

MEMO

TO: Barbara Penn
Tom Meilenhausen

FROM: James L. Baillie

DATE: August 6, 2003

RE: Ten Pro Bono Initiatives for this Bar Year

Here is a draft of the pro bono initiatives for review by the LAD Committee. If the list is acceptable, I hope that the LAD Committee would adopt it and agree to work and assure its achievement. If adopted, we would ask the marketing people to package this for use in various ways.

The goal is to substantially increase pro bono services during this Bar year. We seek 500 new volunteers and 1,000 more cases. We seek a comparable number of new law student volunteers and more cases by law students. During this year, we will try and develop a better understanding of how much pro bono work is being done so that we can measure the increase. These goals may be modified as we develop a better idea of the amount of pro bono actually being done. While these action items are directed toward the short-term goals, we expect many of them to have long-term consequences.

To make this happen, we will:

1. Business Law Pro Bono. We will adopt a plan and launch a new business law pro bono program that will call on business lawyers (the other half of the profession) to use their skills to assist nonprofits and micro enterprise with the goal of community economic development in addition to their help with traditional modes of pro bono service.

2. Law Firms and Corporate Counsel. We will meet with managing partners and challenge them to contribute. We will follow up and help them develop internal programs or improve internal programs and report their results.

3. Judicial Districts and the Judiciary. We will meet with the chief judges of each judicial district and work with them to develop, or update, a pro bono plan for each judicial district. We will follow up and help them develop and implement their plans and report their results.

4. Direct Appeals to Lawyers. The MSBA president will write at least one column on the subject and will send at least one letter to each MSBA member. Pro bono leaders will appear at CLE programs and at as many bar association meetings as possible to get the message out. These other meetings will include section meetings and district meetings. We will try and develop ways to make sure that lawyers are asked, individually, one-on-one, to handle a case. To assist these and other efforts, pro bono marketing materials will be developed.

5. Database. We will develop a standard form for reporting pro bono services, including categories of cases. We will identify the “programs” or providers of pro bono services and get them to help us count. By this we will develop a baseline to measure our results in this bar year and in future years.

6. New Lawyers. We will prepare and deliver information on pro bono for new lawyers at the swearing-in ceremonies and the MSBA president will emphasize this topic at the ceremonies. We will also emphasize pro bono service by lawyers in their first few years of practice.

7. Law Students. This is the future. We will challenge and support MJF to achieve for the first time its goal of 80 % pro bono participation by graduating law students. We will

include pro bono in a more direct way with the professional responsibility classes in all of the law schools. We will call on law students to help with these and other initiatives.

8. On-Line Pro Bono Initiative. The pro bono directory will be improved and placed on-line. In every possible way, attention will be directed to it. We will also improve pro justice in some specific way and direct attention to it. (Can it be used for direct-case placement?) Our Bankruptcy Section will develop a bankruptcy pro bono web page here (or elsewhere in the MSBA system) to support bankruptcy pro bono and make it a national model.

9. Recognition. We will develop and implement a program of regular recognition of volunteers through publicity in local newspapers and by annual ceremonies, Bench & Bar recognition, attention at the convention and other methods to be developed. The principal goal of this recognition will be to give encouragement to our volunteers to continue their efforts. A secondary goal will be to let the public know about the good work that the lawyers do.

10. Staff. The MSBA will support these efforts by hiring a part-time staff person solely dedicated to implementing these steps.

#2833064\1