



ARKANSAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE  
REPRESENTING HOPE

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**Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation & Commission Joint Board Meeting  
May 19, 2023 | In-Person & Zoom | Fayetteville, AR**

**Foundation Board Members:** Sainabou Sonko – Vice President, Hillis Schild – Treasurer, Brian Clary – Secretary, Aaron Brooks, Kyle Burton, Deepali Lal, Tabitha Lee (via Zoom), Harry Light, Debby Nye, Gwendolyn Rucker, John Thomas Shepherd (via Zoom), & Victoria Smith

**Commission Board Members:** Judge Kim Bridgforth – Vice Chair, Judge Carlton Jones – Secretary, Sharnae Diggs, Rachael Borné (via Zoom), Rep. Andrew Collins, Kendall Lewellen (via Zoom), Skye Martin, Benetick Maddison, Milo Mumgaard, Prof. Dequeshia Prude-Wheeler, Lee Richardson, & Judge Adam Weeks

**Unavailable:** Cliff McKinney – Foundation President, Mark Mayfield – Commission Chair, Prof. Kelly Browe Olson, Tiffany Murphy, Kristin Pawlik, Dr. Chadwick Rodgers, Sen. James Sturch, Prof. Tim Tarvin, Eddie H. Walker, Jr., & Justice Robin F. Wynne

**Guests:** Prof. Sara Gosman (Director of Public Service and Pro Bono Program, U of A School of Law), Courtney Nosari-Wall (Law Clerk to Justice Robin F. Wynne), & two members of the public

**Staff:** Jordan Bates-Rogers, Tameka Parker, Edith Chavez De Oseguera, & Autumn Ballard

**Welcome and Introductions** – Mr. Jordan Bates-Rogers & Ms. Sainabou Sonko

- Mr. Bates-Rogers asked for unanimous consent to allow Ms. Sonko and Judge Bridgforth to act as chairs for the Foundation and Commission respectively and ceded the floor to Ms. Sonko who asked for a full round of introductions. The Foundation meeting commenced first.

**Foundation Business Items**

- A quorum was present for the Foundation.
- **Approval of February 2023 Foundation Minutes** – Ms. Sonko asked for a motion to accept the February 2023 minutes. A motion to accept the minutes as written was made. Mr. Clary seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed.



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- **Motion - Officer Elections** – Ms. Sonko asked for a motion to accept the re-election of officers: Cliff McKinney – President, Sainabou Sonko – Vice President, Hillis Schild – Treasurer, Brian Clary – Secretary. A motion to accept the officer slate re-election was made. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **Audit Report** – Ms. Victoria Smith  
Ms. Smith reported that after review of the audit of the 2022 financials by the Governance Committee, the Arkansas Access to Justice statements present fairly. The assets, liabilities, and net assets of Access to Justice as of December 21, 2022 presented no concerns or irregularities.  
**Motion** – Ms. Sonko asked for a motion to accept the review of the 2022 Audit Report via recommendation from the Governance Committee. Ms. Schild motioned to approve. Mr. Clary seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **Approval of Financial Report** – Ms. Schild reported 2022 as a great year financially, finishing with a net budget of over \$40,000. Income was higher than budgeted and expenses lower than budgeted. Ms. Schild pointed out that interest rates were very high which is good from an income standpoint. Reported YTD budget was \$101,000, and YTD income from IOLTA revenue alone was \$144,000. Overall, YTD was reported at \$158,625 versus a budget of \$122,300. Ms. Schild also pointed out IOLTA grant disbursements that were released sooner than in past years. Reported net income for the year was \$16,618.
- **Motion** – Ms. Schild, on behalf of the Finance Committee, asked for a motion to approve the financial reports as presented. A motion to approve the financial report was made. Ms. Rucker seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- Ms. Schild reported that discussions were still ongoing regarding the placement of endowment funds. The Finance Committee recommended a proposed increase to the Preferred IOLTA Bank rate from 0.50% to 1% after hearing no opposition from surveyed banks.
- **Motion** – Ms. Schild asked for a motion to increase the Preferred IOLTA Bank Rate from 0.50% to 1%. Ms. Smith made a motion to increase the rate. The motion was seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **Motion** – Ms. Schild mentioned that a resolution needed to be approved for Ms. Chavez De Oseguera to have a credit card for business services. Ms. Sonko asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Ms. Schild made the motion to approve. Mr. Bates-Rogers seconded. Without any further discussion, the motion passed.



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### **Grants Committee Report** – Ms. Gwendolyn Rucker

- Ms. Rucker reported that \$100,000 each was handed out to Legal Aid of Arkansas and CALS earlier than usual so they could utilize the funds sooner. An additional \$50,000 was available for disbursement. The Grants Committee received three applications for those funds and ultimately decided to grant Legal Aid of Arkansas and CALS \$30,000 for state website improvements, Community Legal Access \$15,000, and the Crawford County Court \$5,000 for language access improvements. Mr. Bates-Rogers submitted to the record that he was previously on the Community Legal Access board, but resigned his position once grant applications were submitted to avoid conflict of interest.
- **Motion** – Ms. Sonko asked for a motion to approve the grant funds allotment request. Ms. Smith made a motion. Mr. Clary seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

### **Scholarship Committee Report** – Ms. Tabitha Lee

- Ms. Lee announced the winners of the 2023 Arkansas Access to Justice High School Scholarship Essay Competition – Faith Kelly from Sylvan Hills High School and Savannah Brown from Junction City High School, who won \$1,000 each for their essay submissions. Ms. Lee reported over 100 applicants submitted essays and thanked the members of the Scholarship Committee and volunteers that graded essays.

### **Commission Business Items**

- A quorum was present for the Commission.
- **Approval of February 2023 Commission Minutes** – Judge Bridgforth asked for a motion to accept the February 2023 minutes. Ms. Martin made a motion to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **Motion - Officer Elections** – Judge Bridgforth asked for a motion to accept the re-election of officers: Mark Mayfield – Chair, Judge Kim Bridgforth – Vice President, Judge Carlton Jones – Secretary. A motion to accept the officer slate re-election was made and seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- Mr. Bates-Rogers asked for comments on the Legal Information vs. Legal Advice: A Guide for Court Staff document as well as the Unlawful Detainer Forms.

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



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- **AR Courthouse Kiosks** – Mr. Bates-Rogers thanked the Arkansas Access to Justice team for assisting with office management while kiosks were being deployed. Mr. Bates-Rogers referenced the kiosk deployment map, and asked for assistance reaching out to clerks and judges in counties that were not yet on board with the project. At the time of this report, 34 kiosks were live.

### **IOLTA Report** – Ms. Tameka Parker

- Ms. Parker reported that interest received in January, February, and March of this year was doubled from last year, \$75,782 versus \$41,848 respectively. With the new rate going up to 1 basis point, Ms. Parker reported that the number of Preferred Banks will fall to 7, with 6 banks qualified for Preferred status.

### **Project Reports** – Ms. Edith Chavez De Oseguera

- **CLEs** - Ms. Chavez De Oseguera reported on two successful CLEs since February, Evictions and Disaster Legal Services, with 85 and 267 attendees respectively.
- **Free Legal Answers** – 7 clinics held at time of report.
- **Translations & Language Access Survey** - Ms. Chavez De Oseguera reported doing translation work, as well as seeking further feedback for the Language Access Survey for a fair evaluation and assessment of needs.

### **Partner Organization Updates** – Mr. Milo Mumgaard & Mr. Lee Richardson

- **Center for Arkansas Legal Services** – Mr. Mumgaard reported 150 to 200 direct action cases at CALS as a result of the March tornadoes. Mr. Mumgaard also reported on the Beyond Opioids project receiving national attention and that the project was presented in a panel at the Equal Justice Conference in Dallas, TX earlier this year. CALS has been busy with record-sealing clinics and was moving into litigation associated with record-sealing. Mr. Mumgaard mentioned a needs assessment will take place this summer as well as a new strategic plan in the fall.
- **Legal Aid of Arkansas** – Mr. Richardson reported on the expired moratorium on Medicaid terminations from earlier this year that affects thousands of Arkansans. Legal Aid was receiving lots of calls regarding that issue and were working to boost direct representation to affected individuals. Legal Aid was doing lots of community outreach and holding meetings with local and national partners. Mr. Richardson reported that Legal aid filed four federal cases and was also doing disability and Court of Appeals



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casework, as well as looking for replacement funding for the Beyond Opioids Project before a three-year grant expired. Bank of America funding for legal services stopped November 2022 as well, and Mr. Richardson reported an anticipated 10-22% funding loss from the Legal Services Corporation. Legal Aid was attempting to generate revenue and resource development at the time of report.

**Next Meeting Date**

Foundation: August 11, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

Commission: September 29, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom

**Meeting Adjournment** – Ms. Bridgforth asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.