLP celebration, on November 14. Those in attendance at the luncheon, at Pesto Brothers Piazza in Flagstaff, welcomed speaker Professor David Hall, who lectures nationally and writes on issues of social justice, diversity, affirmative action, and equal justice and educational transformation.

Awards were presented by Hon. Fred Newton, Presiding Judge, Coconino County Superior Court, to Susan Slasor, Judy Apachee and Phillip (Jay) McCarthy, Jr. Also recognized were attorneys Richard Grimsrud, Robert Miller and David Barrow. In appreciation of their reduced-fee service of process, Hawkins/EZ-Messenger and Northern Arizona Investigations were recognized. Secretary Ruth Rowe was also recognized for her volunteer hours at the Flagstaff DNA office.

The VLP Programs extend their thanks and appreciation to all of the volunteer attorneys, law students, community supporters and funders who make the programs possible. And special thanks to the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education for its extraordinary leadership and support of VLP Programs across Arizona. Here's to the next 25 years! 