

Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services



Strengthening the Delivery of Civil Legal Help to Vulnerable Tennesseans

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LAET Names New Executive Director



KNOXVILLE (November 24, 2015) – The Board of Directors of Legal Aid of

East Tennessee (LAET) announced today that Sheri A. Fox has been named Executive Director of the 26-county civil law firm. She replaces David R. Yoder, who retires on December 31st.

Ms. Fox comes to LAET after 14 years as an attorney with the Chattanooga office of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, P.C., where she served on various committees including the firm's Pro Bono Committee. She is a long-time volunteer with LAET's Pro Bono Project in Chattanooga and has been recognized as an Attorney for Justice by the Tennessee Supreme Court. Ms. Fox has a wide range of litigation experience at both the trial and appellate levels in state and federal courts.

Ms. Fox earned her Juris Doctor degree from The University of Tennessee College of Law, and also holds an M.S. in Mental Health Counseling from Nova University and an A.B.J. in Journalism from The University of Georgia.

"I am thrilled and humbled to join LAET in its ongoing quest to ensure that our elderly, abused, and low-income neighbors receive the legal help they otherwise would be denied solely because they cannot afford to hire an attorney," said Ms. Fox. "While equal justice remains a dream in this country, it is a dream that the lawyers, staff, and supporters of LAET work tirelessly and courageously day in and day out to make a reality. I am proud to join them as the hands, feet, and voices of access to justice in East Tennessee." Ms. Fox also commented that, "One of the primary reasons I joined Baker Donelson over 14 years ago was because of the firm's demonstrated commitment to access to justice. Given that commitment, it is not at all surprising that my Baker Donelson family 'raised' a lawyer who would one day take the helm of LAET. I go with the firm's heartfelt blessings and promises of continued support for access to justice."

Marshall H. Peterson, LAET Board President-Elect, chaired the search committee that recruited Ms. Fox. "I'm excited Ms. Fox accepted this leadership position," said Mr. Peterson. "Her legal experience and demonstrated commitment to civil justice for all led to the board's unanimous decision. I am confident that Ms. Fox's energy and perspective will well-serve the people of East Tennessee."

Russell W. Gray, Office Managing Shareholder of Baker Donelson's Chattanooga office, said, "LAET really hit a homerun with this hire. Sheri is an excellent attorney who has long been dedicated to pro bono efforts. She also has a knack for generating creative and effective ideas and making those ideas become reality. Sheri will have a positive impact not only on LAET in her new role, but also on the community."

Baker Donelson's Pro Bono Shareholder Lisa Borden echoed Mr. Gray's comments. "Sheri has been a tremendous asset to Baker Donelson's pro bono program, in East Tennessee and across the firm. While I will miss Sheri's wise counsel on our pro bono committee, I am thrilled to have the opportunity continue to collaborate with her in her new role at LAET. We look forward to working together with Sheri to serve East Tennesseans in need."

"Legal Aid of East Tennessee has been blessed through the years with exemplary leadership," commented Donald F. Mason, Jr., LAET Board President. "Sheri Fox will be no exception. She is bright, able, resourceful, energetic and articulate, with years of high-level litigation experience. Mr. Mason added, "Perhaps most important, Ms. Fox brings a servant's heart to the helm of LAET, which remains poised to deliver justice for all to the most needy among us. We are indeed pleased to welcome Ms. Sheri Fox as the new Executive Director of Legal Aid of East Tennessee."

Ms. Fox begins her duties with LAET on January 1, 2016.