

Welcome to the first edition of “Pro Bono Out in Front”

“We are excited to bring to you the first edition of our pro bono newsletter to communicate the importance of pro bono work and encourage increased momentum of pro bono service throughout the communities where we work and live.”

Mark Surprenant

Adams and Reese Partner and Pro Bono Paladin



Martin Stern



Jeff Richardson



Ron Sholes

Adams and Reese Attorneys Lead The Way for Pro Bono CLE Credits
Order signed by Chief Justice Bernette J. Johnson
of the Louisiana Supreme Court

Adams and Reese Attorneys’ Proposal for Lawyers to Earn CLE Credit for Pro Bono Work Leads to Unprecedented Louisiana Supreme Court Order

Effective May 1, 2015, and for the first time in the state of Louisiana, every lawyer who does pro bono work can receive up to three hours of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit each year, under an order signed by Chief Justice Bernette J. Johnson of the Louisiana Supreme Court. This followed a proposal by attorneys from Adams and Reese —[Martin Stern](#), [Jeff Richardson](#) and [Ron Sholes](#)—working together with retired Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Harry T. Lemmon, on a project for Louisiana Appleseed. [Read more](#)

[Martin Stern](#) and [Jeff Richardson](#) along with Louisiana Appleseed Executive Director [Christy Kane](#) authored an article: “New Supreme Court Rule Allows CLE Credit for Pro Bono Representation” in the [June/July issue of the Louisiana Bar Journal](#) which discusses the new Louisiana state law that allows every lawyer who does pro bono work to receive up to three hours of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit each year.

Memphis Attorney’s Pro Bono Work Helps Lost Boy of Sudan’s Family Move Into Habitat Home



Cannon Allen

Adams and Reese Memphis Partner [Cannon Allen](#) represented Michael Thokjang, one of the Lost Boys of Sudan who became a refugee from the 1983 civil war in Sudan, to help him and his family get approved for a home through the local Habitat for Humanity program.

Thokjang trekked across Sudan to Ethiopia and eventually Kenya as a very small child with thousands of other orphans (mostly boys) fleeing for his life. He arrived in the U.S. in 2002. He became a U.S. citizen in 2007. He is a husband and father of four children, works as a custodian and has lived in a low-income apartment for the past eight years. Problems with credit needed to be resolved prior to Habitat building their home. Allen knew Thokjang from church, and Adams and Reese agreed to represent him on a pro bono basis. [Read more](#)



Thokjang and family move in new Habitat home

David Waters: ‘Lost Boy’ from Sudan finds new home, family in Memphis. Photo by Jim Weber Copyright 2015 Memphis Commercial Appeal. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Tampa Attorneys Succeed in Religious Freedom Challenge to Affordable Care Act



Stephanie Martin



Chris Roach

Adams and Reese Tampa attorneys [Stephanie Martin](#) and [Christopher Roach](#) have spent more than 100 hours of pro bono work successfully raising a challenge to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) for various ministries of the Christian and Missionary Alliance under the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The CMA ministries object on religious grounds to the ACA because of its mandate to provide abortion-inducing contraceptives in violation of their sincerely held religious beliefs. Chris and Stephanie have partnered with the Dallas-based Liberty Institute in representing these clients. A preliminary injunction was granted after an extended oral argument before Judge John Steele, of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida in Fort Myers. In making its ruling, the Court observed that compelling the organizations to identify their insurance providers to HHS, as required under the government’s recently promulgated rules for the exemption, forces the groups to become “excessively entangled in the process of providing coverage for services which their sincerely held religious beliefs prohibit.” The district court’s ruling has been appealed by the Department of Justice.

Stephanie and Chris are continuing to represent these clients in this appeal before the Eleventh Circuit. [Read more](#)



Columbia Attorneys Participate in Lawyers 4 Vets Program sponsored by South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Attorneys Kirby Shealy, Dawn Hardesty, Cliff Moore and Lyndey Zwing

Jackson Attorneys Assist Husband in Adoption Pro Bono Case



Adams and Reese attorneys [Laura Rose](#) and [Elizabeth Maron](#), in the firm's Jackson office, assisted a husband in an adoption case through the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project.

A husband was seeking to adopt his wife's young son, who was born before their marriage and had a different father who had not been involved

in the child's life at all. When the process was complete, the family was handed the Certificate of Adoption at the Courthouse.

[Read more](#)

Pro Bono Experience: Gerard Gaudet

[Gerard Gaudet](#), New Orleans Associate, recently handled a pro bono construction fraud matter for a person of low income. He was asked by The Pro Bono Project to summarize his experience in handling that case.

"The one thing that young lawyers do not have at the start of their legal career is courtroom experience. While working on the matter for Mrs. Brule, I was able to gain priceless experience in client management as well as in prepping for and participating in a mini trial. Specifically, I was able to prepare witnesses and question them in open court, to prepare and present evidence which I thought was most beneficial to our case, and to present my oral argument based on my own legal analysis and preparation with the client. Most importantly, I was able to help a client in need by obtaining a favorable outcome from the court."

- Gerard Gaudet, Associate, New Orleans

St. Petersburg Attorneys Work with Community Law Program to Aid Minister in Breach of Contract Case



[Andrew McBride](#) presents check to Mr. James West

Adams and Reese attorneys [Andrew McBride](#) and [Jim Dickson](#), in the firm's St. Petersburg office, assisted James West, a disabled minister, through the Community Law Program, Inc., in obtaining full restitution on his breach of contract claim in an automobile sale case.

Adams and Reese has long been a partner of Community Law Program Inc., in St Petersburg, a nonprofit originally created by the Bar over 20 years ago to serve the civil legal needs of low-income and disadvantaged individuals. Dickson will be serving a term as the board's President in August 2015. [Read more](#)

Attorney Pro Bono Service: Boards and Committees

- [Rob Bethea](#)
Epworth Children's Home, Pro Bono Tax Counsel
- [Richard Carmody](#)
American College of Bankruptcy Foundation, Pro Bono Committee Member; National Appleseed, Assistant in Communication and Understanding of Consumer Commercial Law Issues
- [Jim Dickson](#)
Community Law Program Inc., Board President
- [Ira Gonzalez](#)
New Orleans Pro Bono Project, Board of Directors
- [Scott Hetrick](#)
South Alabama Volunteer Lawyers Program, Board President
- [Matt Jackson](#)
American Bar Association, Military Pro Bono Project Committee; South Alabama Volunteer Lawyers Program, Board of Directors
- [Stephanie Martin](#)
The Florida Bar, Pro Bono Committee Member
- [Margaret Myers](#)
The ALS Association Tennessee Chapter, Pro Bono Advisor
- [Anne Russell](#)
Cheekwood Museum of Art and Botanical Gardens, Pro Bono Legal Counsel
- [Martin Stern](#)
Louisiana Appleseed, Board of Directors
- [Mark Surprenant](#)
Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, Board of Directors; Louisiana Access to Justice Commission, Board of Directors; New Orleans Pro Bono Project, Resource Development Committee; and Nominating Committee
- [Laura Whitmore](#)
Federal Bar Association, Pro Bono Committee



2015 Louisiana State Bar Association Pro Bono Century Awards
Ira Gonzalez and Mark Surprenant

Surprenant, Gonzalez Receive LSBA Pro Bono Century Award

Adams and Reese New Orleans Partner [Mark Surprenant](#) and New Orleans Associate [Ira Gonzalez](#) were both recipients of the 2015 Louisiana State Bar Association Pro Bono Century Awards for donating more than 100 hours of pro bono service in 2014 through the LSBA. The awards ceremony was held at the Louisiana Supreme Court in New Orleans on May 19, 2015. [Read more](#)





Jacksonville Area Legal Aid Advance Directives for Seniors

Attorneys Angela Grewal and James Floyd were among the volunteers.

Pro Bono Around the Firm

At Adams and Reese we believe in giving back to the communities where we work and live. Our firm's pro bono policy requires that every lawyer in the firm annually perform a minimum of 20 hours of pro bono work. In the last five years, Adams and Reese attorneys have performed more than 30,000 pro bono hours. Below are mentions of the pro bono work being performed this year by our attorneys:

Pro Bono Out In Front Newsletter

Mark Surprenant

Adams and Reese Partner
and Pro Bono Paladin

Please send any comments and
pro bono successes to:
mark.surprenant@arlaw.com

Pro Bono Committee

CHAIR - Mark Surprenant

Baton Rouge -

Patty McMurray

Birmingham -

Richard Carmody

Columbia -

Cliff Moore

Houston -

Alex Cosculluela

Jackson -

Laura Rose

Jacksonville -

Caroline Prieto

Memphis -

Ben Fox

Mobile -

Scott Hetrick

Nashville -

Margaret Myers

New Orleans -

Martin Stern

Sarasota -

Ryan Owen

St. Petersburg -

Jim Dickson

Tampa -

Eric Partlow

Washington, DC -

Jeff Brooks

Baton Rouge

Attorneys in Baton Rouge have volunteered at several pro bono events and clinics through the Baton Rouge Bar Association Pro Bono Project's Ask-A-Lawyer and Thirst for Justice programs.

Birmingham

Birmingham Of Counsel Richard Carmody works with National Appleseed to assist the organization in communicating consumer commercial law issues to the nonprofit's network of 17 public interest justice centers in the United States and Mexico.

Columbia

The Columbia office held its second pro bono-thon in a "Spring 2015 Friday Blitz" on March 27, as eight attorneys and 10 law students answered more than 55 legal questions using the South Carolina Bar's Law Answers program in conjunction with the South Carolina Bar and University of South Carolina School of Law.

Houston

Houston attorneys have worked on several pro bono assignments received from the Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program, including helping an Iraq war veteran, and with Portrait of a Warrior Memorial Art Gallery (POWMAG of Texas, Inc.) to set the organization up as a nonprofit and help with legal needs.

Jackson

Lawyers in our Jackson office provide pro bono assistance through various organizations in the state including the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project, the Mississippi Center for Justice, and the Mission First Legal Aid Clinic.

Jacksonville

Jacksonville attorneys Angela Grewal and James Floyd volunteered at a Jacksonville Area Legal Aid Advance Directives for Seniors event on July 18, to help senior citizens prepare advance directive documents. Adams and Reese has long been a partner of this event through JALA.

Memphis

Memphis attorneys have volunteered on several pro bono matters through Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc. (MALS), providing free legal assistance, community education and representation in civil matters to several counties throughout Tennessee.

Mobile

Partner Scott Hetrick has been active in various pro bono cases, including leading the way for an uncontested divorce clinic, and a guardianship rights case for a mother over her adult mentally challenged son, so that she can effectively communicate with his caregivers.

Nashville

Nashville attorneys have volunteered on diverse pro bono matters through the Nashville Pro Bono Program, coordinated by the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and The Cumberland, to aid low-income families in civil cases.

New Orleans

Partner Lee Reid and Associate Jennifer Barriere researched and edited the Louisiana Charter School Board Legal Handbook, as well as developed and presented related CLE programs to assist administrators in addressing some of the more pressing legal and organizational issues facing Louisiana's charter schools.

Sarasota

Partners Ryan Owen and David Boyette handled several matters for acquaintances from local churches and employees of Adams and Reese clients. Partner in Charge Jason Gaskill handled several general confidentiality/privacy issues for the Child Protection Center.

St. Petersburg

Attorneys in St. Petersburg are handling several cases referred from the Community Law Program. Representative pro bono needs through the CLP include providing assistance to women in need of domestic injunctions; serving as attorneys for children that will be aging out of the foster care system; and other areas in family law.

Tampa

Attorneys in Tampa have continued working with the Are You Safe organization to provide legal representation for indigent victims of domestic violence, assisted in securing permission for the expansion of a local school and a successful appeal to correct an erroneous ruling on back child support for a disabled parent. Work has also begun working with Wills for Heroes and the local Guardian *ad Litem* program.

Washington, DC

Jeff Brooks, DC Partner in Charge and Executive Committee Chairman, is working with Mark Surprenant, New Orleans Partner and Pro Bono Paladin, on a task for the Louisiana Access to Justice Committee to help secure appropriate funding in Congress for the Legal Services Corporation, which provides free legal services to low-income individuals and families across Louisiana and elsewhere in the country.

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For additional information, please see the firm website at www.adamsandree.com.

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