

ANNUAL APPEAL  
DECEMBER 2002

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**T**hree years ago South Middlesex Legal Services (SMLS) launched a major Campaign to increase urgently needed legal services to the low-income community. Thanks to the ongoing commitment of many dedicated attorneys and business leaders, we are pleased and proud to announce that the Campaign has reached its goal of \$300,000. With corporate donations and SMLS fundraising activities, our annual budget has grown, enabling us to help more people than ever. But new challenges await. Although we are determined to expand our programs and not turn away more eligible clients, this certainly is a formidable task in tough economic times.

**New Fundraising Event – Annual Phonathon**

In addition to the annual golf tournament in the spring, the Campaign Committee will sponsor an annual phonathon each fall. The first one held this September was a huge success. "Phonathon volunteers raised \$20,000 in pledges, which is incredible for our first effort," states Jill Hanchett, Development Coordinator for SMLS. "Our goal was to reach as many of the 4,500 private attorneys practicing in SMLS' service area as we could. We asked lawyers familiar with our program to call their peers. Actually, it was fun. They were competing with each other so the three hour sessions passed quickly." Both big firm and solo practitioners enjoyed tremendous success as Bob Molloy from Staples barely outdistanced Framingham attorney Brian Flynn for the highest amount raised. Darius Arbabi, President of the SMLS Board of Directors, vows that next year he will surpass Bob Molloy. Attorneys love a creative challenge - especially one that pays off for a worthwhile cause.

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Photo by Jill Hanchett



*At the 2002 SMLS Phonathon, Attorneys Beth Aarons and Meg Mullin take a short break from calling their colleagues.*

**Campaign Spotlight****Holland & Knight, LLP**

**"R**alph has been an inspiration to us all - one of the driving forces behind the success of SMLS' Campaign for Legal Services," says Michael Leon of Nutter, McClennen & Fish. He is talking about Ralph Lepore, co-chair of the Campaign Committee with Leon and Bob Molloy of Staples. Lepore is a partner at Holland & Knight, LLP, a law firm well-known for its extensive charitable work and dedication to community service.

Raised in Framingham, Ralph Lepore started working with South Middlesex Legal Services in 1998 on its very first golf tournament. "Ralph basically walked us through the entire tournament," recalls Jill Hanchett, Development Coordinator. "He linked us with the Framingham Country Club and helped us make connections in the business community for sponsorships and tournament participants. He showed us how to manage the logistics

*(continued on page 3)*

# Campaign a Success... New Challenges Ahead

(continued from page 1)

## A Big Thank You to All Participants

A target of \$300,000 in three years was an ambitious goal. This tremendous accomplishment owes its success to the help and support of so many people - both individuals and corporations - who participated in the Campaign. Everyone at SMLS sincerely thanks each and every donor. We could not have done it without you!

We would also like to extend a special thanks to our Campaign Committee, co-chaired by Michael Leon of Nutter, McClennen & Fish; Ralph Lepore of Holland & Knight; and Robert Molloy of Staples. The other members of the committee include bar and community leaders, all of whom worked tirelessly throughout the Campaign.

## There's Still More to be Done

SMLS represents approximately 2,200 low-income and elderly individuals and families each year. The additional money generated from the Campaign helped provide more services to those in need. Yet with the downturn in the economy and cut-backs in spending from the federal and state governments, we now face budgetary shortages and will be less able to provide the services that are needed.

## How You Can Help

There are more than 32,000 eligible low-income people in our geographic service area, many desperately in need of legal help. However, SMLS is only able to employ ten attorneys and two paralegals. Although our capable staff does as much as it can, we must turn away far too many eligible individuals and families. That is why we still need your help. Here are some things you can do:

- Join our Private Bar Volunteer Program - over the last year, local attorneys contributed more than \$250,000 in free legal services. Opportunities are available for attorneys to take cases and/or participate in the Lawyer for the Day program.
- Join our Campaign Committee
- Help with our golf tournament: become a sponsor, play golf, or donate an auction or raffle item.
- Volunteer to make calls at our next phonathon
- Make a contribution: with cuts in government funding, we need corporate and private donations more than ever before. We are a 501(c)(3) organization, so your donation is tax-deductible.



SMLS Campaign co-chairs Michael Leon, Ralph Lepore, and Bob Molloy waiting for the shot gun start at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual SMLS Golf Tournament

Photos by Marlene Desautels



You can make a difference when you volunteer for or donate to SMLS.



*Ralph Lepore, co-chair of the SMLS Campaign for Legal Service, and partner at Holland & Knight, LLP.*

## Spotlight

*(continued from page 1)*

involved. He deserves a lot of the credit for turning it into such a popular and successful event.”

Since then, Lepore has been one of SMLS’ key contributors, donating his time and talent. He has brought many individuals and businesses to SMLS, who have, in turn, made their own financial and personal contributions. This kind of activity is “par for the course” for Lepore, and very much in keeping with the philosophy of his firm, Holland & Knight.

At Holland & Knight, community service is a way of life. The firm’s *pro bono* policy extends to all its offices nationwide where they contribute approximately three percent of their billable hours to *pro bono* work annually. This translates to about fifty hours per lawyer per year. In fact, the firm’s charitable activities grew so much that in 1996 it set up the Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation, to manage and coordinate their ever-increasing philanthropic contributions and activities.

In addition to his *pro bono* work at Holland & Knight and his extensive involvement with SMLS, Lepore is also a member of the Board of Advisors for the Christa McAuliffe Center, on the Foundation Board at Framingham State College, and an active participant in fundraising efforts for The Jimmy Fund.

“Ralph is a major contributor to our success,” says Nancy King, Executive Director of SMLS. “We are very fortunate to have the support and dedication of Ralph Lepore and Holland & Knight.”

**SMLS thanks the following volunteers who gave so generously of their time during the past year. Their valuable work included accepting cases, staffing Lawyer for the Day, presenting at education programs, and helping with our fundraising activities.**

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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

SMLS has launched its website.  
Please visit us at [www.smlegal.org](http://www.smlegal.org).

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## Attorney Carl Quintal a Winner – Client Testimonial Leads to NLADA Award

Photo by Neil McBride



Joy McGrail and Carl Quintal at the NLADA Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he received the Arthur von Briesen Award.

Photo by Cristi Collari



SMLS client Joy McGrail and her son Mark were referred to Carl Quintal through SMLS's Private Bar Volunteer Program.

Joy McGrail is a very satisfied client of SMLS. When she needed help getting education services for her son, she was referred to Attorney Carl Quintal through SMLS' Private Bar Program. He took her case and made it his mission. McGrail was so impressed with Quintal's dedication, compassion and skill that she wanted to find some way to honor him. She took the initiative of drafting a letter and assembling supporting materials nominating him for the Arthur von Briesen Award. This prestigious award from the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) recognizes a private attorney who has made a significant contribution to the delivery of civil legal aid or indigent defense representation. Quintal received the award on November 15, 2002, as part of NLADA's Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. No doubt the touching letter from Joy McGrail played a big part in their decision.

Carl Quintal graduated from Suffolk University Law School in 1999 and immediately joined SMLS' *Pro Bono* Panel. In addition to Ms. McGrail, he has assisted victims of domestic violence in their contested divorce cases. As a lawyer recently out of law school, Quintal's main experience was as an associate corporate counsel. His work with SMLS let him venture into the unfamiliar yet rewarding world of *pro bono* work. The award he received should be particularly inspirational to all new attorneys who may wonder if they can make a difference and if their volunteer efforts are appreciated. To set their doubts at rest, here are some excerpts from Joy McGrail's nomination letter:

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**M**y name is Joy McGrail. I am a single mother of a 16-year-old young man named Mark. Nominating Attorney Quintal for the Arthur von Briesen Award goes to and exemplifies the heart and spirit of this honorable award.

Attorney Quintal took on my case, which appeared to be hopeless, when no other attorney would take it on. I am an indigent person. I called South Middlesex Legal Services for help with Mark's case. The *Pro Bono* Coordinator referred me to volunteer attorney Carl Quintal.



Without hesitation, knowing my inability to pay, he responded quickly to a mother's plea for justice and took my case. Attorney Quintal was successful in working with the local school system to get my son a proper education. I had tried unsuccessfully for ten years, along with Mark's team of professionals and an advocate, to have him properly educated in an environment that would address his learning disabilities and educational needs. What Attorney Quintal accomplished since taking on my case has been more than extraordinary. He was able to hop over from one area of the law (Patent and Corporate Law) to Education Law, achieving great understanding with exceptional perseverance and humility. He met the challenge head on, reviewing reams of documents in order to present the facts properly to the Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals. He submitted an exceptional ten page legal brief that highlighted and addressed the serious and repeated procedural, state, federal and civil rights violations that occurred to my son and the neglect to his education...The school system had fought every step of the way, despite the countless efforts of Mark's education advocate, and reports from doctors and psychologists.

Attorney Quintal requested immediate reinstatement of Mark's education, requesting interim tutoring pending resolution of the disputed education plan. He also requested referral packages be sent out to appropriate special and private schools. The school system did agree in mediation to these terms and executed a signed agreement. Carl's greatest challenge was to follow, as the school system proved only to give lip service to the agreement and soon was in noncompliance...Several schools would not accept Mark as a student due to the inaccurate and negative reporting from the school system. A private high school, a "school without labels," met Mark and warmly accepted him into their summer program enabling him to get caught up and be ready for their tenth grade program this September [2002]. The new school was taken aback by the fact that he still wanted to be educated and go to college despite ten years of being mislabeled, mishandled and shuffled from one inappropriate program to another. He experienced virtually no academic success, only failure and rejection. Mark welcomed this summer program which he regularly attended and had great success receiving A's and a B+.

Attorney Quintal's work on this case has exceeded beyond one's highest expectation, hopes and dreams. He has given of himself tirelessly, even though he was already employed as a full time corporate attorney. He treated me with the utmost respect, compassion and commitment. He returned every one of my desperate calls and always responded to every email I sent to him...His acts of kindness and dedication were genuine. His efforts extended through his own workday into evenings and through the weekends. He selflessly gave of himself and made personal sacrifices, giving up time with his family to meet me...on weekends to review and plan our case. In addition, he met with education attorneys, visited Disability Law Centers and spent hours in law libraries researching case law. He knew what injustices had been done to Mark which fueled his determination to see that Mark receive his just education...

My son has suffered immensely. Carl Quintal has restored hope back into his shattered life. He gave back to him what was taken away...the freedom to dream, aspire and be given every opportunity to achieve his goals. I see a positive change in my son. He is more outgoing and talkative. For the first time he is excited and looks forward to attending this small college prep high school every day. This would not have occurred without Attorney Quintal. I never realized until now that heroes do exist. In honor of my hero, Carl Quintal, I submit his nomination for the Arthur von Briesen Award.

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*The Honorable Edward Ginsburg recruiting for his new project, Senior Partners for Justice.*

## Try the Latest Lunch Special: A Brown Bag Series from SMLS and SMBA

Family law has become increasingly complex. Local lawyers working in this area have much to gain by keeping up to date on new developments and exchanging ideas with their peers and visiting experts. With this in mind, SMLS and the South Middlesex Bar Association have teamed up to offer a series of brown bag lunches on key family law topics.

Starting this past September, SMLS and SMBA invited area lawyers to attend Brown Bag Lunches held at local firms. At these events, lawyers who practice in the same courts meet to discuss issues informally and to hear experts talk on developing legal topics. "This is a great opportunity for hardworking local lawyers to get together and stay on top of their field," says Attorney Earl Titlebaum. Judging from the positive response, the program is very welcome and helpful.

In September, Kenneth Herman, a renowned lawyer and forensic psychologist from Massachusetts General Hospital, spoke on new proposed standards from the American Law Institute for child custody cases. Dr. Herman has served as a *Guardian Ad Litem* investigating and making recommendations in countless custody disputes.

In October, retired Judge Edward Ginsburg spoke about his new project, Senior Partners for Justice. He is enthusiastically starting an initiative to train retired or retiring attorneys to represent low-income clients in family law matters. SMLS' clients will reap the rewards of Judge Ginsburg's tireless endeavors.

And in December, retired Judge Eileen Shaevel discussed how alternative dispute resolution fits into the family law attorney's practice. Judge Shaevel both mediates and arbitrates in her own private practice. Attorney Dawn Ide Austin also spoke on Collaborative Law, a new approach to divorce which relies solely on negotiation rather than litigation.

The agenda for 2003 is under development. We will keep you posted.

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