

ARKANSAS  
ACCESS TO  
JUSTICE  
REPRESENTING HOPE

**Foundation Board Members:** Cliff McKinney- Chair, Sainabou Sonko-Vice Chair, Brian Clary-Secretary, Hillis Schild-Treasurer, Aaron Brooks, Deepali Lal, Tabitha Lee, Kristin Pawlik, John Thomas Shepherd, & Eddie Walker

**Commission Board Members:** Mark Mayfield – Chair, Judge Carlton Jones – Secretary, Rachael Borné, Jean Carter, Rep. Andrew Collins, Kendall Lewellen, Skye Martin, Prof. Kelly Browe Olson, Dequeshia Prude-Wheeler, & Lee Richardson

**Unavailable:** Samantha Blassingame, Judge Kim Bridgforth, Abby Brenneman (Arkansas Access to Justice Program Coordinator), Harry Light, Debby Nye, Stacey Pectol, Dr. Chad Rodgers, Vicki Smith, Prof. Tim Tarvin, Judge Adam Weeks, & Justice Robin Wynne

**Guests:** Sharon Blount-Baker, Kristin Clark (Legal Services Division Director, Administrative Office of the Courts), Judge Tommy Fowler, Grace Gault, Helen Gratil, Joshua Jackson, Antonio Jones (Law Clerk, Arkansas Supreme Court), Kerri Michael, Prof. Tiffany Murphy, Courtney Nosari-Wall (Law Clerk, Arkansas Supreme Court), Lee Richardson (Legal Aid of Arkansas), & Marty Sullivan (Director, Administrative Office of the Courts)

**Staff:** Jordan Bates-Rogers, Tameka Parker, & Ginny Greer

- Welcome and Introductions** – Mr. Bates-Rogers called the meeting to order and introductions were made.
  - Ginny Greer and Tameka Parker were introduced by Mr. Bates-Rogers. Ginny is the 2022 summer Fendler Fellow and has done great work for the program. Tameka vacated the Executive Assistant position and filled the IOLTA Program Manager position for Arkansas Access to Justice.
- Center for Racial Justice and Criminal Justice Reform** – Presentation by andré douglas pond cummings, Associate Dean for Faculty Development & Charles Baum Distinguished Professor of Law

- Mr. pond cummings presented a Center for Racial Justice and Criminal Justice Reform Report. He spoke on how and why the Center was founded. Highlights: \$1 million donation from Walmart to fund Court Observation Project; \$25,000 grant from Building Black Communities Fund; \$210,000 from Walmart to develop “enhanced community policing project”; \$20,000 from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation for a judicial listening series.

**3. How Courts Can Use Technology to Improve Access to Justice** – Attendees heard from a panel regarding the use of technology to provide better public access.

- Moderator: Hon. Amy Dunn Johnson–Circuit Court Judge, 6th Judicial District
- Panelists: Sharon Blount-Baker–Circuit Clerk & Ex-officio Recorder, Crawford County; Hon. Tommy Fowler–State District Court Judge, Craighead County; Grace Gault–District Court Clerk, Sherwood District Court
- Panelists gave specific examples of successful technology implementation in their courts and offices, including but not limited to: a robust text messaging reminder system; PowerPoint presentations in courtrooms that detail rules, procedures, and what to expect; and utilization of QR codes and social media to get information to the public. Panelists also discussed the inefficient utilization of court and state resources when cases get thrown out for simple mistakes that could be mitigated by court clerks early on in the legal process if the line between legal information and legal advice were more clearly defined.
- Hon. Amy Dunn-Johnson received a plaque for service to Arkansas and the legal community!

**4. Winthrop Rockefeller Staff Welcome** – Janet Harris

- Janet Harris gave a history of the Winthrop-Rockefeller Institute and talked about its mission.

**5. Small Group Session Reports** – Attendees broke into groups to discuss and report on prompts from Access to Justice.

- *20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Commission* group suggests: a symposium with CLE and party to follow; highlighting personal stories; 20 questions for 20 years; awards for legislators and the business community, moving beyond the legal community
- *How to better communicate IOLTA’s value to attorneys and banks* group suggests: target banks with small market shares that want to grow; 10 reasons to support IOLTA to address an education problem from a banking standpoint; identify correct contact points at banks; mailer to attorneys explaining preferred bank benefits

- *Fundraising* group suggests: silent auction items – utilize sporting events, local art and theatre
- *Eviction forms* group suggests: annotated forms; FAQs; utilizing young attorneys with more time

6. **Fines & Fees Panel** – Attendees heard from a panel regarding court fines and fees and the effect of failure to appear warrants. Discussion consisted of solutions to mitigate these issues.

- Moderator: Moderator: Hon. Carlton Jones–Circuit Judge, 8th-South Judicial Circuit
- Panelists: Rachael Borné–Director of Career Services, Our House; Hon. Tommy Fowler–State District Court Judge, Craighead County; and Josh Jackson–Attorney, Beyond Opioids Project
- Panelists spoke about court user concerns including: mobility, fines, and trust in the justice system. Panelists also spoke about the ripple effects of these issues and offered successful solutions, including but not limited to: amnesty programs, addressing misinformation, sign-up documents for individuals to speak directly with a judge about issues complying with court obligations, and partnering with treatment centers or other locations that see potential traffic to help circulate correct information and resources.

7. **Business Items**

- A quorum is present for the Foundation.
- No quorum is present for the Commission.
- Eddie Walker nominated for at-large slot on board by the Governance Committee. Seconded by Ms. Schild. Motion passes.
- John Thomas Shepherd nominated for re-election. Seconded by Ms. Schild. Motion passes.
- Officer elections – Cliff McKinney, President; Sainabou Sonko, Vice President; Hillis Schild, Treasurer; Brian Clary, Secretary. Motion to accept leadership slate by Mr. Brooks. Seconded by Mr. Shepherd. Motion passes.
- **Approval of January 2022 Commission Minutes** - No quorum present for the Commission. No vote was taken.
- **Approval of January 2022 Foundation Minutes** – Motion to accept the minutes by Ms. Lal. Seconded by Mr. Brooks. Motion passes.

8. **Governance Committee Report** – Ms. Schild

- **Audit Report** – Clean audit report; no questions asked. Motion to accept audit report from Governance Committee; seconded by Ms Schild. With no further discussion, the

motion carries unanimously.

- **Form 990** – Motion to accept from Governance Committee. Motion seconded by Ms. Schild; With no further discussion, the motion carries unanimously.

#### 9. **Executive Director's Report-** Mr. Bates-Rogers

- Mr. Bates-Rogers recognizes Tameka Parker as the new Access to Justice Foundation IOLTA Programs Manager and Ginny Greer as Fendler Fellow.
- Ms. Greer is working on a report examining the AR Free Legal Answers Program to identify underserved groups and to make recommendations for improvements.
- IOLTA Report: Tameka Parker taking over IOLTA duties. We are seeing an upward trend in IOLTA revenues and we are frequently communicating with banks about rates and the Preferred IOLTA Banks Program.
- CLE Updates: Abby Brennenman is continuing a series of pro-bono-focused CLEs and is working with a vendor to get pro bono CLEs on demand.
- We are also working with Paladin to develop a statewide pro bono portal to help connect lawyers to pro bono opportunities.

#### 10. **Financial Report** – Ms. Hillis Schild

- Cash/Cash equivalents of \$2,151,000
- Only outstanding debt is a credit card, paid monthly
- Stephens Equity account and Money Market decreasing; equity moving into cash to pay the last of Bank of America Settlement grants
- IOLTA income for the most recent financial report was \$38,000. YTD Budget is \$113,000, but we are at over \$124,000 from IOLTA revenue. Income has significantly increased since the most recent financial report.
- March 2022, \$51,899 in income; YTD \$173,000, over budget
- \$21,000+ expenses total for March; \$79,000 actual expenses for the year – at a profit for the year.
- Ms. Schild proposed an amended budget based on information from Mr. Bates-Rogers about the statewide pro bono portal. This would be an added expense of \$7,000. There is a grant to cover this expense.
- Ms. Schild asks for a motion to approve the amended budget proposal. Motion by Mr. McKinney. Second by Mr. Brooks. Motion passes.
- The cycle of liquidating equities to have cash on hand for grant payments and then making payments puts us out of compliance with our investment policy. The Finance Committee is aware of this and expects the problem to resolve after the last Bank of

America grant payment.

- The Finance Committee will have a recommendation for use of the excess funds left from the Bank of America Settlement, likely at the beginning of next year.
- Motion to pass Account Signer Resolution. Seconded by Mr. Brooks Motion passes.

#### **11. Scholarship Committee Report**

- The Scholarship Committee is working to put the essay contest into effect for 2023. They also discussed narrowing down essay topics and marketing strategies and resources.

#### **12. Partner Report** – Ms. Jean Carter (Center for Arkansas Legal Services) and Mr. Lee Richardson (Legal Aid of Arkansas)

- *Center for Arkansas Legal Services*: Uptick in public reaching out to CALS, due to public outreach and help desk in courts. Eviction and consumer debt cases remain high, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. More staffing is a need.
- Ms. Carter announces retirement from CALS after 42 years.
- *Legal Aid of Arkansas*: Mr. Richardson presents a statistical report; around 2,200 cases closed YTD. The highest number of cases are divorce cases, orders of protection, and landlord-tenant cases.

#### **13. Meeting Adjourned**


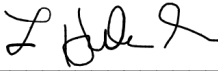
**ARKANSAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDATION  
RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

By action of the Board of Directors of the Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation, Inc., taken without a meeting, pursuant to Section 3.08 of the BYLAWS of ARKANSAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOUNDATION, INC.

RESOLVED, that the Foundation's Grants Committee currently lacks sufficient members to constitute a quorum.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Gwendolyn Rucker and Tabitha Lee, having volunteered for appointment, are appointed to serve on the Grants Committee.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution is effective upon the signature of the last director.

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*Victoria*

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07 / 15 / 2022

*Brian M Clary*

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07 / 14 / 2022

*Sainabou Sonko*

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07 / 13 / 2022

*D.S.*

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07 / 13 / 2022

*Eddie Walker*

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07 / 14 / 2022

*judsa*

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07 / 16 / 2022