



PRO BONO COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Friday, August 22, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.

I. Introductions and Welcome – (Raina Shipman)

- a. Raina opened her first meeting as Chair, thanking Immediate Past Chair Tara Trevorrow for her leadership and mentorship.
- b. Judge Laurel Isicoff noted this is her final year as Judicial Chair before retirement but committed to remaining active.
- c. Attendees introduced themselves:
 - i. Raina Shipman, Chair
 - ii. Judge Laurel Isicoff, Judicial Chair
 - iii. Terry Sanks, Vice Chair (IP attorney and Legal Aid Society board member)
 - iv. Lauren Stricker, Second Vice Chair (debtor's counsel; also serves on Federal Court Practice Committee's pro bono subcommittee)
 - v. Mark Brown (managing attorney of "Put Something Back" in Miami)
 - vi. Tara Trevorrow (bankruptcy court staff and leader of Financial Literacy Task Force)
 - vii. Lorna Brown-Burton (debtor practitioner, Broward/Palm Beach),
 - viii. Shirley Grinstein (Communications Committee, invited liaison)
 - ix. Marshall Kobrin (corporate/M&A attorney, Corporations Committee)
 - x. Kathy McElroy (former Committee Chair and liaison to "Big Bar" Pro Bono Committee)
 - xi. Maxine Long (active and long-time pro bono committee member; past recipient of Pro Bono award)

II. Approval of Minutes from Prior Meeting(s) – (Raina Shipman)

- a. Minutes from the previous meeting on June 2, 2025, were approved unanimously (motion: Tara Trevorrow; second: Terry Sanks).

III. Executing the Mission Statement – (Raina Shipman)

- a. Committee reaffirmed goal of achieving 100% pro bono participation among BLS members.
- b. Discussion of Florida Bar data tracking:
 - i. Current spreadsheet is outdated (approx. 2 years old).
 - ii. Information is difficult to parse due to lack of standardized entries.

- iii. Kathy McElroy advised updated data will be available after September, once bar membership renewals and pro bono reporting are finalized.
 - iv. Possible plan: request a sorted spreadsheet limited to BLS members from Bar staff (via Diana Kellogg).
 - v. Data would allow metrics (total hours, % participation, recognition of top contributors).
- c. Next steps: Wait until September to request updated spreadsheet; revisit tracking methods in future meeting.

IV. Committee Membership and Participation – (Raina Shipman/Tara Trevorow)

a. Outreach

- i. Outreach to **transactional attorneys** emphasized; goal is to show pro bono is not limited to litigation.
- ii. Partnership continues with **Florida Community Development Legal Project** to promote opportunities with nonprofits and small businesses.
- iii. Marshall Kobrin authored an article outlining transactional pro bono opportunities, now live on the Section website and scheduled for newsletter distribution.
- iv. Retreat initiatives:
 - 1. Pro Bono Table with cloth, flyers, and multiple QR codes (Florida Pro Bono Matters, Florida Free Legal Answers, Community Development Legal Project, Pro Bono Pledge).
 - 2. Staffing the table: Lauren to set up a SignUpGenius link to replace manual email signups.
 - 3. Flyers: Tara provided color flyers; additional materials to be printed.
 - 4. QR codes: Tara demonstrated simple QR generator; Judge Isicoff offered to request plastic table frames from BLS staff.
 - 5. Emphasis on engaging transactional lawyers during Retreat “hallway time.”

b. Publications – Judge Isicoff, Chair

- i. Need more “Pro Bono Stories” for newsletters and publications.
- ii. Past stories included impactful domestic violence and bankruptcy cases.
 - 1. Judge Isicoff will create a flyer (“Tell Us Your Pro Bono Story”).
- iii. Suggested new features:
 - 1. Profile of Judge Brown’s Virtual Bankruptcy Clinic, now statewide.
 - 2. 11-year bankruptcy case handled by Nicole McLemore and Trish; Tara to reach out to Nicole for input.

- iv. Shirley Grinstein (Communications Committee) encouraged cross-posting stories in newsletters and highlighted Communications' need for content.
- c. Small Business Clinics – Judge Isicoff, Chair
 - i. Mark Brown reported Legal Aid Miami runs small business clinics (most recently on Miami Beach).
 - ii. Request: circulate dates to Committee so BLS can help recruit volunteers.
 - iii. Clinics provide non-litigation opportunities in alignment with Committee's goals.
- d. Pro Bono Award – Kathy McLeroy
 - i. Carlos Sardi received 2025 award at Judicial Liaison Dinner (June, Boca Raton).
 - ii. Nominations for next cycle open in October 2025; close January 2026.
 - iii. Plan: publish reminders in newsletters and circulate at Retreat.
 - iv. Potential candidates: Mark Wolfson noted as deserving nominee.
- e. Pro Bono Week – Committee Discussion
 - i. National Pro Bono Week scheduled for October 19–25, 2025.
 - ii. Content plan:
 - 1. Publish multi-part story of Nicole/Trish's long-running case.
 - 2. Feature "Why I Do Pro Bono" snippets from Retreat luncheon cards.
 - 3. Share "One Promise" campaign videos via newsletters and social media.
 - iii. Retreat luncheon initiative:
 - 1. Place index cards + pens at tables with tent card prompt.
 - 2. Collect anonymous or signed "Why I do pro bono" statements.
 - 3. Publish snippets in October.
 - 4. Judge Isicoff suggested brief mic announcement at luncheon.
 - 5. Lauren Stricker agreed to email Retreat Chair Andy Layden for approval.
- f. Membership – Open
 - i. Still need a Chair for Membership subcommittee.
 - ii. Discussion: assign each substantive BLS committee's vice chair as automatic liaison to Pro Bono Committee.
 - iii. Raina and Judge Isicoff to raise suggestion with EC/Stephanie Lieb at next meeting.

V. Ongoing work and initiatives – (Raina Shipman)

- a. Best Practices Guide Update
 - i. Committee edits complete; awaiting Standing Committee feedback.
 - ii. Judge Isicoff committed will finalize comments by early September; Maxine volunteered to assist.
- b. Pro Bono Pledge Campaign Update
 - i. Flyers and QR codes to be available at Retreat.
 - ii. Importance of follow-up emphasized (collect end-of-year reporting from pledge signers).
- c. Florida Pro Bono Matters
 - i. Florida Bar Foundation is now FUNDING FLORIDA LEGAL AID (FFLA). Our website has a link to their pro bono matters, and interested attorneys can sign up there. There is a search bar that filters cases down by location, matter, type and more.
 - ii. QR code to be created and displayed at Retreat.
- d. Recognition of Pro Bono Heroes in Publications
 - i. Ongoing initiative
- e. “One Promise” Campaign
 - i. Ongoing initiative.
 - ii. Committee agreed to promote existing videos (general, young lawyer, senior lawyer versions) during Pro Bono Week via newsletters and communications.

VI. BLS Pro Bono Award Update – (Kathleen McElroy and John Macdonald)

- a. (see above)

VII. New Business

- a. Patently Impossible event:
 - i. Mark Brown announced revival of Miami-based patent competition on October 29, 2025, at Miami Dade College.
 - ii. Fun team-building with invention challenge; will generate publicity and pro bono engagement among IP attorneys.
 - iii. Flyer to be circulated once ready.

VIII. Adjourn

- a. Meeting adjourned at approximately **6:05 p.m.**

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