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September 2024

# Championing Justice for People with Disabilities & Ensuring Access for All

Legal Services is dedicated to advocating for people with disabilities, ensuring their safety and well-being by helping them obtain the benefits they are entitled to.

## Hope for One Family

Olga and her family struggle daily to provide the best care possible for her brother, Ulises. Born with developmental disabilities, Ulises recently turned 49 and is now bedbound in a semi-comatose state. Faced with

numerous challenges, including a reduction in Medicaid services, the citizenship application process, and obtaining a state card, they turned to Legal Services for help.

Legal Services Attorney Jocelyn Armand developed a comprehensive approach to address their legal hurdles and meet Ulises' specific needs. Jocelyn filed an **appeal challenging the reduction of nursing services by Medicaid, successfully ensuring Ulises continues to receive 24/7 home care and enabling Ulises to maintain access to the care he needs to survive.**

Additionally, we represented Ulises through the naturalization process, obtaining waivers for the required exam and oath ceremony, and securing a disability accom-

modation for an in-home visit in lieu of the traditional interview process. **His family, who left communist Cuba for a better life, achieved their dream of having him become a U.S. citizen.** Additionally, his naturalization ensures continued access to life saving care and other benefits without fear of losing eligibility.

Our advocacy extended further. Ulises also needed a Florida ID to access services, but his family was unable to obtain one on his behalf. In today's day and age, we all understand the importance of having an identity document in everyday life. Due to his inability to leave home, this simple task was challenging. After the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV) denied our request for a reasonable accommodation, we sent an ADA demand letter based on discrimination against persons with disabilities. Subsequently, FLHSMV coordinated a home visit allowing Ulises to obtain a Florida ID.

Thanks to Legal Services, **this family's journey transformed from one of uncertainty to one of hope and empowerment.** By addressing their legal needs, we resolved immediate challenges and laid the foundation for a brighter future for Ulises and his entire family.

## Systemic Impact

People with disabilities like Ulises face considerable systemic barriers

to obtaining a state ID. Our attorneys ensure state programs are administered with fairness and due process so that everyone, including those with disabilities, has an equal opportunity

to benefit from their services. **Through our advocacy in this case, we ensured that the FLHSMV adopted new internal policies and procedures, making it possible for thousands of Floridians with disabilities to obtain an ID.**

**"This case shows our unwavering commitment to make state programs accessible and equitable for all – especially vulnerable populations facing significant barriers. We are proud to foster a more fair and inclusive future."**

Jocelyn J. Armand  
Director of Strategic Partnerships & Advocacy



## From the Chief Executive Officer Monica Vignes-Pitan

It has been a productive year as we work to ensure a fair and equitable legal process by supporting our clients individually and advocating for systemic change.

**Newly Approved Form for Pro Se Tenants** – Our Tenants' Rights team has achieved an impressive milestone. Many people facing eviction represent themselves in court. Since the Miami-Dade Clerk of Court's website only had forms to help landlords, back in 2015 we asked about the inclusion of our eviction materials. Our attorneys were advised that the Clerk could only publish forms approved by the Florida Bar and the Florida Supreme Court, but none existed. Over the years, we advocated to the Florida Supreme Court, the Office of State Court Administrator, and the Florida Bar for a form tenants could use when answering an eviction. During this time, one of our attorneys began serving on the Bar's Rules Committee. In 2019, the Bar's Civil Procedure Rules Committee recommended a form allowing tenants to select defenses and file motions regarding rent disputes. This past June, the Florida Supreme Court approved Form 1.947(b) – Answer – Residential Eviction. **Clerks statewide are now publishing the form, helping tenants respond to evictions and present their defenses.** After more than a decade of advocacy, we are proud of this victory that increases access to justice for self-represented litigants.

**Cocktails Under the Stars is Back** – Join us on **October 17th at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden for Cocktails Under the Stars, presented by Even-sky & Katz/Foldes Wealth Management.** Now in its third year, this fundraiser promises an unforgettable night of fine wines and delectable bites all while raising awareness of our mission and growing our community of supporters. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

I remain extremely grateful for your unwavering support and dedication to our mission. Together, we are building a community of equal justice!

## How You Can Help

I have had the pleasure of participating in the work of Legal Services of Greater Miami for twenty years as a pro-bono attorney, Board member and officer, and member of the Foundation. Legal Services is defined by its laser-focus on its mission: helping those who can't afford private attorneys with important legal problems such as eviction, foreclosure, and access to government benefits. One of my favorite programs is assisting entities which create and provide truly affordable housing—one of our greatest needs as a city.

Over all these years, there have been two constants. First, the dedicated 40 full-time legal service attorneys (never enough), assisted by volunteer attorneys (never enough) to do their work with skill, dedication and expertise. They are knowledgeable and well-respected both by judges and by their colleagues in the Bar. They do as good a job for their clients as private attorneys hope to do for their paying clients.

Second, this outstanding nonprofit law firm has always been well-run by its super-qualified Executive Directors, staff and management, with annual audits and oversight by an active Board demonstrating transparency and accountability. As documented by a study, **every dollar spent on Legal Services generates seven dollars of income for the community as a whole.** That's the kind of multiplier we can be proud of!

I encourage you to find out about volunteer opportunities or make a contribution that can qualify towards your pro bono responsibility.

**Jeffrey B. Crockett**  
Partner

COFFEY | BURLINGTON  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



SCAN TO GIVE



## From Foundation Board Director Jeffrey B. Crockett

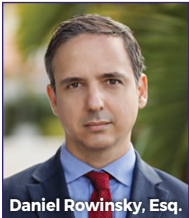


Ensuring Continuity of Healthcare Through Medical-Legal Partnership

In her early 50s and dealing with chronic medical conditions, including thyroid cancer, Maria was scared when she learned her Medicaid benefits would end. Left without essential healthcare coverage to obtain immediate care for her conditions, Maria was referred to our Medical-Legal Partnership. After consulting with her, Legal Services Senior Staff Attorney Daniel Rowinsky discovered the agency that administers the Medicaid program erroneously terminated her coverage Medicaid based on inaccurate income information.



Legal Services filed an appeal and successfully advocated for her Medicaid benefits to be reinstated retroactively. As a result, she would be able to continue her treatments and avoid any medical debt. Additionally, Legal Services provided critical legal advice regarding her Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) claim that had been closed a few years prior for missing a hearing. Moreover, we referred Maria to a local partner for assistance with recertifying her Medicaid and food assistance (SNAP) claims. This holistic approach not only reinstated Maria's healthcare coverage, but also set her on a path to secure additional support and financial stability.

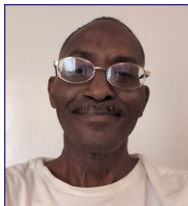


Tenant Restored to His Rightful Home, Thanks to Our Partnership with Wells Fargo

WELLS FARGO

In partnership with the Wells Fargo Foundation, Legal Services has helped thousands of people facing eviction or the threat of eviction remain in their homes. Mr. Hadley's case exemplifies that no matter the uniqueness of the circumstances, our partnership helps tenants assert their rights and protect them from eviction.

At age 60, Mr. Hadley took in his brother and family to help them avoid homelessness. He is no stranger to being a caretaker to his family as he cares for his aging mother alone.



After witnessing his brother's abuse of their mother, Mr. Hadley asked his brother to leave. His brother refused. Police were called after a tense argument ensued, and Mr. Hadley was arrested despite having suffered a head injury. During the next few months while Mr. Hadley was held in jail unable to post bail, his brother, along with his family, took control of his apartment, and threatened Mr. Hadley's lease and Section 8 participation by not paying rent. Once released, Mr. Hadley found that he could not return to his own home without violating the automatic protective order against his brother (the criminal charges were eventually dismissed).



Mr. Hadley was forced to stay with family and sought the assistance of Legal Services to get his home back. Legal Services Attorney Alexandra Lasher successfully filed an unlawful detainer action to evict the brother proving he had no rights to the apartment. The judge issued a favorable judgment, restoring legal possession of the property to Mr. Hadley. Additionally, we negotiated an expedited amendment to the protective order, allowing Mr. Hadley to finally return home, resume everyday life, and continue caring for his mother. Through our advocacy, we ensured Mr. Hadley's housing rights and stability were protected.

Pro Bono Attorney Wins Appeal for Nonprofit to Develop Affordable Housing & Maximize Impact

Little Haiti Housing Association (LHHA), a nonprofit affordable housing developer, owned property in the Little Haiti neighborhood on which it intended to develop affordable housing. The property was encumbered by an improperly created conservation easement which prohibited any construction or development on the property. The property was devoid of any special ecological, geological or environmental factors which conservation easements are designed to protect. Instead, the easement appeared to be a sham, designed to cloud title which violated Florida's public policy in favor of the marketability of real property, free of unreasonable restraints on transfer.

In 2016, Legal Services co-counseled with pro bono attorney Michael Whitt and filed a quiet title action to remove the conservation easement. In October 2022, the trial court entered summary judgment in favor of LHHA. The party asserting the conservation easement appealed the judgment to the 3rd DCA. Michael Whitt, now with the firm of Hahn Loeser & Parks, in Fort Myers, again co-counseled with Legal Services to represent LHHA in the appeal. The 3rd DCA affirmed the decision in June 2024, and LHHA is now free to pursue its mission of constructing much-needed affordable housing on the property.



HAHN LOESER attorneys at law

"Hahn Loeser & Parks remained 100% committed to assisting Little Haiti Housing Association throughout this lengthy legal battle to clear away the illegitimate conservation easement. We are thrilled that this much-needed affordable housing project can finally become a reality for the Little Haiti community."

— Michael R. Whitt Partner, Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP

SUPPORT EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE THROUGH PRO BONO

Follow Michael's lead as well as countless other pro bono attorneys who give of their time and skills to create a meaningful impact.

PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

- Tenants' Equal Justice Clinic
- Key West Clinic

Mentorship and malpractice insurance provided.

SAVE THE DATE



October 29, 2024 | 6:00pm



# The Fifteenth Annual HEART OF GIV



Jaret Davis (Honoree), Neda Ghomeshi (Presenter), Monica Vignes-Pitan (Legal Services CEO), David Lawrence Jr. (Honoree), Mayor Daniella Levine Cava (Special Guest), Lilly Ann Sanchez (Event Chair), D. Porpoise Evans (Board Chair) & Enjoliqué Lett (Presenter)



H.T. Smith & Bonita Jones-Peabody



Scott & Michele Baena



Juanita Alvarez



Dain Desouza & Brett Amron



Judge Miesha Darrough & Stephen Rosenthal

## From Our Hearts to Yours, THANK YOU for a Successful Heart of Giving Celebration!

On May 16, 2024, over 400 influential guests from the legal, financial, and business communities convened at the beautiful Rubell Museum for the Fifteenth Annual Heart of Giving Celebration and Judicial Reception.

The **2024 Equal Justice Leadership Award** was presented to **Jaret L. Davis, Esq.**, Senior VP of Greenberg Traurig P.A. and Co-Managing Shareholder of the Miami office, and the **2024 Equal Justice Humanitarian Leadership Award** was presented to **David Lawrence Jr.**, founder and Board Chair of The Children's Movement of Florida and former publisher of The Miami Herald. The awards were presented by **Neda Ghomeshi** (Assistant General Counsel, Ryder System, Inc.) and Legal Services Board Director **Enjoliqué Lett** (Shareholder, Greenberg Traurig).

The celebration was hosted by **Master of Ceremonies Elliott Rodriguez**, Emmy Award-winning journalist and respected CBS South Florida news anchor. **Legal Services Board President D. Porpoise Evans** (Office Managing Shareholder, Littler) and **Event Chair Lilly Ann Sanchez** (Shareholder, The L-S Law Firm) warmly welcomed guests to the special ceremony and introduced **special guest Mayor Daniella Levine-Cava** who delivered an impactful message about the importance of access to justice.

Legal Services extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who made the celebration possible, especially **title sponsors, Greenberg Traurig LLP, Ryder, and Lauri Waldman Ross**, and **exclusive liquor sponsor, Bacardi**, the other 75+ event sponsors, and all who attended and supported its mission to advance economic opportunity and social justice for all. Additionally, we are **deeply thankful to Ryder for presenting a check to Legal Services for nearly \$90,000 in memory of Julie Azuaje**, cherished both within Ryder's legal team and as a longstanding member of the Legal Services Board of Directors who championed social justice.

[CLICK HERE](#) to explore the photo gallery and see some of the night's most memorable moments.



Jaret Davis gives remarks after receiving award



Enjoliqué Lett, Jaret Davis, Monica Vignes-Pitan, Brigid Cech Samole & Sheila Oretsky



# ING Celebration & Judicial Reception



Vanessa Varona, Ramon de Legorburu & Michelle Dominguez



Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, D. Porpoise Evans, Alan Greer, Monica Vignes-Pitan, Senior Judge Patricia Seitz & Lilly Ann Sanchez



Thomas Schulte, Jamie Isani & Gil Acevedo



Emma Masters, Carlos Martinez, Aleida Martinez-Molina, Monica Vignes-Pitan, John Kozyak & Myrlandie Myrbel



Alexandra Coupet, Michael Elkin & Pamela Perry



Daniel Rowinsky, Angel Valverde, Kelly Peña, Diana Mendez, Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, Annette Tadeo & Michele Samaroo



Erin Hoover, William Mueller & Elliot Kula



Tomas Gamba & Robert Parks



John Lee, Asra Chatham, Karla Utset & Gabriel Valdes



Maria McDonald, David McDonald & John Lukacs



Guests enjoy a sumptuous feast at the celebration



Judge Vivianne Del Rio, Judge Chiaka Ihekweba & Jae Lofton



Guests peruse & bid on dozens of silent auction items



Darrell Payne, Monica Vignes-Pitan & Robert Parks



D. Porpoise Evans & Cherine Smith Valbrun



Our work is made possible through the generous support of our

## Leadership Circle Donors

### Blue Diamond 100,000+

Harke Clasby & Bushman - *Social Justice Fellowship in Honor of Nancy T. Clasby*  
Holland & Knight  
Jacqueline Allee Smith - *The Jacqueline Allee Smith Legal Fellowship Program*  
Stearns Weaver Miller

### Diamond 50,000+

Helliwell Family Foundation- *In Memory of Paul L. E. Helliwell, Esq.*  
Ryder System, Inc.

### Gold 25,000+

Akerman LLP  
Berger Singerman LLP  
Bilzin Sumberg LLP  
Cole Scott & Kissane, P.A.  
Evensky & Katz/Foldes  
Wealth Management  
The Fine & Greenwald Foundation  
Greenberg Traurig  
Gunster  
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP  
Kluger, Kaplan, Silverman, Katzen & Levine  
McLuskey, McDonald & Hughes, P.A.  
Scott Family Foundation  
Ver Ploeg & Marino  
Weiss Serota Helfman Cole + Bierman, P.L.  
White & Case LLP  
Yavitz Cypen Foundation -  
*Harry & Irving Cypen Tax Fellowship*

### Silver 10,000+

AXS Law Group  
Scott Baena  
Bast Amron LLP  
DLA Piper  
Dolan Dobrinsky Rosenblum Bluestein  
Hamilton Miller & Birthisel  
Harper Meyer LLP  
Jimenez Mazzitelli Mordes  
Kaufman[Rossin - *Accounting Fellowship*  
Kenny Nachwalter, P.A.  
Lauri Waldman Ross, P.A.  
León Cosgrove Jiménez  
Levine Kellogg Lehman  
Schneider + Grossman  
McDermott Will & Emery  
Meland Budwick, P.A.  
The Moskowitz Law Firm  
Ocean Bank  
Peckar & Abramson  
Podhurst Orseck  
Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan  
Saul Ewing LLP  
Sidley Austin LLP  
Solorzano Law, PLLC  
The William J. and Tina  
Rosenberg Foundation  
Winston & Strawn LLP

### Bronze 5,000+

A to Z Injury Law  
The Hon. A. Leo Adderly & Wilda Adderly  
Berk Merchant & Sims  
Buckner, Shifrin, Etter, Dugan & Bradfute  
Camillus House  
CareSource Foundation  
Continental Corporate Services, Inc.  
Day Pitney  
Esquire Deposition Solutions  
First Horizon  
Gamba & Herrera Trial Lawyers  
Gelber Schachter & Greenberg, P.A.  
Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani  
Grove Bank & Trust  
InCloud LLC dba Ontra  
Kevin & Yolonda Jacobs  
Marcos Daniel Jiménez  
Kirkland & Ellis LLP  
The L-S Law Firm  
Morgan Lewis  
The Morrison & Foerster Foundation  
Nelson Mullins  
Pack Law  
Darrell & Debbie Payne  
Rivero Mestre  
Rubenstein Law  
Santander Bank  
Sequor Law  
Shubin & Bass, P.A.  
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan  
Stanley Wakshlag  
TD Bank

Donor levels reflect cumulative giving for the campaign period January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2025. As of 8/1/2024.

## JOIN OUR MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM & BECOME A SUSTAINER

### Meet Our Sustainers

- ▶ William Burdette
- ▶ Rachel Glade
- ▶ Eric Hinz
- ▶ Enjoliqué A. Lett
- ▶ Jenifer Norwalk
- ▶ David J. Petrantonio
- ▶ Sandra Regner
- ▶ Reinaldo Suarez Lariot

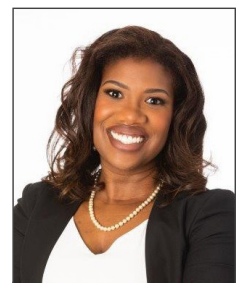
It's easy to join  
online.

**CLICK HERE**  
to make  
a one-time  
or recurring gift.

Thank you to our monthly donors, the Sustainers! Your unwavering support is instrumental in driving change and making a difference in lives all over Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

Board Director & loyal supporter, Enjoliqué A. Lett says, *"I believe that a litigant ought not be denied competent counsel because of an inability to afford an attorney. Legal Services gives life to this principle daily and I am proud to support its work!"*

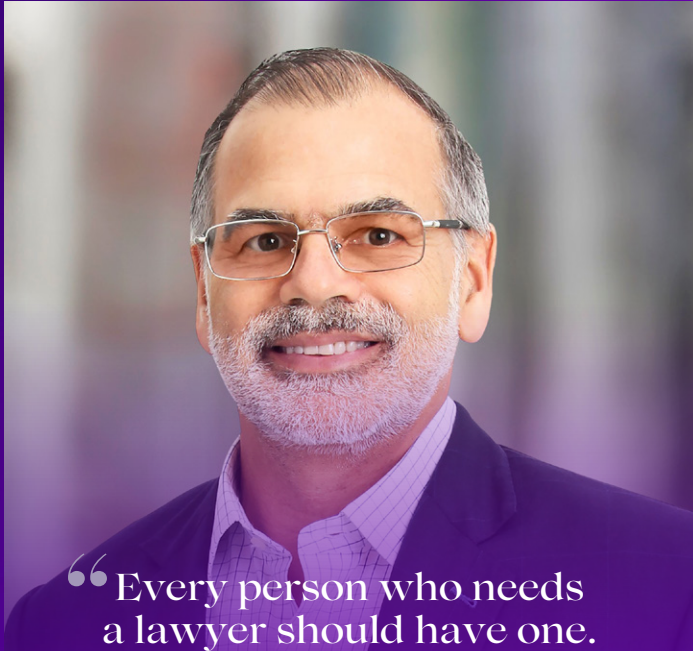
Join Enjoliqué for effortless giving to create consistent impact and an amplified effect. You can make a difference all year long with a recurring gift of \$10 or more a month.



Enjoliqué A. Lett, Esq.

# Legal Legend

## Former Florida Supreme Court Justice Raoul G. Cantero



“Every person who needs a lawyer should have one. Legal Services assures that even the poorest among us can be represented. For lawyers, there is no greater or more important cause to support.”

– Raoul G. Cantero

Former Justice Raoul Cantero’s career is a testament to the profound impact that a dedicated individual can have on both their community and their profession. As a Legal Legend, his leadership, service, and commitment to diversity have helped to shape the legal community in Miami and set a standard of excellence and inclusivity that continues to inspire.

Cantero, leader of White & Case’s Miami office, has handled over 400 appeals in his 30-year career, earning top rankings from Chambers USA. His ability to simplify complex legal issues has made him a sought-after advocate in high-profile cases. Appointed to the Florida Supreme Court in 2002, Cantero was the first Hispanic justice and one of the youngest ever.

Cantero’s contributions to Legal Services as a Leaders Council member, former Board Director (1991-1994) and staunch supporter reflect his commitment to serving the community, guiding the current and future generations in the legal field.

Join

THE  
LEGACY  
SOCIETY

The Legacy Society was founded to enhance the economic stability of our most vulnerable neighbors and foster a resilient community for years to come. By including Legal Services in your bequest, you create a lasting legacy of empowerment, helping individuals and families achieve financial stability and a brighter future.

These are some of the ways you can create a legacy at Legal Services:

- Designate Legal Services as a beneficiary of your last will and testament or trust.
- Direct IRA transfers.
- Establish Legal Services as a beneficiary of your life insurance.
- Create a Charitable Remainder Trust.

**Join The Legacy Society and transform someone’s future.**

### Thank You for Paving the Way!

- Michele & Scott Baena
- Marcia K. Cypen
- Edie Laquer
- Gisela Munoz & Daniel Baker
- Jacqueline Allee Smith\*

\*Realized gift



Please Join Us

# COCKTAILS UNDER THE STARS

OCTOBER 17, 2024 | 6:30 PM

REGISTER

RSVP by 10/7

## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COUNCIL

Among the many impactful ways our Young Professionals Council supports Legal Services, this year they **hosted the second annual Associates Drive**, raising vital funds for our mission.

**Under the leadership of co-chairs Jennie Fine (Bilzin Sumberg) and Christopher Noel (Sequor Law)**, Team Captains from **15 Miami law offices** spearheaded fundraising efforts, passionately advocating for the transformative work at Legal Services. They successfully **raised over \$24,305**, directly fueling our mission of providing access to justice!

Thank you to the Young Professionals Council! Your dedication and commitment are truly inspiring and are making a significant difference in our community.

For the complete listing of the Council members, scan [HERE](#).

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### CHAIR

Alexandra Cimo, Esq.  
SMGQ Law

#### CHAIR-ELECT

Jennifer Mosquera, Esq.  
Sequor Law

#### CORPORATE

#### ENGAGEMENT CHAIR

Alejandro Ruiz  
Evensky & Katz/Foldes Wealth Management

#### DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

Danny DiClemente, Esq.  
Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton LLP

#### IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Dan Humphrey, Esq.  
Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP

**1.** The Council **celebrated the achievement of the Associates Drive campaign** for the second year in a row.

**2.** At the recent **Conversations with Leaders**, Council Chair Alex Cimo moderated the discussion with Mayor Daniella Levine-Cava. Over the years, the Council has organized discussions with Miami leaders to inspire young professionals.

**3.** In May, the Council **hosted a social gathering at Cervceria La Tropical after the Heart of Giving** to keep the celebration going and kickoff the Associates Drive! Pictured are Council members Lu Li, Freddi Mack with husband Jay Roberts, and Danny DiClemente.

**4.** Council members **attend and support the 15th Annual Heart of Giving Celebration** in May. Pictured are Council members Jennifer Mosquera, Dan Humphrey, Alex Ercolani, Danny DiClemente, and Torri Macarages.



1



2



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