

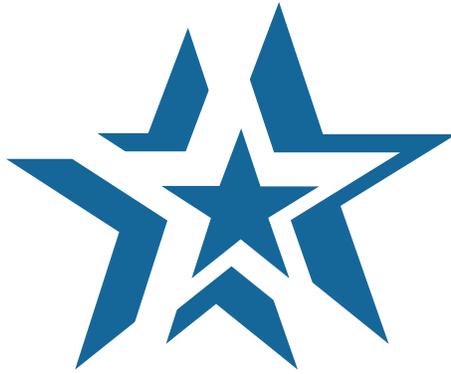


THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM  
PRO BONO PROGRAM  
2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Providing *Pro Bono* Professional Services to Veterans,  
Their Loved Ones, and Survivors Since 1992.





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## DEDICATION

# VINDICATING CLAIMS, AFFIRMING WORTH

*It's been said that even warriors need advocates.*

Increasingly, ours is a “new military,” producing a new breed of veterans who encompass the best-educated group to date about their own rights and benefits. But when it comes to obtaining the benefits they have earned through service, all generations of veterans have the same needs.

They need fair hearings for their claims and a level playing field in courts of law. They need to know their service is appreciated, and the promises they believed will be kept. They need to know their value as human beings is understood and respected. They need to know they are not forgotten—that someone believes them—and will fight for their cases.

The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program is committed to obtaining justice for these men and women. To restoring their pride. To demonstrating our faith in them, and maintaining our belief that a righteous cause can triumph.

Every day we take up the cause of our nation's veterans, whether they served in World War II or recently returned from Iraq or Afghanistan. We never forget what they did, or what they deserve. Their situations drive us to find new ways of communicating our services, and expand the services we provide to an increasing number of veterans in need of legal assistance.

This 2014 Annual Report is dedicated to all those men and women, appellants and attorneys, volunteers and benefactors, who have touched or been touched by the Pro Bono Program. The Veterans Consortium is grateful to our nation's veterans for allowing us to serve them. We give thanks to the volunteer attorneys—and the clerks, paralegal staff members, and administrative professionals—throughout our country who have committed to being advocates for these warriors. They shape our vision and drive our efforts, now and into the future.

A man with a prosthetic left leg is shown in a starting crouch on a dirt track. He is wearing a black tank top, black shorts, and orange-tinted sunglasses. He has a black prosthetic left leg with a curved blade-like foot. He is wearing a black watch on his left wrist. The background shows a clear blue sky, a fence, and some trees.

In 2014, The Veterans Consortium's volunteer corps donated legal services valued at **\$6,279,047** to serve hundreds of Pro Bono Program clients, and has represented **4,591** veterans and their loved ones or survivors since we were founded in 1992.

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*Pro bono design services of front cover by Greg Vassar, graphic designer and Dan O'Hara, both from Skyline Displays  
Photo credit on page 5: Sarah Beal/Arrowhead Films*

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program (The Veterans Consortium) has worked for more than two decades to help our nation's veterans and their loved ones or survivors obtain benefits to which each may be entitled by ensuring equal access to justice through *pro bono* representation. We are pleased to report that The Veterans Consortium completed another successful year in 2014 as described in this year's annual review. Speaking on behalf of the Executive Board, we are proud of the achievements of the staff and volunteer corps in 2014, especially in the context of the last 22 years.

To illustrate, since accepting our first veteran client in 1992, through the end of 2014 our dedicated staff and volunteer corps have:

- helped more than 12,164 veterans and their loved ones or survivors;
- won 3,483 cases for deserving clients, a nearly 80% lifetime win rate;
- placed cases with 19 law school clinics, helping to grow the next generation of veterans law attorneys and build the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims bar;
- trained 3,500 new volunteers to strengthen and leverage the Private Bar;
- introduced a Helpline as an additional program service that is successfully providing limited legal advice to appellants who are unrepresented at the Court;
- used outside support to launch our *pro bono* Medical Review Project for independent medical advice to enhance our clients' appeals, and to help make their Court decisions actionable at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and
- provided *pro bono* legal and professional services worth more than 70 Million dollars.

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*“We expect the need for our services will continue to grow . . .”*

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We expect the need for our services will continue to grow as Iraq and Afghanistan veterans' claims work their way through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs system and increase the number of potential appeals. This anticipated increase, combined with our enhanced appellant outreach and education activities—which have started to increase referrals and requests for assistance—should produce a larger number of client applications and enable us to help even more veterans and their loved ones or survivors.

The Veterans Consortium has a track record of productive collaboration with many longstanding stakeholders. We are grateful for the **substantive support** we receive from leading veterans service organizations; the **tireless efforts** contributed by our dedicated volunteer corps of law firms, solo practitioners, and law school clinics; and the **invaluable cooperation** of the many professional State and County veterans service officers across the U.S. Looking to next year, we will work with our traditional stakeholders plus new mission partners, to continue delivering high quality legal assistance effectively and efficiently to this nation's many unrepresented veterans and their loved ones or survivors.

# FIGHTING FOR THOSE IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Army veteran Floyd “Danny” Applegarth’s case came to The Veterans Consortium’s attention in late 2013, after he had filed an appeal at the Court. Mr. Applegarth was challenging the determination by the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (Board) that he was not entitled to service connection for several conditions, including ongoing, painful neck and back disorders that resulted from a car accident suffered while on active duty in Germany. After evaluating his case, The Veterans Consortium staff concluded that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) had failed to provide Mr. Applegarth with an adequate examination. Indeed, in a number of instances the VA had misinterpreted or ignored his medical record and the opinions of his private physicians that clearly supported service connection. He accepted the Pro Bono Program’s offer of assistance, and the case was assigned to Washington, D.C.-based volunteer attorney Robyn Thorpe, who had attended our Pro Bono Program training session in 2012. In 2014, Ms. Thorpe succeeded in getting the case remanded to the Board.



Danny Applegarth

Perhaps the biggest challenge Pro Bono Program volunteer attorney Robyn Thorpe encountered while representing Floyd “Danny” Applegarth in his appeal was the uphill battle of the VA claims process. “You see all that these servicemen go through in the line of duty,” she says, “so it’s unfortunate that a process that should be nonadversarial *seems* so adversarial.”

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“I prayed  
for a second  
chance...”

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In her client’s situation, she points out, “You trust those people to risk their lives for you, but you don’t trust them to say a car accident that happened while in the service is causing harm.”

Ms. Thorpe calls Mr. Applegarth’s case for neck and back service connection “the most obvious thing,” stating: “He had a car accident in 1991, he’s been in pain ever since...” She points out that the military culture encourages people to be tough, regardless of their pain. “My client ‘sucked it up’ and did not complain about it, although he was hurting every day...then [the VA] says, ‘look there’s no proof—you didn’t treat it.’ But [the military culture] told him to suck it up.”

# FIGHTING FOR THOSE IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Mr. Applegarth, whose grandmother is a Lakota Sioux, grew up in South Dakota's Wounded Knee region, where his parents taught at a Bureau of Indian Affairs school. He agrees with Ms. Thorpe that the independence, respect for privacy, and acceptance of an adverse situation valued by the Native American culture in which he lived probably worked against his pushing for treatment for the pain, even in the immediate aftermath of his car accident. "I was coming off post with this captain," he remembers. "It was a December holiday, we were at the first stoplight, when and a German soldier hit black ice and slammed into us at 50 mph." Mr. Applegarth woke up on a gurney, surrounded by people speaking German—and the American captain, who kept asking if he was all right. "I kept saying 'I'm OK,' " he recalls, "because they teach you to be tough no matter how much it hurts."



*A restored Bell UH-1 Iroquois (Huey) helicopter being ceremonially blessed in the documentary "In the Shadow of the Blade." These helicopters were routinely used in Vietnam, to transport injured soldiers like Mr. Applegarth.*

Mr. Applegarth first filed for service connection in 2008. He was rejected, then appealed, and was again rejected by the Board. "I prayed for a second chance," he remembers. "I was faced with an impossible situation and somehow Jesus got me to The [Veterans] Consortium." While working as a therapist at the VA Martin Vet Center in South Dakota, he reconnected with Carol Wild Scott, whom he had first chatted with when she recognized the address on his Court filing and gave him a call. The Veterans Consortium deputy director for case placement was now married to an Assiniboine man from the area.



*Danny Applegarth with his son Dexter (left) and daughter Becky*

"That's how I first heard about the [Pro Bono] Program," he recalls. "And I have to say, it really gives you another voice, a second chance when you're told no, and that you have no chance. I now feel I have some justice."

Mr. Applegarth praises the effectiveness of the Pro Bono Program for cutting through red tape in the veteran's favor. He is determined to spread the word about the opportunity the Pro Bono Program offers to the veterans he encounters daily in his work at Martin. "I got to The

[Veterans] Consortium by serving veterans," he says. "Now it's my turn to serve them, especially the Native Americans who come to the center. They deserve better treatment for the way they feel about this country, and their warrior ways.... I believe The [Veterans] Consortium gives them a chance to address those issues."

# A VIEW FROM THE BENCH

## JUDGE MARY SCHOELEN, COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

Coming from a military family—her father was career Navy—Judge Mary Schoelen credits her background with giving her an awareness of the sacrifices service members and their families are called on to make. While this didn't predispose her to the practice of military or veterans law before she began law school at The George Washington University (GWU) in 1990, she says that it probably made her more receptive to wanting to help.

At the time, GWU did not offer any courses or clinics in veterans law. "I took administrative law," she recalls. "One course book mentioned the new court [*i.e.*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims] being created, but it also had outdated information, such as the \$10 fee cap still being in place for representing a veteran."

Fortunately, Judge Schoelen's desire to do public interest law found an outlet when a friend, who had interned for the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP), told her about the opportunity. "You got paid, you had responsibility, and you got to do a lot of writing, which other internships didn't offer," she says. "All this, plus veterans law, made it interesting." She also quickly learned how outdated her knowledge of veterans law was—while being interviewed for the job, she learned the \$10 fee cap was a thing of the past.

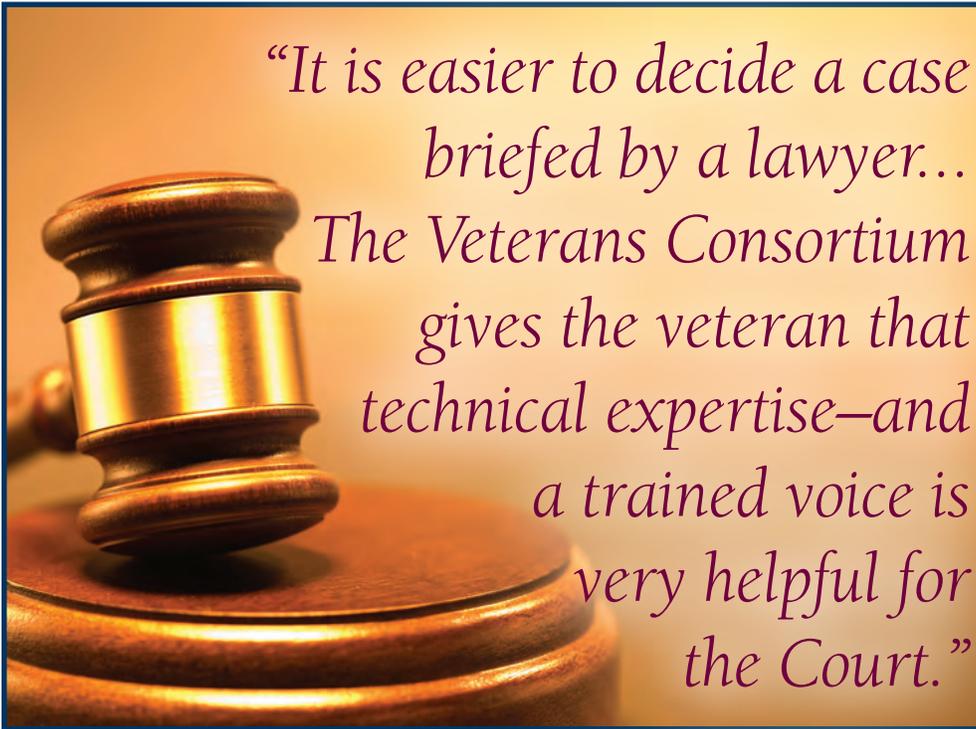
Her time at NVLSP included the opportunity to represent veterans before the Board of Veterans' Appeals (the Board). This was her first exposure to the VA. "I didn't really know what to expect but I walked away surprised," she remembers. "Having taken evidence and looked at other areas of law, it's very pro-veteran—the evidentiary rules in place make it easier for the veterans. But when it comes to them actually getting the benefits, it seems very complicated to do that."

After law school, Judge Schoelen interned with the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, a position she says she fell into. "It was 1993, I was without a job—there was a legal recession and probably half the class was jobless—and I was still trying to figure out what to do." An informational interview with a lawyer on the committee, who had worked for NVLSP and was highly enthusiastic about her job, motivated Judge Schoelen to ask if she could volunteer to work for free. For months she was a legal eagle by day and a floater salesperson at night and on weekends for a venerable Washington department store, until the staff director found some money and she became a regular staffer.



*Judge Mary Schoelen, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims*

# A VIEW FROM THE BENCH: JUDGE MARY SCHOELEN



After more than half a year with the committee, Judge Schoelen’s world shifted again after the 1994 election, when the majority and minority switched in the Senate, funding changed, and the committee staff was reduced from 11 to five. Judge Schoelen was able to get a position at Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), with which she was already familiar thanks to VVA’s relationship with NVLSP. “During my internship I was an accredited VVA service officer, but I hadn’t had much interaction with management before I took this job,” she says. “VVA was energizing their service programs and had hired a new director, who hired me.” She enjoyed the variety

of responsibilities open to her, from training to interfacing with the Board on matters related to benefits. “We commented on new Board rules, and VVA contracted out appellate work, while I screened these [cases] for who to represent... before the Board and the Court. I even testified before a House subcommittee on new legislation.”

Her VVA experience solidified Judge Schoelen’s interest in veterans law and related policy areas—“what should the regulation say, what should the legislation look like, what should be focused on that is not addressed.” When the opportunity to return to the Senate committee opened up, she went for it. Judge Schoelen saw it as a platform to initiate and see to fruition legislation that would have an impact on veterans benefits on a larger scale.

“Generally most people [involved] are pro-veterans,” she says. “It is sometimes challenging to work in legislative matters or the Court when there is no natural opponent to providing veterans benefits.” She further explains, “Someone has to determine what is the right sweet spot for legislation....VA, Congress, or the Court sometimes has to be the one to say ‘no.’”

As Judge Schoelen’s career on Capitol Hill evolved, bringing her new and greater responsibility, change was taking place at the Court, too. “All the original judges’ terms were wrapping up, so there were going to be six vacancies on the Court,” she remembers. “It was an opportunity I knew would not come around for another 15 years or so.”

Her staff director at the time asked her to consider becoming a judge, and Senator Jay Rockefeller, for whom she had worked for a long time, put her name forward to the White House to be nominated. “It’s a presidential nomination,” Judge Schoelen notes, requiring Senate consent and a hearing before the Veterans Affairs committee. She made a point of not

# A VIEW FROM THE BENCH: JUDGE MARY SCHOELEN

working on the other nominations, not wanting to be privy to her colleagues' confidential data, such as financial information. It took more than two years from the beginning of the process, but at last Judge Schoelen was confirmed and sworn in.

Judge Schoelen viewed coming onto the Court as an energizing experience. "It's a lonely, wonderful job," she says, contrasting it to her Hill years, where she was used to running to meetings, watching the floor, and interacting with many people at once. "Here, it's quiet. You can be thoughtful, and it is well suited to the deliberative requirements of the job," she says. "The veteran has waited a long time to get here, we want to give him or her their say in court, we want to look at things to try to get it right and as clear as possible. Even if I don't agree, I want veterans to feel they have been heard."

Judge Schoelen enjoys the interaction with her four law clerks, one of whom—her senior clerk—came from NVLSP and whom she credits with being a tremendous asset, "particularly as I was trying to figure out how to be a judge." The Court's processes and formality were challenges that took some getting used to. She went from being surrounded with people to a situation where there is not as much direct interaction and *ex parte* rules are in effect.

One way Judge Schoelen keeps her finger on the pulse of what's going on "out there" is by participating as a guest lecturer on The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program's training team, a role she took on soon after finishing her first year on the Court. "I knew the Pro Bono Program because I'd taken the training and even taken on a case while working for VVA," she says. Now about every 18 months, she joins the Pro Bono Program's regular trainers and other guest experts at sessions around the country, describing the days with volunteer lawyers as a mutual learning experience. "I think it's interesting to see what they are interested in," she says. "And it's great that so many people are involved. Here, people are looking for *pro bono* opportunities and they want to support the troops." The fact that The Veterans Consortium sometimes has had to turn people away from training sessions, she believes, is clear proof of the burgeoning interest in veterans law.

As for the value of the Pro Bono Program to the Court itself, she has no doubt. "The [Pro Bono] Program is very helpful to the Court. It is easier to decide a case briefed by a lawyer, assembled by a lawyer," she says. "Frequently we get single-spaced, handwritten sheets. If we don't know what the veteran is seeking, how can we respond? That can be very frustrating for us and the veteran. The Veterans Consortium gives the veteran that technical expertise—and a trained voice is very helpful for the Court."



# ADVOCATING FOR VETERANS IN FINANCIAL DISTRESS

In April 2014, Rebecca Cagle Wanee, an Amory, Mississippi, veterans law attorney whom The Veterans Consortium is pleased to number among our Pro Bono Program volunteer corps, was honored with the CVA-NOVA Pro Bono Advocate of the Year Award, presented by two veterans advocacy organizations—the Center for Veterans Advancement and the National Organization of Veterans’ Advocates.

Noting Wanee exemplified the *pro bono* spirit, CVA director and program manager Rick Little praised her efforts to make high-quality legal services available to veterans unable to afford them: “As a result of her participation, Rebecca has provided tens of thousands of dollars in benefits to homeless veterans, enabling them to access permanent housing and other vital opportunities that lead to an independent life.”



*Rebecca Cagle Wanee*

Wanee might have been born to be a veterans law practitioner and Pro Bono Program attorney, growing up surrounded by proud former military service members—her father was a Marine, her uncle was a combat vet in the Army, and her Army veteran grandfather received two Purple Hearts while seeing combat in the Philippines during World War II. She herself served as an Air Force JAG from 1996 to 2004, and has been a member of the Air National Guard since 2012.

Wanee was drawn to veterans law almost immediately after getting off active duty and setting up her own office. “I was contacted by a veteran who saw that I’d listed military law as a practice area,” she explains. “I told him I would really like to help but had to warn him that I’d never represented a veteran before.” Wanee then cold-called Hugh Cox, a combat veteran and experienced veterans law attorney, to ask for advice. Cox explained what she would need to do at the Court, and signed on as her sponsor. Fortunately things went well with her first veteran client. “I succeeded, which gave me confidence to go out on my own in 2006 to represent veterans full time,” she says.

At that time, Wanee met several staffers from The Veterans Consortium, and soon she participated in one of our Pro Bono Program’s training sessions and signed on as a volunteer. She was assigned her first case from The Veterans Consortium in February of 2007, and her effective advocacy once again carried the day, winning a remand for her client.

Almost a decade into her practice, the now-seasoned Wanee has advice for those considering veterans law: “When veterans are told ‘no,’ they internalize this rejection. It takes a lot of courage for them to ask for help. It’s a matter of pride.” While receiving benefits rightfully owed them is one reason that veterans appeal, receiving vindication is also huge. “It’s recognition that what they’ve been telling the VA is true and what they did during their service matters. A lot of clients are needy, financially distressed, or elderly. Money is important, but at the same time there is a huge emotional undercurrent of vindication.” For Wanee, succeeding on behalf of veterans and their families makes it all worthwhile; for The Veterans Consortium, knowing that attorneys like Wanee receive our new volunteer trainings repays our outreach and education efforts tenfold.

# GETTING A VIETNAM VETERAN HIS DUE

*After having his 2002 claim for service connection for bilateral hip arthritis repeatedly denied, Vietnam combat veteran Luis Vargas filed a pro se appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court) in 2014. The Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) had denied Mr. Vargas' claim, based on negative VA examination opinions that declined to link this condition to service because x-rays taken after he left the Army did not show arthritis, although more current x-rays did. At the time of the Board denial in November 2013, Mr. Vargas had positive nexus opinions from private physicians. However, because they failed to address the issue of the x-rays showing no arthritis subsequent to active service, the Board found this evidence to be lacking. The Board instead relied upon the negative opinions in its denial; reasoning that, while Mr. Vargas currently had arthritis, the fact that x-rays subsequent to service exist that show no arthritis meant that the arthritis was not service connected.*



Luis Vargas

The Veterans Consortium staff attorney Jeremy Bedford was the Pro Bono Program evaluator for Luis Vargas' appeal. Not only did he recommend that we take the case, but he also asked to be appointed as Mr. Vargas' direct representation attorney. "Upon reading Mr. Vargas' Board denial, I realized that I wanted to represent him," Mr. Bedford says, "because he is an Army Special Forces Vietnam combat veteran that I felt had been wronged by the VA, and I really wanted to personally assist him."

Mr. Vargas vividly remembers what led to his decision to go with the Pro Bono Program. A representative from another service organization had helped him in connection with his lumbar spine disability and had urged him to apply for VA rating for his hips, a claim that was eventually denied. At that point, the representative suggested Mr. Vargas file an appeal at the Court, setting in motion the events that brought him to The Veterans Consortium.

*"...I really wanted to personally assist him..."*

"I received a lot of brochures from groups and firms after I filed," Mr. Vargas says. "They basically all said the same thing. But somehow the [Pro Bono Program's] information stood out. It was more clear, it highlighted the important things, and answered various questions I had in a way that I could understand."

He accepted The Veterans Consortium's offer of legal representation and within a week received a call from Mr. Bedford, who introduced himself and filled him in on the next steps for his appeal.

# GETTING A VIETNAM VETERAN HIS DUE



Jeremy Bedford

Mr. Vargas, who served three tours in Vietnam, first with the 101st Airborne, then with Special Forces, and finally with the Advisory Command Group to an ARVN infantry division, downplays his military missions as “jumping out of an airplane wearing 80 pounds of equipment”—tough on the body and certainly a stressor for his joints. The fact that Mr. Bedford had members of his family who had served in Airborne units was a plus for Mr. Vargas. “I thought he understood what we did, so he could relate to some of this service connected disability,” he explains. “I felt at ease because he understood what my job had entailed all those years.”

In August 2014, Mr. Bedford negotiated a Joint Motion for Remand with the VA general counsel, based on the VA ignoring Mr. Vargas’ inquiry about the credentials of the examiners who provided the negative opinions in his case. He next advised Mr. Vargas to get a nexus opinion letter. Many consider a nexus opinion—with nexus being defined as the means of connection between the in-service injury and the current problem—to be key in overturning a denial. But as with all things VA-related, addressing exactly the relevant issues in wording the Board will find persuasive is critical.

Once a physician was prepared to write the opinion, Mr. Bedford wrote a letter explaining what facts would need to be addressed in order for the VA to view the claim favorably—most importantly, the post-service x-rays that showed no arthritis.

Armed with this information, Mr. Vargas’ physician drafted a nexus opinion that ameliorated the deficiencies in the previous opinion. The result: the claim went back to the Board, which granted service connection in February 2015. The Board sent the claim back to the Regional Office, where a 10 percent rating for each hip was assigned with an effective date of November 2002. “Essentially, the [Pro Bono] Program helped this retired Vietnam War combat veteran be granted service connection,” Mr. Bedford says, “with 13 years of back pay at a 20 percent higher rating than he was already receiving.”

Grateful for the Pro Bono Program’s assistance in reaching a successful outcome, as a county service officer working with veterans, Mr. Vargas is making it his own mission to help them get their claims approved—working with them on their initial filings, and recommending The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program to those who have been denied or are simply in need of legal advice or referrals. “After dealing with VA all these years, I think VA doesn’t get it,” Mr. Vargas says. “Without a program like this one, I’d still be getting ignored, not having my questions answered. I finally feel that someone listened.”

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*“...he is making it his own mission to help them get their claims approved...”*

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# SETTING A PRECEDENT FOR SERVICE CONNECTION

*What came to The Veterans Consortium as a case for service connection for tinnitus, brought by Army veteran Robert Fountain, ended with the setting of an important precedent that opened new opportunities for service connection for many other veterans. Prior to Mr. Fountain's case, tinnitus was not counted among the conditions that could be considered service connected on the basis of "continuity of symptomology" (this legal term describes situations in which a chronic condition appeared during service, but was not specifically diagnosed at the time and continued for years, perhaps without treatment). Due to Mr. Fountain's persistence and the hard work of his Pro Bono Program attorney, Jessica Alfano Powell from The Veterans Consortium volunteer corps, tinnitus can now be service connected on this basis as a qualifying chronic condition.*



Robert Fountain

Army veteran Robert Fountain dates his tinnitus back to an incident that occurred in the late 1970s during field exercises. "I was in a foxhole, and heard this noise, blam, and a bomb seemed to go off right by my head." He remembers someone mentioning that he could get tinnitus from such a close explosion, but he ignored it. "I figured getting checked out would only slow me down, so I told everyone not to worry about it. And I didn't just think about it, myself."

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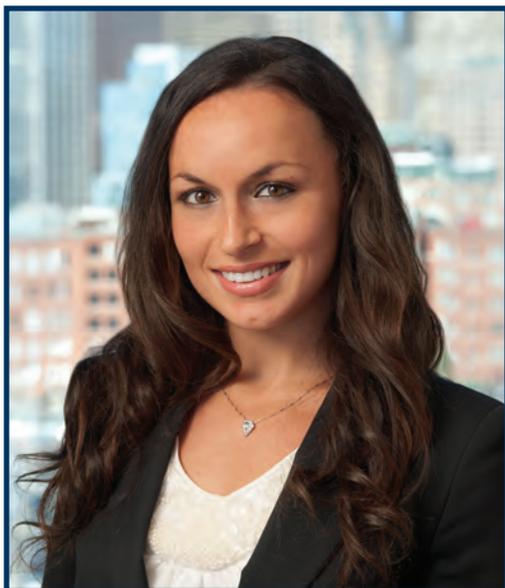
*"Knowing that someone cares makes a big difference..."*

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However, every time he had an exam after the incident, Mr. Fountain told the examiners that he had a problem with ringing in his ears. He finally got a thorough checkup and was told he should submit a claim—which was promptly denied by his VA Regional Office. Mr. Fountain was shocked. "Even my VA person [representative] said, 'How could they deny you for ringing in the ears?'" Thanks to a volunteer at his state veterans center, who put together a list of attorneys and helped Mr. Fountain submit the Notice of Disagreement paperwork, he was able to file his appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. This in turn led to an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court), evaluation by The Veterans Consortium staff, and finally representation at the

Court by Pro Bono Program attorney Jessica Alfano Powell.

# SETTING A PRECEDENT FOR SERVICE CONNECTION



Jessica Alfano Powell

Mr. Fountain has only good things to say about Ms. Alfano Powell's efforts on his behalf. "Knowing that someone cares makes a big difference. I hadn't wanted to think the VA was really that sort of organization, making you think sometimes that they're all against you when you're trying to get something done. But Jessica, she really wanted to get things right for me."

Like many veterans, Mr. Fountain says that while getting benefits would be good, even more important is being affirmed: "You really do have this problem. It's the principle of the thing. [The Army] told us we would have to work, but 'we'll take care of you the rest of your life.' But they're not taking care of me, I'm taking care of myself."

As for Ms. Alfano Powell, her advice to lawyers considering doing veterans law on a *pro bono* basis is to "go for it". "It's very rewarding, and if you're considering it as a career path, it's an interesting area of law," she says. "You won't make a ton of money but you won't be bored."



# HONORING A HUSBAND'S MEMORY

*The appellant in Hewlett v. McDonald was Mrs. Cora Hewlett, the widow of veteran Norman L. Hewlett. The claim, dated April 2006, was for service connection for the cause of the veteran's death. Pro Bono Program volunteer attorney Stephen Dunne twice won remands from the Court, with the most recent being in August 2014.*

*Subsequent to this remand, Mr. Dunne obtained an independent medical opinion for the appellant furnished by The Veterans Consortium through our innovative pro bono*

*Medical Review Pilot Project, using donations from our benefactors. On the basis of the medical opinion, the VA granted service connection for the cause of death and paid almost eight years of back-pay benefits.*



*Norman and Cora Hewlett*

When Stephen Dunne was assigned Mrs. Hewlett's appeal, the VA had already denied his client benefits for 10 years, despite clear evidence that her husband was exposed to Agent Orange. "It was clear this had nothing to do with money," Mr. Dunne recalls from his first conversations with Cora Hewlett. "She was fighting VA to preserve her husband's memory and

honor." As a veteran, Norman Hewlett had always been proud of his service, but at the end of his life he was extremely disappointed by the VA's denials that his painful liver cancer was service connected. His widow was furious at how he was treated near the end of his life, and determined to pursue his case as high as it could go to win justice for her husband.

"I am a veteran myself," Mr. Dunne says, "and I promised her we would try to honor Norman's memory in her case." One of the keys to success was a medical grant that would enable them to obtain a specialist's opinion. "I did the research," Mr. Dunne recalls, "and all the types of cancers were overwhelming. There were hundreds of specialists." Eventually he tracked down a doctor in

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*"...she is getting the justice she deserved after 10 long years..."*

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*Stephen Dunne*

New Jersey who was willing to document the relationship between Mr. Hewlett's time in Asia and his cancer. This opinion from a highly honored doctor tipped everything in the veteran's favor. "I think without it, there's not a chance we would have won this case," Mr. Dunne says. At the time, he was also concerned because Cora Hewlett had pneumonia and may have been on her deathbed. "That was close to a year ago—thankfully she made a full recovery and finally she is getting the justice she deserved after 10 long years."

# HONORING A HUSBAND'S MEMORY

Mr. Dunne feels *pro bono* attorneys can learn from Mrs. Hewlett's persistence. "You can win these cases but it's not easy. It's a long, hard-fought battle." He urges volunteer attorneys to learn as much about the cases and the veterans' conditions as possible. "We looked at VA studies on cancer and the association of different cancers with veterans serving in different parts of the world, and gave that information to the specialist." Mr. Dunne also found it critical to explain to the doctor that the VA requires explicit language in order for an opinion to have persuasive value.



In June 2015, Mrs. Hewlett at last received two checks from the VA, one retroactive, the other is the first of an ongoing monthly benefit. "I'm glad it's over," she says, "and my attorney did a wonderful job. But nothing will make up for what VA did to my husband. I felt terrible about how he suffered... They had my husband not having been exposed to Agent Orange, so we had to prove all that. Then he died in 2006. And we're now just getting things straightened out."

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*"You can win these cases but it's not easy. It's a long, hard-fought battle."*

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Mrs. Hewlett describes how Mr. Dunne and the Pro Bono Program treated her versus how the VA responded as being like night and day. "That program is a good program," she says. "When I filed my last appeal I got about 12 to 15 letters from different attorneys. But I liked what I heard from this [Veterans Pro Bono] Program, and after talking with Mr. Dunne, I was happy he was my attorney."

Mr. Dunne, who became a volunteer attorney after participating in a training session delivered by The Veterans Consortium in Delaware, says the importance of the Pro Bono Program cannot be overemphasized. "It's amazing to see its success rate," he says. "Pro se [i.e., unrepresented], veterans seem likely to fail. They cannot understand the complexity VA has put in front of them. Veterans can't process it." The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program's volunteer attorneys, trained in the nuances of the law and the Court, thus become the deciding factor between losing and winning. In Mrs. Hewlett's case, Mr. Dunne's high-quality representation, and an effective medical opinion secured through The Veterans Consortium's innovative *pro bono* Medical Review Pilot Project, made all the difference.

# 2014 ATTORNEYS, FIRMS & LAW SCHOOL CLINICS

Without the commitment of individual attorneys, law firms, and law school clinics, The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program would be hard-pressed to carry out our mission to serve veterans and their loved ones or survivors as effectively as we do today. Time and again, our volunteers have shown a willingness to devote their time, expertise, and resources to this worthy cause—not only as advocates before the Court, but also as strategic advisors to our staff, as mentors and guides to our other volunteers, and as generous financial benefactors to The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program's operations.

We know from experience that our volunteers are drawn to the Pro Bono Program for the opportunity to put their legal expertise to work for those who have given so much for our country. Our thanks go out from The Veterans Consortium to the many attorneys, firms, and law school clinics that have contributed to the success of the Pro Bono Program by selflessly helping hundreds of veterans and their loved ones or survivors in 2014.

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## 2014 LAW SCHOOL CLINICAL PROGRAMS

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### **Emory Law Volunteer Clinic for Veterans**

H. Lane Dennard Jr., Esq., Adjunct Professor

### **George Mason University Clinic for Legal Assistance to Service Members and Veterans**

Laurie Neff, Esq., Director & Managing Attorney

### **Harvard Law School Veterans Law and Disability Benefits Clinic**

Daniel Nagin, Director

### **Stetson University College of Law Veterans' Law Institute**

Michael P. Allen, Esq. Director

### **University of Arizona, James E. Rogers College of Law Veterans Advocacy Clinic**

Kristine A. Huskey, Director

### **University of Detroit Mercy School of Law Veterans Law Clinic**

Tammy M. Kudialis, Esq., Director

### **University of Pittsburgh School of Law Veterans Legal Clinic Practicum**

Jason W. Manne, Supervising Attorney

### **The Veterans Clinic at the University of Missouri School of Law**

Angela Drake, Esq. Supervising Attorney

### **Washburn University School of Law**

Debi Schrock, Director

### **Widener University School of Law Veterans Law Clinic**

Thomas J. Reed, Esq. Professor Emeritus



## **MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN BOARD DECISIONS**

2014 saw the expansion of The Veterans Consortium *pro bono* Medical Review Pilot Project, thanks to contributions from our supporters. These medical reviews and opinions—provided at no charge to the appellant—often uncover information crucial to establishing the connection of a medical condition to the appellant's service, that the veteran or family member could not otherwise afford. These *pro bono* medical reviews have made Court decisions actionable at the VA, resulting intangible benefit awards. Any appellant who is represented by a Pro Bono Program volunteer and whose case has been remanded by the Court to the Board of Veterans' Appeals is eligible to apply.



Robert Baxter

## 2014 DAVID ISBELL INTERN: ROBERT BAXTER

Each year The Veterans Consortium offers a David Isbell Internship, which commemorates our founding Chairman. We were fortunate to have Robert Baxter as our David Isbell Intern from May to August 2014. During his three-plus months with us, he energetically threw himself into all aspects of the program. Not only did he work in the main office, supporting evaluations and placement, but he also got to know and interact with the Executive Board.

Mr. Baxter worked with The Veterans Consortium founding member organizations during a critical time for veterans. “I was able to observe what was happening right in the middle of the U.S. House of Representatives conference on veterans healthcare facilities,” he notes, “working with the Big Six veterans service organizations teams as they developed positions and projects.” Finally, Mr. Baxter was able to support Pro Bono Program volunteers through his work on training manuals and online training. “I felt like I was coming full circle,” he says, “going from evaluation and placement, to actually working on the pleadings.” He credits this variety of experience as the reason he got so much from the internship experience. “Often legal internships can bog you down, but basically every four weeks I could change and go to another side of things.”



David Isbell, Esq.

In May 2014, Mr. Baxter graduated from the The George Washington University Law School, then reported for active duty as a Navy judge advocate. As for the future beyond his military service, Mr. Baxter is sure that veterans law will have a place. “I think there is definitely an increasing awareness of veterans law,” he says. “After being at war for 15 years, we have vets who have a variety of issues not limited to medical issues. That’s really what’s gaining momentum, and empowering law students—the idea that these people have served their country and now we can serve them.”

## VISION & STEWARDSHIP

Our all-volunteer Executive Board consists of seven voting members—four of them veterans, who are responsible for establishing the vision, providing stewardship and governance, and ensuring that The Veterans Consortium delivers high-quality *pro bono* legal services effectively and efficiently. One representative is drawn from each of the four veterans service organizations that founded The Veterans Consortium—The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, National Veterans Legal Services Program, and Paralyzed Veterans of America. Three voting members—including the Board’s current chairman and vice chairman—represent the Private Bar.



The Veterans Consortium’s all-volunteer Executive Board

The Executive Board meetings include Invited Guests from the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the Legal Services Corporation. The Executive Board is supported and advised by a Treasurer, who also performs *pro bono* Chief Financial Officer duties for The Veterans Consortium.

# EXECUTIVE BOARD



Mary Ann Gilleece  
Gary M. Butter  
Len J. Selfon  
Ronald B. Abrams



Verna Jones  
Steven Henry  
Roy E. Spicer  
William S. Foster, Jr.

## **Mary Ann Gilleece, Esq., Chairman** *(The Private Bar)*

Using expertise gained as a law firm partner and in senior State and Federal leadership positions, Ms. Gilleece provides advice to domestic and foreign corporations on a broad spectrum of issues related to legislative, government contract, and business matters. Her knowledge of the laws, regulations, and internal government procedures related to the government acquisition process, coupled with her experience in senior positions in the executive and legislative branches of government, enable her to assist clients to successfully resolve complex business, legal, legislative, and regulatory problems.

## **Gary M. Butter, Esq., Vice Chairman** *(The Private Bar)*

Mr. Butter is in-house patent counsel in the New York office of Google Inc., and an assistant adjunct professor of law at Brooklyn Law School. Before joining Google, he was a partner at Baker Botts, LLP, where he focused on high-tech patent litigation and intellectual property issues. After graduating from the United States Naval Academy, Mr. Butter served as a submarine officer from 1982 to 1987, and retired from the US Naval Reserve as a captain in 2010.

## **Len J. Selfon, Esq., Secretary** *(Paralyzed Veterans of America)*

Mr. Selfon is the recently appointed general counsel for Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), joining the Office of General Counsel as associate director in 2010. He previously served as senior vice president for United Spinal Association and VetsFirst, where he managed a national network of veterans service representatives and directly represented veterans and their family members before the Department of Veterans Affairs' regional offices, the Board of Veterans' Appeals and the federal courts. Mr. Selfon also has been director of Vietnam Veterans of America's Veterans Benefits Program, a legal consultant to the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program and a senior appellate attorney in the VA Office of the General Counsel.

## **Ronald B. Abrams, Esq., Director** *(National Veterans Legal Services Program)*

Mr. Abrams is joint executive director of the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP). Since joining that organization in 1989, he has conducted more than 200 training sessions for numerous national veterans organizations, associations and government agencies involved in veterans affairs, state bar associations, Legal Services Corporation-funded offices, and national legal associations. Mr. Abrams is author of the NVLSP's Basic Training Course in Veterans Benefits and helped design the training curriculum for the Pro Bono Program.

## **Verna Jones, Director** *(The American Legion)*

Verna Jones has been a member of the American Legion's national VA&R staff since July 2009, initially serving as an appeals representative in the Appeals and Special Claims

unit located at the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, D.C. She has since held the positions of BVA manager and deputy director of claims and currently the director of National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission. Before joining the national staff, Ms. Jones was the Department of North Carolina's department service officer from 2004 to 2009; she remains a member of American Legion Post #55 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Ms. Jones was a personnel sergeant in the U.S. Army from 1987 to 1995.

## **Steven Henry, Director** *(The American Legion, Alternate Director)*

Mr. Henry is assistant director for claims at The American Legion, where he concurrently serves as the service officer for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, working to assist veterans and their families receive the benefits they earned through military service. Mr. Henry has held various positions of responsibility with The American Legion, including national appeals representative and national field service representative. Mr. Henry is a "results driven Marine veteran passionately serving his fellow veterans by assisting them in navigating the red tape and bureaucracy of Veterans Affairs and ensuring they receive the benefits they earned through their military service."

## **Roy E. Spicer, Director** *(Disabled American Veterans)*

Mr. Spicer supervises the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) National Appeals Office located in Washington, D.C., which provides free, professional representation of appellants before the Board of Veterans' Appeals. He joined the Army in 1968, serving in Vietnam as leader of a Recon Team until serious combat wounds led to disability retirement. Mr. Spicer has received numerous military honors, including two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star and two Presidential Unit Citations. After Army service, he entered the DAV National Service Program in 1971, serving in a number of key positions until being named executive assistant to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in 1994. In 1997, Mr. Spicer rejoined DAV at its National Appeals Office.

## **William S. Foster, Jr., Esq., Director** *(The Private Bar)*

Mr. Foster is a partner at Baker Botts and a member of the firm's Intellectual Property Practice who also practices before the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. Throughout his career, Mr. Foster has been involved with veterans issues, representing veterans for the Pro Bono Program before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. Prior to attending law school, he was a legislative aide with the Majority Staff for the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and a professional staff member of the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance. Mr. Foster is a service-connected disabled veteran who was a beneficiary of the Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation benefit.

# INVITED GUESTS



Cary P. Sklar

Amy Wilkinson-Hagen

Dr. Bristow Hardin

Meredith Horton

Hugh Quinn

William Levi

**Cary P. Sklar, Esq.,** *U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims*

In his role as Counsel to the Court, Mr. Sklar serves as a Court liaison to the Veterans Pro Bono Program. His division also handles a wide range of legal matters arising from Court administration, including judicial and staff compliance with the codes of conduct and other judicial and staff ethics questions; attorney discipline; interpreting and applying Court rules; and advising the Clerk on public office operations, appropriations, and personnel matters. Before joining the Court, Mr. Sklar served as senior advisor to the special counsel at the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC), where he provided advice on administrative and policy matters. He also supervised an OSC investigation and prosecution division, and established and directed the OSC's Mediation Program. Before joining OSC, Mr. Sklar litigated in federal district and appellate courts on behalf of the National Treasury Employees Union.

**Amy Wilkinson-Hagen, Esq.,** *U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims*

Ms. Wilkinson-Hagen is Deputy Counsel to the Court at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, a position she has held since 2007. She was previously a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Lawrence B. Hagel at the Court. Ms. Wilkinson-Hagen received a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center, and specializes in general law practice, administrative law, employee benefits, fiscal matters, ethics and professional responsibility, judicial policy and legislation, judges' compensation and benefits, veterans law, and appellate litigation. She has also received degrees in English literature from Brigham Young University (B.A.) and The University of Chicago (A.M.).

**Dr. Bristow Hardin,** *Legal Services Corporation (through May 2015)*

Dr. Hardin is a program analyst with the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and is its administrator for the Pro Bono Program's grant funds. Before joining the LSC, he was director of the Union Institute's Center for Public Policy, project coordinator at the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, and policy analyst and advocate at the Food Research and Action Center and the Virginia Poverty Law Center Food Law Project. Dr. Hardin has been a lecturer and adjunct professor

at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and American University, Washington, D.C. As a private consultant, he provides legal services to organizations and other groups in the areas of evaluation, strategic research, and policy analysis.

**Meredith Horton, Esq.,** *Legal Services Corporation (from May 2015)*

Ms. Horton joined the LSC Office of Program Performance in October 2014 as a program liaison and became Program Counsel for the Pro Bono Innovation Fund, Disaster Relief and Recovery, and Veterans Grant Administration in March 2015. Prior to joining LSC, she worked at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in Washington, D.C., where she was involved in litigation, advocacy, and public education. She worked extensively with pro bono attorneys, helping structure large-scale pro bono projects and managing case teams. Before practicing law, Meredith spent four years as an organizer and advocate on consumer protection, environmental, and education issues in New York City and California.

**Hugh Quinn, Esq., CPA, MBA, CFE** *Treasurer (through June 2014)*

Mr. Quinn is the principal at Quinn Forensics in Washington D.C. He brings more than 25 years of business management, litigation consulting, and accounting experience to the position of Pro Bono Program Board treasurer, having assisted corporate officers, boards of directors, including special and audit committees, and counsel in matters such as government contractors, international accounting issues and insurance investigations.

**William Levi, CPA, CGMA,** *Treasurer (from June 2014)*

Mr. Levi provides pro bono chief financial officer duties for The Veterans Consortium, and is concurrently the Treasurer reporting to the governing Executive Board. Mr. Levi is the Principal at W. Levi and Associates, LLC, a firm that assists Washington, D.C. metropolitan area clients by providing accounting, tax, and consulting services. He brings more than 30 years of business management, consulting, and public accounting experience. He has assisted nonprofit and for-profit organizations, corporate officers, and boards of directors in a wide range of matters including corporate governance, internal controls, financial reporting and internal audits.

## THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM STAFF



**Jeremy Bedford**  
Esq.



**Courtney McRae**  
Esq.



**Elizabeth Pesin**  
Esq.



**Leonce Wilson**  
V.L.S.



*Not Shown:*  
**Jennifer Zajac, Esq. (PVA)**

# PRINCIPAL STAFF MEMBERS



Camille D. Soleil

Edmund M. Glabus

David H. Myers

Louis J. George

Richard V. Spataro

Carol Wild Scott

**Camille D. Soleil, Esq.,** *Executive Director (through October 2014)*

Ms. Soleil previously served in nonprofit management positions with professional associations for registered nurses, including as director of leadership services for the American Nurses Association, executive director of the Alaska Nurses Association, and director of labor for the Kentucky Nurses Association. In addition, she worked as an attorney for the Louisville Legal Aid Society.

**Edmund M. Glabus,** *Executive Director (from June 2015)*

Mr. Glabus is executive director of The Veterans Consortium and also leads its outreach and education initiatives to veterans and dependents. Previously, he was a business unit general manager at ManTech International, where in 2014 he was privileged to lead the unit's 1,000 associates in delivering more than \$250 million in mission solutions. From 2007-2013, as the CAO, he also was the firm's executive sponsor for 13 outreach programs that helped achieve and sustain a 45 percent veteran workforce while receiving numerous awards as an Employer of Choice. Mr. Glabus is a veteran whose 20-year Regular Army, National Guard and Army Reserve career included various command and staff tours in the U.S. and overseas. Mr. Glabus earned his B.S. from Georgetown University and he completed the University of Maryland's miniMBA Certificate program.

**David H. Myers, Esq.,** *Director of Case Evaluation and Placement; Acting Executive Director (from October 2014 through June 2015)*

Mr. Myers joined the Pro Bono Program in 2000, and was promoted to Director of Case Evaluation and Placement in 2012. He retired from the U.S. Navy in 2000 after 28 years of enlisted and commissioned service, including 1973-74 enlisted-service deployment to Southeast Asia and 24 years as a Navy judge advocate. During his Navy career, Mr. Myers assumed numerous roles, including director, Special Programs Division (OJAG); deputy director, Appellate Government Division, Navy-Marine Appellate Review Activity; deputy director, Criminal Law Division (OJAG); senior trial counsel, Naval Legal Service Office, Naples, Italy, during the first Gulf War; military judge, Navy-Marine Corps Trial Judiciary; Atlantic Circuit; and assistant staff judge advocate, Bureau of Naval Personnel. His military decorations include four Meritorious Service Medals.

**Louis J. George, Esq.,** *Director of Recruiting and Training (through August 2015)*

In June 2012, Mr. George became the NVLSP appointed contract director of volunteer attorney recruiting and training for the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program, having previously served as staff attorney at the National Veterans Legal Services Program. Before joining NVLSP in 1998, Mr. George worked as an associate counsel with the Board of Veterans' Appeals, where he wrote decisions regarding entitlement to veterans benefits for review by members of the Board. Since 2010, Mr. George has served as co-chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee of the Section of Administrative Law and Regulatory Practice of the American Bar Association. He is a current member and former president of the Board of Governors of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Bar Association.

**Richard V. Spataro, Esq.,** *Director of Recruiting and Training (from August 2015)*

Mr. Spataro is the contract director of volunteer attorney recruiting and training for The Veterans Consortium, as well as director of training and publications for National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP). Mr. Spataro joined NVLSP in 2004 and was promoted to the position of senior staff attorney in 2013. He has represented hundreds of veterans before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and has also represented veterans before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, the Board of Veterans' Appeals, and VA Regional Offices. He trains advocates in veterans law and mentors attorneys who participate in NVLSP's Lawyers Serving Warriors® Program and the Pro Bono Program.

**Carol Wild Scott, Esq.,** *Deputy Director for Placement*

Ms. Scott has been a member of The Veterans Consortium team since 1996, overseeing the placement of more than 4,000 cases with pro bono attorneys over that time. Active in many areas of veterans' legal matters, Ms. Scott is the Chair of the Veterans & Military Law Section of the Federal Bar Association. She was honored with the President's Award of the Federal Bar Association in 2010 and the National Organization of Veterans Advocates' Ken Carpenter Achievement Award for Excellence in 2012 for her advocacy on behalf of veterans, particularly Native American veterans.



**Belinda Allen,**  
P.A.



**Daniella Furey**  
L.S.W. (NVLSP)



**Leigh Hillebrand**



**Aaron Hoitink**  
Ph.D.



**Cathy Klingler**



**Sandy Peterson**

# 2014 FINANCIALS

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

December 31	2014
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,274,245
Investments	363,791
Accounts receivable	1,082
Prepaid expenses	172,250
Property and equipment, less accumulated depreciation and amortization (2014 – \$6,639)	—
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$2,811,368</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	
Liabilities	
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 158,288
Payable to LSC	1,254,133
Deferred revenue	992,068
Deferred rent liability	92,643
Accrued salaries and related benefits	39,943
Total Liabilities	2,537,075
Net assets – unrestricted	274,293
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$2,811,368</b>

## STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended December 31	2014
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Legal Services Corporation — The Pro Bono Program	\$ 2,228,924
Donated Services	213,978
Contributions	66,322
Investment Income	169
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$2,509,393</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>	
Program Services	
Legal Services Corporation – The Pro Bono Program	\$ 2,444,308
Pro Bono Program – donated funds	25,215
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>2,469,523</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>39,870</b>
Net Assets – beginning of year	234,423
<b>NET ASSETS – END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$274,293</b>

# 2014 FINANCIALS

## REPORTED/ESTIMATED CONTRIBUTIONS (UNAUDITED)

Individual Donors and Benefactors	\$ 52,841
Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP	7,981
Squire Patton Boggs US LLP	3,000
Chisolm Chisolm & Kilpatrick	2,500
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>\$66,322</b>

## SUMMARY OF DONATED FUNDS AND EXPENSES (UNAUDITED)

Contributions available as of 12/31/2013	\$ 220,074
Contributions received as of 12/31/2014	66,322
Interest earned 1/1/2014 – 12/31/2014	23
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS/INTEREST</b>	<b>\$ 289,419</b>
<b>LESS</b>	
Expenses paid from Contributions 1/1/2014 – 12/31/2014	\$ 25,295
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS AVAILABLE AS OF 12/31/2014</b>	<b>\$ 261,124</b>

# 2014 FINANCIALS

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## ESTIMATED/REPORTED DONATED SERVICES (UNAUDITED)

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Estimated Donated <i>Pro Bono</i> Services*	\$ 6,279,047
Paralyzed Veterans of America	115,421
Baker Botts, LLP	26,258
Raffa, P.C.	6,000
National Veterans Legal Services Project	2,384
W. Levi & Associates	1,575
<b>TOTAL VALUE OF ESTIMATED DONATED SERVICES</b>	<b>\$6,430,685</b>

\*This figure was calculated by multiplying the number of cases placed with the pro bono attorneys by the average number of hours for a pro bono attorney to complete a case, as reported by Pro Bono Program volunteer attorneys completing cases in 2014, and multiplying this number by the 2014 Laffey matrix hourly rate for a private attorney in their 4th to 7th year of practice.

The Veterans Consortium would like to honor the memory of the late Tony Chapman for his poignant and very special poem to honor the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944. (Authorization was obtained for the 2009 Annual Report and covered future use in The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program publications.) 

# STAND HERE NOW

I stand here now  
Amongst ... brave men  
With whom ... I've stood before  
The last time ... when we landed  
On June 6th of '44  
Back then ... we were all young men  
Eighteen ... or little more  
Their lives ... cut short ... that morning  
On this distant ... windswept shore  
I stand here now ... and wonder  
What would they ... have become  
Had they survived ... that morning  
Their lives ... allowed full run  
One thing ... I know ... for certain  
Of which ... there is ... no doubt  
These brave young men  
My pals ... from then  
Would ... be old  
White haired ... with wrinkled brow  
Just like me ...  
As I stand here ... now

—Tony Chapman









The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program is a non-profit organization created to provide all qualifying veterans and their loved ones or survivors legal representation—at no charge—before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC).

The Veterans Consortium recruits volunteer attorneys to represent appellants before the CAVC (and the Federal Circuit or Supreme Court as appropriate) without charge; screens cases so that pro bono representation is provided in cases with merit; and offers comprehensive training in the field of veterans law, plus mentoring and additional support to its volunteer corps of more than 500 attorneys and related professionals across the United States.



THE VETERANS CONSORTIUM  
PRO BONO PROGRAM



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