

## Tennessee Responds to Hurricane Victims' Legal Needs

BY VANESSA M. CROSS



Hurricane Katrina's landfall on Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama on August 29, 2005 displaced thousands of Gulf Coast citizens, including many lawyers, and their legal institutions. The scope of the tragedy has been immense and the resulting needs great. According to Susan Clark, president of the MBA, evacuees in the Memphis area now number approximately 10,000 with more expected. Memphis Area Legal Services (MALS), the Memphis Bar Association (MBA), and the Tennessee Bar Association (TBA) have been effective in coordinating their efforts to respond to the legal concerns created by these devastating events.

"MALS and the MBA worked together to staff the Disaster Assistance Center that was opened by the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency on Hollywood and Central in Memphis," said attorney Linda Warren Seely, Director of Internal Operations and Private Attorney Involvement at MALS. "With the volunteer help of Craig Barnett, the organizations staffed the DAC to take applications from evacuees to determine which ones will need extended service representation."

In addition to intake through the DAC, the MALS pro bono project makes referrals

to volunteer attorneys on cases requiring extended services. Also, the TBA petitioned the Tennessee Supreme Court to permit lawyers in good standing displaced by the disaster to practice law in Tennessee on a temporary, emergency basis to maintain the interest of their clients. Under the Tennessee Supreme Court's inherent authority over the practice of law in Tennessee and pursuant to T.C.A. § 23-1-105,



which authorizes the Court to set the standards for admission of persons from other jurisdictions, Chief Justice William M. Barker, writing for the Court, granted the TBA's petition for attorneys holding a valid license issued by Louisiana, Mississippi, or Alabama. To practice law for sixty days from October 5, 2005, these attorney must meet the following requirements: 1) be in good standing with their home state bar and 2) be displaced from the their home jurisdiction. For more information on the TBA efforts go to their web-site at [www.tba.org/Katrina](http://www.tba.org/Katrina).

"Tennessee has permitted licensure to displaced attorneys," said Seely, but many of these displaced attorneys are still in need of temporary space to work. Through the Memphis Legal Placement (MLP) service of the MBA,

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## AWA PRESIDENT

Judge Kay Robilio



This afternoon I attended the funeral of Jay Alan "Skippy" Hanover at Temple Israel Cemetery. The Rabbi delivering the eulogy focused on the celebration of Mr. Hanover's life, his generosity of spirit and his joy in living. Early on he was a lawyer who championed the rights of minorities and women, all the while establishing the highest level of collegiality with members of the bar. At the conclusion of the Rabbi's words, I think all those in attendance felt a lift in their spirit and could derive a vicarious thrill in Mr. Hanover's accomplishments.

It should be our mission as members of AWA to support each other by providing opportunities for listening to each other's challenges and achievements, and to provide opportunities to educate ourselves on the law, and to eat and drink well.

After our first board meeting, I am delighted to report that we are planning an off-site CLE for the Bench and Bar this spring as well as a "meet and greet" for members of the Bench and Bar around Valentine's Day. I would like for us to plan a reception to honor our membership as well as to give them an opportunity to meet with the members of our Tennessee Assembly. These new projects will require a significant commitment of time and energy, but I think these projects can also provide us with good times. As we all know, many times it is the anticipation of celebrations that is almost as important as the celebration itself.

I am honored to serve as your President and I encourage you to call me in chambers

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## 2005 Marion Griffin-Frances Loring Award Honors Judge Rita Stotts



October 6, 2005.

Judge Stotts was chosen for her ser-

Judge Rita L. Stotts was honored with the AWA's 2005 Marion Griffin-Frances Loring Award at the University Club on

vice to both the state and local bars, the Tennessee judiciary, and the community. Since receiving her law degree from Vanderbilt University, Judge Stotts has served in private practice, worked as a law professor at the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, and now serves on the Thirteenth Judicial District of the Shelby County Cir-

cuit Court, Division IV. Her civic involvement includes contributions as board member, Girls, Inc.; Board Leadership, Women's Foundation for Greater Memphis; Advisory Board, Second Chance, Ready Work Program; Advisory Board, Memphis Theological Society; and Advisory Board, Grace Magazine.

## AWA Mentor Reception



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**Snapshots from AWA's 2005 Mentor Reception hosted at Susan Clark's beautiful home in Harbor Town was held September 8, 2005.**  
 Left to right, **1.** Brandi Reaves, Tina Taft, Tricia York, Alissa York Gray, Christian Soronen. **2.** Crystal, Tiffany Taylor, Jennifer Hagerman, and Michelle Howard Flynn **3.** Charlotte Prather Milton, Janet Shipman, Fran Riley, Sheri Lipman **4.** Rachael Hutchings, Lauren Shine, Milandria King **5.** Mary Wolff, Susan Clark, Blanchard Tual.



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## Leo Bearman, Sr. Inn of Court Meeting



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The AWA Board was invited as special guests to the Leo Bearman, Sr. Inn of Court meeting with keynote speaker Senator Howard Baker.  
 Left to right, **1.** Laurie L. Christensen, Mary McGinnis, Fran Riley, and Judge Kay Spalding Robilio **2.** (standing) Shari Myers, Monica Wharton, Michele Howard Flynn, (seated) Beth Oschack, and Mary McGinnis.



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## AWA Annual Banquet



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**Snapshots from AWA's 2005 Annual Banquet held at The University Club on October 6, 2005.**  
 Left to right, **1.** Mayor AC Wharton inducting the new AWA board. **2.** Judge Kay Spalding Robilio with friends **3.** Shari and Daniel Myers **4.** Judge Kay Robilio and Judge Rita L. Stotts **5.** Anita I. Lotz, Christine Stephens, Fran Riley, and Robin Rasmussen.



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## In the Spotlight



Jocyn Dan Wurzburg is a natural trailblazer. Whether founding the Memphis chapter of the Panel of American Women in 1968, becoming Memphis' first professional mediator, or establishing the Jazz Society of Memphis, Wurzburg is a cutting edge thinker and doer.

Recently, we found this AWA member in the spotlight in an article by Rhodes College that can be accessed at <http://www.rhodes.edu/NewsCenter/RhodesMagazine/Spring2005/Wurzburg.cfm>.

Wurzburg is working with the Rhodes Womens' Studies program on a panel discussion to be held at the college on March 22. The event is titled "Effecting Change: Memphis Women in the Fight for Racial Justice."

### AWA PRESIDENT

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(545-4024) or at home (767-1649) at any time to discuss our Bar work, or if I may answer a question for you. I am easily reached any morning at home as I am an early riser. The success of our Fall Annual Meeting to honor Judge Stotts and install our new board demonstrates the vibrancy of our organization. What an exciting evening it was! Many thanks to all who made that evening so successful.

### Race for the Cure



Cecil C. Humphreys AWA student chapter, along with Phi Alpha Delta, were happy to join over 15,000 in this year's Race for the Cure held in Germantown. Our own Crystal Johnson placed 31st among the women, running 3 miles in 24 minutes. L-R: Carly Gallagher, Christy Sigler, Brandi Reaves, Emily Teague, Meredith Kimmel, Christian Soronen, Crystal Johnson, Chad Jackson (front).

## Counsel On Call



### HEALTHCARE ATTORNEY CONTRACT

Memphis healthcare legal department is looking for an assistant manager to assist the General Counsel in the day to day running of the department on a contract basis. Must have background in the healthcare industry and general in house experience. JD and Tennessee License required.

### REAL ESTATE & LITIGATION ATTORNEY PERMANENT

Memphis firm is looking for real estate and litigation associates with 3-6 years experience. Strong academics and writing skills required. Excellent east Memphis work environment.

### LITIGATION ATTORNEY PERMANENT

Established Memphis based AV law firm is looking for an attorney with 2-10 years experience defending medical device manufacturers. Requires solid academics and writing skills. Some travel required. Excellent work environment and collegial atmosphere in a growing area for the firm.

Qualified candidates for any of the positions above should e-mail their resume to [andy.branham@counseloncall.com](mailto:andy.branham@counseloncall.com) or fax to 901-432-4686.

## Make the call for your CAREER

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901-432-4720



firms can donate office space to displaced attorneys. Additionally, the Mississippi Bar and Mississippi Bar Foundation have established the Hurricane Katrina Lawyer Relief Fund to assist lawyers who have lost their offices in the storm. Funds collected will be used to assist lawyers with re-establishing their law offices. Donations should be made payable to Mississippi Bar Foundation and mailed to Hurricane Katrina Lawyer Relief fund, c/o Mississippi Bar Foundation, P.O. Box 2168, Jackson, MS 39225-2168.



**Pro Bono Service Needed!** Lawyers throughout the country have been called on to provide pro bono civil legal assistance to those directly affected by the hurricane. MALS and the MBA are coordinating the pro bono legal service of Memphis area attorneys. The volunteer attorneys will be called upon to answer calls for legal assistance about working with FEMA, obtaining benefits, entering into leases for temporary housing, filing for bankruptcy, replacing documents, and more. Anne Fritz, MBA Executive Director, is coordinating for the MBA and can be reached at (901) 527-3573 or by e-mail at [afritz@memphisbar.org](mailto:afritz@memphisbar.org). Linda Warren Seely at MALS can be reached at (901) 255-3417 or by e-mail at [lseely@malsi.org](mailto:lseely@malsi.org).

**The New Bankruptcy Laws.** For attorneys providing pro bono service, it is notable that, although Congress offered no tax relief to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, they will get a break from the tough new bankruptcy laws. The Department of Justice (DOJ) says it is temporarily waiving some of the provisions that would hit hurricane victims hardest. The DOJ United States Trustee Program, which administers bankruptcy laws, announced the following measures to assist Hurricane victims: 1) document requirements will not be extensively enforced, 2) the Means Test to file Chapter 7 bankruptcy will treat the adverse effects of the hurricane as a "special circumstance," which can create a waiver of its requirements, 3) flexibility will be extended to debtors under the requirement that debtor attend a meeting of creditors, 4) venue objections will not be raised by Trustees for displaced debtors, except in special circumstances, and 5) Trustees are permitted to waive the counseling requirement in a judicial district where credit counseling service cannot be "reasonably" obtained.

**What can firms do?** Some law firms have taken the lead in exercising the strength of the collective to assist hurricane victims. The law firm of Thompson Hine, LLP, donated \$100,000 to the American Red Cross, the largest donation in the firm's history. Thompson Hine also announced that it will match, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, any individual donations made by its staff members. Also, firms can make an institutional commitment to hurricane victims by establishing a pro bono policy specifically directing a portion of the firm's pro bono resources to providing legal relief to hurricane victims. Additionally, Memphis area firms have been called upon to offer assistance in finding work for displaced legal support staff seeking work in Memphis. For firms with openings, contact Mary Walpole, MLP president, at (901) 527-3573.

"A law firm's pro bono program speaks volumes about the firm's view of the legal profession," said James Sandman,

a partner with the Washington D.C. office of Arnold & Porter. "It says a lot about a firm's culture and values."

**More Information.** The Memphis Bar Foundation has set up a "Katrina Disaster Fund" to accept contributions, which will go to the Hurricane Katrina Legal Community Relief Fund, established by the Louisiana State Bar Association and the Hurricane Katrina Lawyer Relief Fund, established by The Mississippi Bar Association to assist lawyers who lost their homes and offices. Visit their web-site at [www.memphisbar.org](http://www.memphisbar.org) for donations and volunteer opportunities.

The American Bar Association has also established a web-site for attorneys interested in providing pro bono legal assistance, making donations for disaster relief and receiving guidance on how to effectively assist hurricane victims. Go to [www.abanet.org/katrina](http://www.abanet.org/katrina) for more information.

Attorneys from hurricane devastated jurisdictions must complete and submit an Emergency Registration form to the Board of Law Examiners to practice in Tennessee until December 5, 2005. The form can be obtained from the MBA web-site and can be e-mailed to [kathy.queen@tscmail.state.tn.us](mailto:kathy.queen@tscmail.state.tn.us) or mailed to the Board of Law Examiners, 706 Church St., Suite 100, Nashville, TN 37243-0740.

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