

**Pro Bono Committee, Business Law Section**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 1, 2018, 8:30-9:30am**  
**BLS Labor Day Retreat**  
**Bonita Springs, Florida**

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Meeting was called to order by Marisa Dorough, Committee Chair, at 8:30 a.m.

**I. Introductions of all Attendees and BLS Fellows**

**II. Reading of Mission Statement**

**a. Ms. Dorough read the Mission Statement of the Pro Bono Committee:**

*The mission of the Pro Bono Committee is to achieve 100% participation in pro bono service by Business Law Section members and attorneys in their firms.*

**III. Old Business**

**a. Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held June 14, 2018, were unanimously approved.

**IV. Ongoing Initiatives**

**a. Update On Pro Bono Activities From Around The State**

- i. Ms. Dorough announced that a new weekly clinic through Project H.E.L.P., serving the homeless population in downtown Orlando, has been started.
- ii. John MacDonald advised that Jacksonville attorney Mike Freed would be running his second “Freed to Run” fund raiser, which involves running six marathons in six days from the Florida Supreme Court in Tallahassee to the Duval County Courthouse in Jacksonville. Some are sponsoring Mr. Freed monetarily or a number of teams that have been organized to run with him. The goal is to raise \$250,000.00.
- iii. Karen Ladis discussed a Dade County Legal Aid initiative for getting a jump start on promoting pro bono to new lawyers, which involves judges talking about pro bono opportunities with future and new law students.
- iv. Mark Stein advised that he makes presentations to start ups at co-working spaces. The group discussed the extent to which this would qualify as pro bono or low bono.
- v. Ms. Ladis discussed the Dade County Legal Aid program “Put Something Back” walk-in clinic, which has weekly hours for family and domestic violence, housing, guardianship, bankruptcy, and other civil cases.

**b. Plans for Pro Bono Week October 21-27, 2018**

- i. Ms. Dorough indicated that there will be a ceremony in Orlando honoring pro bono volunteers in Orange and Osceola Counties held by the Ninth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee.
- ii. Ms. Ladis announced that there will be an event honoring pro bono volunteers on October 25, 2018 in Miami.
- iii. Judge Norton indicated that the ABA’s focus on this year’s Pro Bono Week is disaster relief.

- iv. A discussion was had regarding email and social media blasts to BLS members during Pro Bono Week.
  - c. Florida Pro Bono Matters Portal Update** [not discussed]
  - d. Website Content Review**
    - i. It was discussed whether the top portion of the pro bono web page could be used for something other than photos of committee chairs and vice chairs, although feedback from Tracey Eller indicated that it was a design feature of the BLS website and not something we could rearrange.
    - ii. Lynn Sherman suggested including links to pro bono opportunities in various locations throughout Florida on the web page.
    - iii. Mindy Mora recommended that we highlight the link to the pro bono matters on the web page.
    - iv. Ms. Dorough solicited volunteers for a new sub-committee to consider revising and updating the committee web page. John MacDonald, Karen Ladis, Lynn Sherman, Marisa Dorough, and Alex Bowen volunteered.
  - e. Monthly BLS Email Blasts**
    - i. Monthly BLS email blasts will start in September. Suggestions were made that each blast highlight an organization, event, rule change, or BLS member (including quote or two about the experience).
    - ii. Tracey Eller has access to email analytics through Constant Contact vendor, and can use that tracking on emails she sends as Section-wide blasts.
    - iii. Volunteers were solicited to help with content.
  - f. First annual BLS “Embrace a Case” Challenge and future Challenges**
    - i. Bankruptcy/UCC had the best participation in this inaugural event (3 members of that section participated). Overall, participation was not widespread but it did provide good visibility.
    - ii. The individual winner will be highlighted in one of the next monthly blasts.
- V. Section Leadership** joined the meeting, and stressed the importance of the work of the Pro Bono Committee and its promotion of pro bono service to the entire Section.
- VI. New Business**
- a. Means to encourage and recognition BLS members’ pro bono service**
    - i. Encouraging 100% participation
      - A. A discussion was had regarding using a blast email to announce recent changes to The Florida Bar’s pro bono bar Rules and obligations as a reminder of our Committee’s mission, our professional obligations, and the Bar’s aspirational goals.
    - ii. Recognition tokens or events
      - A. Lynn Sherman discussed providing awareness pins or stickers at meetings for members of the BLS that have achieved certain pro bono milestones—to recognize pro bono heroes and encourage others to get involved.
      - B. A group discussion was also had about using social media to encourage participation, similar to the recent “Ice Bucket Challenge.”
  - b. Mr. MacDonald advised that the Middle District of Florida has reconstituted its legal assistance program.**

- c. Alex Bowen, a student at Florida State University Law, advised that FSU Law has a program that matches attorneys and students with entrepreneurs, and is seeking assistance from practicing attorneys to serve as supervisors/mentors.**
  - a. Ms. Ladis and Mr. Stein offered to provide guidance based on their experiences with pro bono advice to start-ups.
- b. Use of Money in BLS Budget [not discussed]**
- c. Scheduling of Telephonic Meeting [not discussed]**

**VII. Announcement of Next meeting:**

- a.** The next meeting of the Pro Bono Committee will be held in conjunction with the Business Law Section Midyear Meeting, January 16-19, 2019, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld in Orlando, Florida.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Ms. Dorrough adjourned the meeting at 9:30.