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Managing Attorney

*Providing free legal services in civil (non-criminal) matters
to low-income people primarily in
Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin Counties.*



www.legalaidnc.org/WinstonSalem

4th Annual Pro Bono Celebration

Legal Aid of North Carolina salutes pro bono efforts in Winston-Salem

by Jean Witherspoon

On Wednesday, April 20, 2011, the Legal Aid of North Carolina-Winston-Salem Office held its fourth annual pro bono celebration at the Hawthorne Inn in Winston-Salem to recognize and celebrate the pro bono efforts of its local attorneys in 2010.

Awards were presented to the volunteer attorneys who did outstanding work for LANC clients in 2010.

Susan D. Brotherton (sole practitioner, Statesville) was recognized as the Family Law Attorney of the Year, Rural Counties. Brotherton has taken domestic violence cases pro bono for several years, helping low-income clients in Iredell County who most likely would not have received legal services

without her dedicated pro bono assistance.

Robin J. Stinson (Bell Davis & Pitt, P.A., Winston-Salem) was recognized as the Family Law Attorney of the Year, Forsyth County.

Mark D. Boynton (Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, LLP, Winston-Salem) was recognized as the Housing/Consumer Attorney of the Year.

Celeste M. Harris (Maynard & Harris, PLLC, Winston-Salem) was honored as the Volunteer Attorney of the Year. Harris currently serves on the LANC-Winston-Salem Office's Local Advisory Council (LAC) and is the Co-Chair of the LANC



Steve Virgil (l.) (Wake Forest University School of Law) with some of the 24 law students who took mortgage cases through the WFU Community Law & Business Clinics.

Board of Directors.

Steve Virgil (Wake Forest University School of Law) was recognized as the Mortgage Foreclosure Attorney of the Year. Virgil supervised the WFU School of Law's Community Law & Business Clinic, through which 24 law students

(see **Pro bono**, Cont. on page 4)

Mock Trial Team Coach

LANC-Winston-Salem Office assists school

by Kenneth Love

This school year, members of Legal Aid of North Carolina-Winston-Salem Office coached the Mock Trial Team from the Carter G. Woodson Charter School in Winston-Salem, N.C.

This was the second year that members of the Winston-Salem office partnered with the school to coach the team.

The NC Advocates for Justice and the Carolina Center for Civic Education have been sponsoring the Mock Trial program since 1994. The program teaches high school students public speaking, critical thinking and other important skills.

The competition is designed to teach the students legal concepts while incorporating other skills that will make them more successful in whatever career they choose. However, the program does not require students to aspire to be lawyers

This year, the Carter G. Woodson Charter School sent two teams to the regional competition in Durham, NC. The teams were coached by Hazel Mack (LANC Triad Regional Manager), Benjamin Harris (Staff Attorney, Family Law Unit and HEEC Unit), Jeanna

(see **School**, Cont. on page 8)

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LANC NEWS

is the newsletter of Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC). Send comments to: *LANC News*, Legal Aid of NC, 224 South Dawson Street, Raleigh, NC 27601. Editor: Dock Kornegay; Executive Director: George R. Hausen, Jr., Esq. Legal Aid of North Carolina is a nonprofit [501(c)3] law firm that provides free legal services to low-income persons in North Carolina through 24 field offices and six statewide projects.

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Update from Yvette...

"Gearing Up...."

R. Yvette Stackhouse, Esq.
Managing Attorney, LANC-WS Office



It's finally spring! Everywhere you look, new life and continued growth are apparent. Blossoms are everywhere and so many new things are happening here at Legal Aid.

Our Winston-Salem office has three units: the Family Law Unit; the Public Benefits Unit; and the Housing, Employment, Education and Consumer (HEEC) Unit. All three units have articles in this edition of the newsletter that give you an update on what's happening.

The Family Law Unit primarily does domestic violence cases. The *Family Law Unit Update* (see page 6) gives an overview of the successful collaboration Legal Aid has shared with Family Services, Inc. in doing these cases. The article discusses our current and past collaborative and continued relationship.

The *Public Benefits Unit Update* (see page 6) acknowledges the increased demand for representation in Medicaid disability cases. As a result, we recently suspended the Self-Help Medicaid Clinic and started accepting more Medicaid disability cases, depending on the merits of the case. In addition, the benefits unit also provides representation for those who need advanced directives (e.g., wills, powers of attorneys and health care power of attorneys) for non-complicated matters.

In the HEEC Unit, we have noticed a continued growth in our mortgage foreclosure cases, with a growing trend also in the number of tenants in rental homes that are foreclosed on. In these hard economic times, we have also noticed an increase in the number of clients seeking representation at hearings to receive unemployment insurance benefits. Since so many people have lost their jobs, we are also seeing an increase in the number of debt collection cases coming into the office.

The *HEEC Unit Update* (see page 7) mentions all of these issues and provides an introduction to the new staffers in the

unit. It also mentions our appreciation of the private bar and Wake Forest University School of Law who have assisted us by taking pro bono (volunteer) cases for mortgage foreclosure clients and other consumer and housing cases.

In fact, the need for volunteer attorneys has remained a constant in all of our units. We appreciate every volunteer attorney that has taken a client case. To show our appreciation, we have an annual **Pro Bono Attorney Celebration** (see page 1) at which we recognized all volunteer attorneys and bestow our Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award. This year, the Celebration was held on April 20 at the Hawthorne Inn in Winston-Salem.

In previous years we have had Janet Ward Black, the former President of the NC Bar Association and Dean Blake Morant of the Wake Forest University School of Law as our special guests, who gave words of inspiration and encouragement to our pro bono attorneys. This year we had an inspiring performance by Authoring Actions Assegai Outreach Ensemble.

The Ensemble performed original creative writing pieces centered around the law. They are a dynamic group of local teenagers. Their Interim Board Chair is the Honorable Lisa Menefee, who provided an introduction for the group.

Finally, our office cherishes the relationships we have with community organizations in our service area of Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin Counties. You will see an example of this in the article, "**LANC-Winston-Salem Office assists school**" (see page 1), that highlights several staff attorneys who volunteered to work with Carter G. Woodson School of Challenge's mock trial teams. The two teams competed at the state level and did quite well for only their second year of competition. We love sharing what we do with others, particularly a future generation.

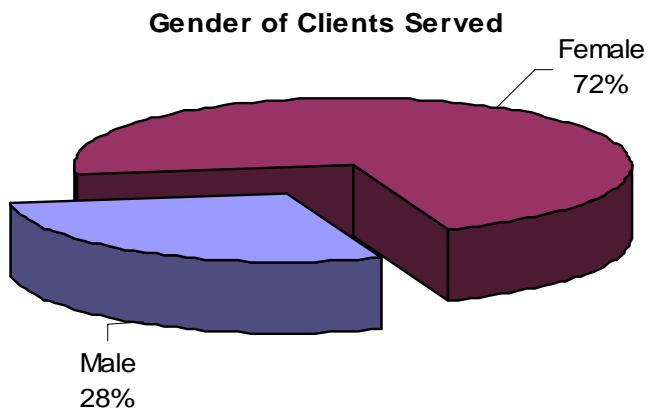
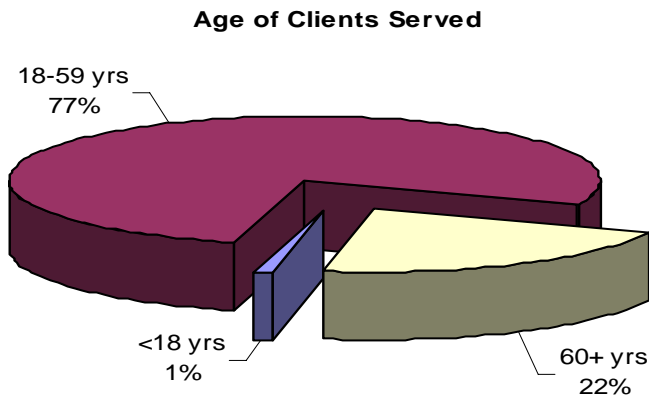
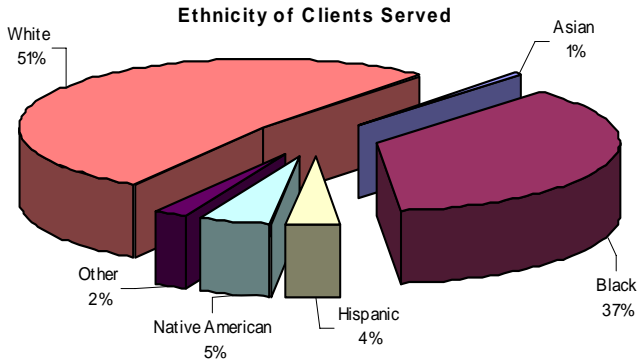
We look forward to a rewarding and productive rest of the year, as we continue to look for life-altering solutions to critical legal issues for our clients.

"...the need for volunteer attorneys remains constant in all of our units."




Communities and Cases of Legal Aid of NC

Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) provides high-quality legal services and access to justice to help meet the legal needs of approximately 3.5 million financially eligible North Carolinians (over 34% of the state's total population of 9.2 million people) whose household incomes fall below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. Of that total, almost one million are over the age of 60 and many are disabled and homeowners. The majority of poor households are headed by females. In 2010, the median income of LANC clients was approximately \$11,000, which is significantly less than the living wage of \$25,626 determined by the NC Justice Center.



About Legal Aid of NC

As the only Legal Services Corporation (LSC)-funded program in North Carolina,  Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) provides free, community-based, civil legal services in all 100 counties of North Carolina to those whose income falls below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines:

Size of Family Unit	Maximum Income Level*
1	\$ 13,613
2	\$ 18,388
3	\$ 23,163
4	\$ 27,938
5	\$ 32,713
6	\$ 37,488
7	\$ 42,263
8	\$ 47,038

* [The figures in this table represent 125% of the poverty guidelines by family size as determined by the US Department of Health & Human Services.]

LANC provides legal representation and counseling in civil (non-criminal) cases only.

Because of limited resources, LANC's cases are generally limited to those that impact clients' basic needs, including housing, access to medical care, protection from domestic violence, consumer protection and subsistence income.

LANC of NC receives funding from LSC (50%), the NC General Assembly (25%), and IOLTA (Interest On Lawyers' Trust Accounts; 12%). The remaining funds come from Title II funds for Older Americans, United Way, local governments, individual attorneys, foundations and other grants.

Legal Aid of North Carolina offices also recruit and coordinate private attorney (*pro bono*) volunteers through local volunteer lawyers programs (VLP's).

For additional information on Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) and its offices, visit the LANC website, www.legalaidnc.org.



(Pro bono, Cont. from page 1)
 handled mortgage foreclosure cases in 2010.

The law firm of **Craige Brawley Liipfert & Walker, LLP** (Winston-Salem) was recognized as the Pro Bono Firm of the Year.

Special recognition was given to **Michael Morlock** (Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, LLP) for his volunteer co-counsel work. **John Bumgarner, Brad Collins, and William Miller** received recognition for their work as public interest fellows.

The **Wake Forest University Law School's Community Law and Business Clinic students** were recognized and thanked for the numerous mortgage cases they handled for us.

Paralegals from **Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, PLLC** were recognized for their volunteer work at "Safe on Seven," Forsyth County's award-winning Domestic Violence Center. Thirty volunteer attorneys were given certificates and gifts of

appreciation for the cases they handled in 2010.

The evening began with a reception. **Barbara Knotts**, Chair of the LANC-Winston-Salem Local Advisory Council, (LAC) welcomed everyone with inspirational words.

Special guest, **Honorable Lisa Menefee**, spoke about the Authoring Action Assegai Outreach Ensemble, and her role with the organization. Authoring Action is a non-profit educational enrichment and outreach organization with programs designed to develop youth as authors and advocates for social change in our communities. Judge Menefee introduced three students from the ensemble who presented their creative writing pieces to the audience about pro bono work and justice.

Paul Shepard, am member of the LANC-Winston-Salem LAC and the 2009 Volunteer Attorney of the Year, closed the program by thanking everyone for their volunteer time and dedication to Legal Aid of NC.



Celeste M. Harris (Maynard & Harris, PLLC)
 Volunteer Attorney of the Year
[Presented by Yvette Stackhouse (r)]



Honorable Lisa Menefee
 Interim Board Chair, Authoring Action
Introduced Assegai Outreach Ensemble



Authoring Action's Assegai Outreach Ensemble Students:
Donna Daniel, Karnesha Bailey, Willie Homes



Susan Brotherton
 Family Law Attorney of Year, Rural
(Sole Practitioner, Statesville)



Mark D. Boynton
 Housing/Consumer Attorney of Year
(Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, LLP)



Michael T. Morlock
 Special Recognition - Co-Counsel
(Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, LLP)

**PRO BONO
 ATTORNEY
 CELEBRATION
 —
 APRIL 20, 2011
 —
 WINSTON-SALEM**



Robin J. Stinson
 Family Law Attorney of Year, Forsyth
(Bell Davis & Pitt, PA)



Craige Brawley Liipfert & Walker, LLP
 Firm of the Year
[Accepted by William Walker (l)]



Steve Virgil
 Mortgage Foreclosure Attorney of the Year
(Wake Forest School of Law)

Want to volunteer ?

The LANC-Winston-Salem Office is looking for volunteers for the following opportunities:

- ▶ Pro Bono Attorneys
- ▶ Justice for All Volunteers
- ▶ Court Observation Volunteers
- ▶ Student Interns

Volunteers receive orientation and training by our experienced staff. Volunteers may send resume or interest letter to:

Legal Aid of North Carolina
 102 West Third Street, Suite 460
 Winston-Salem, NC 27101



For more information,

visit our Internet website for the "LANC-Winston-Salem Office":

www.LegalAidNC.org/WinstonSalem

and click on the hyperlink for:

"Volunteer/Pro Bono Options"

Second since consolidation

Access to Justice Campaign continues in Winston Salem

Legal Aid of NC's annual Access to Justice (A2J) Campaign in Winston-Salem has raised more than \$9,000 thus far in 2011 for the provision of legal services in our community.

The 2011 A2J Campaign included a phone bank that contacted attorneys across Forsyth County to ask for support of Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) in Winston-Salem.

While LANC's A2J campaigns have been around for years in North Carolina, this is the only the second year of Legal Aid of NC's A2J Campaign in Winston-Salem since the consolidation of LANC and Legal Aid Society of Northwest NC in July 2008.

Private attorneys, law firms and a local foundation have all contributed to the success of the LANC-Winston-Salem

Office's Campaign.

It's not too late to make your donation. For more information on the LANC A2J campaign, go to the LANC website's Access to Justice webpages at:

www.legalaidnc.org/public/give/access_to_justice



In January, LANC volunteers (l-r) Barbara Knott, Paul Shepard and Celeste Harris called their peers to ask for their support of the local Access to Justice (A2J) Campaign in Winston-Salem. Knott, Shepard and Harris are active members of the LANC-Winston-Salem Office's Local Advisory Committee.

Thanks to those from Winston-Salem who have given to the 2011 Access to Justice Campaign:

The Winston-Salem Foundation
Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice PLLC
Hartsoe & Associates, PC

William A. Blancato
Ian A. Calvert
Joseph T. Carruthers
John A. Cocklereece
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Muriel N. Hopkins
James M. Iseman, Jr.
Gordon W. Jenkins
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Jeffrey T. Lawyer
Charles D. Maynard

Steven A. McCloskey
J. Kevin Morton
Christopher M. Okay
Walter B. Patterson
Michael D. Phillips
Norwood Robinson
Paul C. Shepard
Robin J. Stinson
Jessica R. Telligman
Robert C. Vaughn
William Z. Wood

It is not too late to make your donation now at:

www.legalaidnc.org/public/give/access_to_justice



Family Law Unit Update

By Valene Franco, Managing Attorney

Spotlight on Collaboration with Family Services, Inc.



The Family Law Unit is pleased to highlight its continued collaboration with Family Services, Inc.'s **Safe Relationships Division** ("Safe Relationships"). Safe Relationships staff members have been helping families affected by domestic violence and sexual assault through comprehensive response and advocacy to victims.

Safe Relationships programs and services include a Domestic Violence Crisis Line (336-723-8125) and a Sexual Assault Crisis Line (336-722-4457), as well as various other Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault response services.

Our LANC Family Law Unit staff also regularly attend **Domestic Violence Community Council (DVCC)** and **Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)** meetings. The DVCC is a collaborative group of professionals, survivors, and interested community leaders in business, education, health care, the faith community, law enforcement and the human services field. SART is a collaborative group of forensic nurse examiners from area hospitals, and professionals in health care, criminal justice, law enforcement, public

education, higher education and human services professions

Both SART and DVCC work together to better serve victims, hold offenders accountable, and educate the community about the dynamics and effects of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Such collaborative efforts complement our involvement with the Family Services

Safe on Seven Center (SOS). SOS is a multi-agency partnership that provides services to victims of domestic violence in one centralized location on the

seventh floor of the Forsyth County Hall of Justice. SOS brings together key service providers, such as law enforcement, victim advocates, paralegals and social services in one location.

A LANC paralegal is on site at SOS during hours of operation and is often the first person to speak with the victim. The LANC paralegal assists with the filing and processing of pro se requests for Ex Parte 50B Domestic Violence Protective Orders, and also provides referrals to other relevant community agencies.

Also, DeWanna Hamlin, the Coordinator of Prevention and Education in the Safe Relationships Division, is a member of our Local Advisory Council. DeWanna and I recently collaborated to create a fact sheet entitled, "**After the 50B Domestic Violence Protective Order**



Family Law Unit: (l-r) Benjamin Harris (Staff Attorney); Marketta Gray (Paralegal); Valene Franco (Managing Attorney); Kristin Kelly (Staff Attorney); Crisel Guerrero (Paralegal) and Henrietta Mickel (Paralegal).

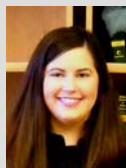
Hearing" that addresses an existing gap in services for domestic violence victims in our community. We recognized that some persons receiving protective orders may not know what comes next. Our information sheet will be handed out to victims in court after they have had their 50B hearing. It will provide information regarding legal rights and responsibilities for victims that receive their protective orders as well as for those victims that do not receive an order.

This longstanding collaboration contributes to an overall coordinated community response for our clients and many of the victims seeking services in Forsyth County. We look forward to continued successful collaboration with the Safe Relationships Division.



Public Benefits Unit Update

By Lisa Brace White, Staff Attorney



The Public Benefit unit represents clients in Social Security, Medicaid/Medicare, Work First, Food and Nutrition Services, Veteran Affairs and Advanced Directive cases.

Our team helps people get the public benefits they are entitled to by law. In 2010, we were able to win over \$884,000 in benefits for our clients. Our unit consists of two attorneys, Charles Hall and Lisa Brace White, and two paralegals, Linda Graham and Joanne Martin.

The types of cases that we handle are extremely varied. For Social Security cases we handle disability denials, medical improvements, termination of benefits,

overpayments, retirement, and survivorship (spouse or child). Under Medicaid and Medicare our staff handles cases involving deductibles, Health Choice, disability, reduction in services, denials of pre-approvals, terminations, and estate recovery. In regards to Food and

Nutrition Services, we offer assistance with denials, terminations, reductions, and fraud matters. Our unit handles all matters in regards to Work First denials or terminations.

Until recently, our office had a Medicaid clinic to help individuals learn to represent themselves at a hearing. Due to an increase in demand, we have now cancelled our clinic and opened up our intake to all Medicaid cases to give our clients individual attention and potential representation.

In addition to public benefits, we offer wills, power of attorney, health care power of attorney, and living wills for anyone who qualifies for Legal Aid services. Having these documents in place puts our client's minds at ease.

If you or anyone you care about is in need of these services, please contact our office.



Benefits Unit: (l-r) Lisa Brace White (Staff Attorney); Yvette Stackhouse (Managing Attorney); Linda Graham (Paralegal); Charlie Hall (Staff Attorney)



HEEC Unit Update

Housing, Education, Employment, Consumer Unit

By Liza Baron, Managing Attorney



The HEEC (Housing, Employment, Education, and Consumer) Unit welcomes **Takeisha Redd**, an experienced LANC attorney who comes to us after almost seven years in the LANC-Smithfield and LANC-Boone offices. She supervises the HEEC paralegals' casework, and replaces Emma Clark Kinyanjui, who took Keisha's former position in the Smithfield office. Takeisha has hit the ground running with her own caseload as well as her supervisory skills.

We also welcome **Benjamin Harris**, who comes to us from the LANC-Fayetteville Office. Ben splits his time between handling domestic violence cases for the Family Law Unit and handling consumer and employment cases for the HEEC Unit. He spent his first two years out of law school working in Kenya with the Federation of Women Lawyers on women's rights programs.

We are delighted to be working with both Keisha and Ben.

Other valued members of the HEEC unit are staff attorneys **Susan Gottsegen**, **Kenneth Love**, **Jeanna McCullers**; and paralegals **Gricel Guerrero**, **Romany Hines**, and **Tracy Nicholson**. Staff attorneys **Marcella Farmer** and **Charlie Hall** work part-time in our unit. Charlie handles some employment and consumer cases, and Marcella handles the office's expungement caseload.

Our unit has continued to see a large number of unemployment compensation, debt collection and foreclosure cases. In addition, we are seeing more than ever before cases of tenants' rental homes being

foreclosed on. We have increased our bankruptcy filings as a valuable tool that is used primarily to help prevent foreclosures. These cases and the clients behind them are the unfortunate by-products of our still ailing economy.



HEEC Unit: (l-r) Jeanna McCullers (Staff Attorney); Romany Hines (Paralegal); Takeisha Redd (Supervising Attorney); Benjamin Harris (Staff Attorney); Kenneth Love (Staff Attorney); Gricel Guerrero (Paralegal); and Liza Baron (Managing Attorney). Not pictured: Susan Gottsegen (Staff Attorney); Tracy Nicholson (Paralegal).

Due to its volume, our foreclosure caseload continues to be handled by the attorneys throughout the entire office, including benefits and family law attorneys. In addition, our office has two attorneys who devote virtually their entire time to negotiating mortgage loan modifications to prevent foreclosures. These two able gentlemen are staff attorneys **Keith Clayton** and **John Lawson**. Funding for their positions comes from a National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling grant.



MFP Unit (l-r): Keith Clayton (Staff Attorney) and John Lawson (Staff Attorney).

We have also received valuable assistance with foreclosure cases from **Wake Forest University School of Law Professor Steve Virgil**. He has handled approximately 35



Steve Virgil, Esq.

of these cases on a pro bono basis during two semesters of his Community Economic Development Law Clinic at the law school, in which he supervises his clinic students' handling of these cases.

Speaking of pro bono assistance, our unit has received assistance on housing and consumer cases from a number of private attorneys this past year. We are extremely grateful for their efforts on behalf of our clients. Without them, fewer deserving clients would obtain pro bono representation. We also continue to enjoy co-counseling arrangements with private attorneys on individual cases in litigation now and then, which is a fun way for LANC attorneys and private attorneys to learn from each other and develop good working relationships.

In addition to handling individual client cases, the HEEC unit staff offers several clinics monthly:

- **Exemptions Clinic** (every other Thursday) - Assistance with preparation of forms to protect one's property from being seized to satisfy a judgment.
- **Tenants Rights Clinic:** (3rd Wednesday each month) - Information on tenants' rights and responsibilities, including information on the summary eviction and appeal process.
- **Re-entry Clinic:** (4th Tuesday each month) - Information and resources to help ex-offenders re-enter society, including expungement information

All are welcome at our clinics. We ask that you call ahead of time to register.

Thank you for your support of our work on behalf of our clients at Legal Aid of North Carolina.



Support Staff Unit Update

By Louella Brannan, Office Manager

The Support Staff Unit at the LANC-Winston-Salem Office consists of the following full-time employees: **Louella Brannan** (Office Manager), **Joanne Martin** (Paralegal), **Margaret Moll** (Intake Specialist) and **Nikki Worthy** (Paralegal).

In addition, **Marketa Gray** and **Harrietta Mickle** assist the Support Staff Unit on a part-time basis. Both Marketa

and Harrietta divide their time between the Family Law Unit and the Support Staff Unit.

All support staff are cross-trained in the three major areas of front desk responsibilities: telephone, screening and word processing.

The front desk area has nonstop demands at all times not only with the three, major areas of responsibilities but also with constantly assisting client walk-ins as well as clinics, meetings and trainings.

It has often been said that it takes a special kind of person to work the front desk area, and we have six of that special kind of person who all truly care for others.



Visit our Website

for the LANC-Winston-Salem Office:

www.LegalAidNC.org/WinstonSalem



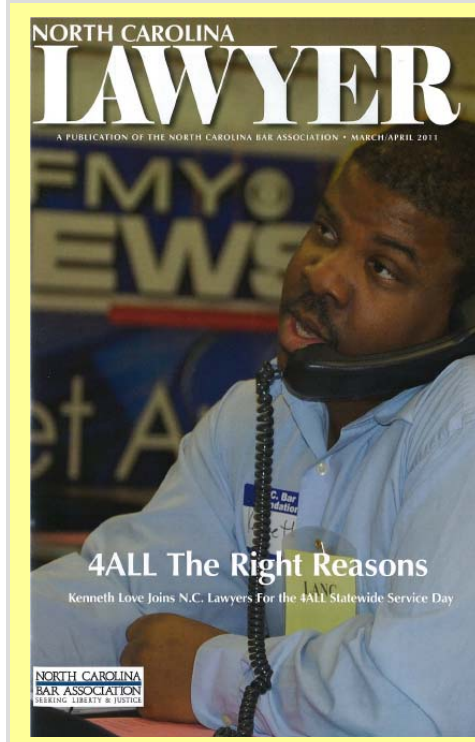
(School, Cont. from page 1)

McCullers (Staff Attorney, HEEC Unit) and Valene Franco (Managing Attorney, Family Law Unit). Also, in preparation for the event, other members of the LANC-Winston-Salem Office staff and Forsyth Technical Community College paralegal interns observed the students' simulation of the case in a Forsyth County district courtroom.

Although they did not win the final competition, the teams brought home three awards including a "Best Witness Award" and two "Best Attorney Awards." More importantly, the teams brought home a growing hunger to win next year.

The experience was rewarding for both the students and the LANC-Winston-Salem Office staff.

We look forward to renewing our partnership with Carter G. Woodson Charter School next year, and invite other interested members of the Forsyth County Bar to serve as coaches for the Mock Trial event..



Kenneth Love (staff attorney, LANC-Winston-Salem Office) captured the front cover (c) of the March-April edition of "North Carolina Lawyer," a publication of the NC Bar Association. Love was conversing on the telephone during the NCBA's fourth annual 4ALL Statewide Service Day on March 4 in Greensboro. The 4ALL Statewide Service Day proved to be another record-setting experience for the citizens and lawyers of North Carolina. Operating from seven call centers stretching from the mountains to the coast, volunteer attorneys fielded **8,568 calls**, besting last year's previous record of 8,467. It took an army of 460 lawyers, paralegals, law students and other volunteers to field the calls, and an extraordinary array of call center hosts who helped make the day possible. The event also marked the **official launch of a new pro bono program, "Call 4ALL,"** that will provide attorneys the chance to help a pre-screened, Legal Aid of NC client in one of several areas of law: private landlord/tenant, public and subsidized housing, Medicaid, consumer, and employment security.

The Winston-Salem Office of Legal Aid of North Carolina provides free legal services in civil (non-criminal) matters to low-income people in the six counties surrounding Winston-Salem, including: Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin Counties.



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Winston-Salem, NC 27101