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Washington College of Law Fellow Serving at LAET

Low income and elderly East Tennesseans have a new legal advocate on their side thanks to a law school fellowship program in Washington, D.C. Malika Noel has received a JD Distinguished Fellowship from American University's Washington College of Law (WCL), and is serving in the Knoxville office of Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET).

Ms. Noel graduated in May 2013 from WCL, where she earned a Juris Doctor degree. She attained the highest grade in Property Law and Elder Law, and is currently awaiting the results of the July 2013 Tennessee Bar Exam. "When I heard about the fellowship opportunity, I immediately knew that I wanted to do legal aid work," said Ms. Noel. "It takes only one day in court to see that lower-income Americans are grossly under-represented in our legal system. I am concerned about the funding crisis facing legal aid programs and feel that fellowships play a critical role in nurturing and supporting the next generation of career legal aid attorneys."

Ms. Noel has demonstrated her commitment to serving the public interest through past work experience at the National Academy of Public Administration, Legal Services Corporation, and Legal Services of Northern Virginia, and as a Student Attorney with D.C. Law Students in Court, a litigation clinic where selected third-year law students represent low-income residents. She has also worked with abused and neglected children as a volunteer CASA-Court Appointed Special Advocate in Arlington and Alexandria, VA.

"We are thrilled that Malika chose to begin her public interest career as a Fellow with Legal Aid of East Tennessee," said Debra House, LAET's Associate Director. "Her presence enables us to expand our services and serve those most in need. Many

low-income East Tennesseans will benefit from her year-long fellowship.” Ms. Noel added. "Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity, and everyone deserves a meaningful chance at justice. Legal aid attorneys are on the front lines of making sure that happens, and I’m thrilled to be a part of that.”

The Washington College of Law JD Distinguished Fellowship Program funds substantive legal work performed by recent WCL graduates. Applicants are selected on a competitive basis. Selection criteria include a demonstrated interest in substantive legal work, past work experience, clinical experience, academic achievement, and how proposed substantive work furthers the graduate’s career development. For more information on this program, visit www.wcl.american.edu/fellowship/.

Legal Aid of East Tennessee’s mission is to ensure justice for elderly, abused, and low-income people by providing a broad scope of civil legal assistance and advocacy. LAET serves eligible persons in 26 counties through offices in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Johnson City, Maryville, and Morristown. For more information, contact LAET’s Knoxville office at (865) 637-0454, or visit www.laet.org.

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