

Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services

Strengthening the Delivery of Civil Legal Help to Vulnerable Tennesseans

www.tals.org

Award Recipients

B. Riney Green Award

2000 -- **Linda Seely**, for her work in establishing the TBA's Equal Justice Committee; Patti George, for mobilizing advocates throughout the state in response to sweeping changes in the TennCare program.

2001 -- **Bill Haley**, for his leadership in state planning. And, Stewart Clifton and Mike Murphy, for their skill, commitment creativity and initiative in developing mechanisms for state funding for legal aid in Tennessee.

2002 -- **Pat Mock**, for her work in developing state-wide policies governing uniform affidavits of indigency.

2003 -- **Doug Blaze**, for his leadership in establishing an expanded Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services.

2004 -- **Mary Michelle Gillum**, for her leadership in establishing the Tennessee Taxpayer Project, and working with advocates throughout the state in improving advocacy to low-wage working families.

2005 -- **Jennifer Jean Rosenbaum**, for her effective advocacy and coalition-building efforts which improved the lives of immigrants and refugees throughout Tennessee.

2005 -- **Steve Xanthopoulos**, for his constant promotion of statewide programs to address significant client needs which have strengthened legal aid providers and improved the lives of thousands of low-income Tennesseans.

2006 -- **Sherry Wilds**, with the Disability Law and Advocacy Center of Tennessee, for her efforts to promote collaboration among legal aid providers in Tennessee on behalf of children with disabilities.

2007 -- **Frank Cantrell**, Memphis Area Legal Services, for his leadership in coordinating and helping draft the TALS amicus curiae for the Wimmer Case before the Tennessee Supreme Court. Frank's efforts not only brought advocates statewide together but rejuvenated the TALS Consumer Law Task Force, as well.

2008 -- **Pam Ford Wright**, West Tennessee Legal Services, for her tireless efforts to promote continuing education and training among elder law and health law advocates.

2008 -- **Bill Bush**, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, for spearheading a statewide effort by legal services attorneys to establish a groundbreaking DHS policy to waive food stamp overpayments which were caused by an agency error.

2009 -- **Adinah Robertson**, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, for her enduring efforts to promote community education and client-oriented and appropriate materials to legal aid clients everywhere.

2010 -- **David Tarpley**

New Advocate of the Year: Recipients

2006 -- **Sharmila Murthy**, an attorney with the Legal Aid Society in Nashville, for her high level of creative, effective representation of clients. Murthy handled several complex consumer cases aimed at preventing predatory lending scams. She also greatly expanded the Legal Aid Society's representation of immigrants and refugees in Nashville.

2007 -- **Dawn Gerhardt**, an attorney with the Tennessee Coalition on Domestic and Sexual Violence Immigrant Legal Clinic, for her effective and high-quality representation of immigrant victims of domestic or sexual violence or victims of human trafficking in their immigration hearings. Because of her work, Dawn has helped make the lives of many immigrant victims and their children safer.

2008 -- No award given

2009 -- **Craig P. Barnes**, Memphis Area Legal Services, for his collaborative work through the TALS Consumer and Housing Task Force. He created the "Consumer Jeopardy" consumer law CLE, which he developed as a live Webinar, with both a live audience and a simultaneous broadcast. He has also assisted with other statewide trainings. In 2007, Craig was instrumental in the statewide effort of the Task Force to assist with the Wimmer case.

2009 -- **Spring Miller**, Southern Migrant Legal Services, for her work with community groups and individual low-wage workers to press state and federal occupational health and safety agencies, including TOSHA, to improve enforcement. She also took the lead in filing a Title VI discrimination complaint against the farmworker occupational health and safety agency in another southern state for its discriminatory refusal to enforce pesticide safety protection standards for farmworkers who are linguistic and racial minorities.

2010 -- **Katie Evans** has been with the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland (LASMT) for only two years, but in that time has handled over 500 cases. Fifty of these cases pertained to Tennesseans losing their TennCare home health care services and many others pertained to Social Security Disability Law. Evans has become passionate and knowledgeable about both of these topics, resulting in great benefits for her clients. To date, Evans has won all her Social Security cases that have gone to hearing and several prior to hearing. Additionally, Evans was played a pivotal role in two successful Federal Court cases pertaining to TennCare violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

2010 -- **Chris Coleman** is currently a staff attorney at the Tennessee Justice Center (TJC), but Coleman began his involvement with TJC as a lawyer in private practice serving as a board member. Witnessing the impact TJC was making on the behalf of poor Tennesseans inspired him to make a career move to public interest law. So Coleman joined the TJC staff and hit the ground running. My work at TJC is not driven by charity or pity.” Coleman said of his new position. “Rather, it’s driven by a concern for the fundamental rights of clients faced with the loss of the most basic necessities of life.” In less than a year’s time, Chris Coleman has made himself indispensable at TJC. When faced with complex issues pertaining to FEMA regulations and the Health Care Affordability Act, Coleman has proven to be an invaluable research and training resource to the TJC staff and community members. As an advocate, Coleman has not been afraid to take on intimidating legal issues, such as strengthening due process protections for disaster victims seeking FEMA assistance. In cases such as these, Coleman has been proactive in creating and executing advocacy strategies and his efforts may very well influence the future actions of the Obama Administration pertaining to due process.

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