

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Paul Bateman, Schiff Hardin

When **Paul Bateman** met Serena, she was mid-divorce. Two years earlier, her husband had filed for divorce, obtaining and paying for her private representation through a defined contribution plan. As the legal proceedings dragged on, Serena felt increasingly uncomfortable with an attorney paid for by her soon-to-be ex-husband.

Seeking an attorney she could rely on, she turned to CVLS' **Schiff Hardin / HOW, Inc. Legal Clinic**, where Paul agreed to represent her. "It took me time to earn her trust," Paul says. "I appreciate that she gave me that opportunity."

The initial evaluation for custody of their young son favored Serena. When her husband challenged it, piecing together an independent report significantly slowed down the momentum. Her husband lost his job and filed for bankruptcy, further complicating matters. Statements and case information needed updating as time dragged on, forcing both Serena and Paul to adapt to changing circumstances and changing opposing counsel.

Four years later, Serena ultimately attained what she had wanted all along: a fair custody order. Despite the difficult and complex nature of the case, "it worked out better than what we would have ever expected," Paul says.

Paul is not a divorce attorney, but he does have one critical skill Serena did not: knowledge of the legal system, from the courts and judges to filing papers and legal research. "That's immeasurably valuable, transferring your JD to someone who doesn't have that access," Paul says.

Unbeknownst to him, he was taking on one of the most complicated cases of his career - and given that he works in anti-trust litigation, that's saying something - but according to Paul, that's why volunteering is so important, why he sees pro bono as "a duty for an attorney."

"It's the cases you might glance over at first view, that are the most important to those seeking legal assistance," he says.

"The big first step is just saying yes."

"Without your representation, this would've been a major disaster."

Joyce R. had lived in her home for decades. Retired, she took out a reverse mortgage so that she could stay in her home on her fixed income. The reverse mortgage required that she continue to live in the home, which she did, but after she developed dementia, she began to throw away or hide her mail.

After she ignored notices from the mortgage company, they did a routine check on her occupancy, mistakenly decided she didn't live there and filed for foreclosure. Joyce didn't tell her children until, months later, they discovered a notice about the foreclosure sale.

Her sons immediately went to court, where Judge Pamela Meyerson appointed CVLS under the Access to Justice Program.

Volunteer Eric Sutton of SMNP Law took the case even though he was heading out of the country for a well-deserved vacation. Between flights, Eric drafted detailed pleadings regarding Joyce's mental capacity and her uninterrupted residency at her home.

At the next court date the Plaintiff vacated the foreclosure judgment and sale and dismissed the case.

Her family was so appreciative, they sent the following:

"Dear Attorney Sutton and Attorney Walsh: We cannot express in words how grateful and thankful we are to you for taking our mother's case and resolving the issue of the sale of her home. Without your representation this would have been a major disaster. Because of her mental condition with dementia, our mother's was totally unaware of what was happening and what would have happen without your assistance. On behalf of our mother and our family, thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We are truly grateful. "

VOLUNTEER HONOR ROLL

Roenan Patt ***Panel Referral Program***



Roenan Patt has been volunteering with CVLS since January 2013. An Associate at Chilton Yambert Porter LLP, Roenan's practice focuses on civil litigation defense, and he brings that expertise to his pro bono work.

From the very beginning, he has taken a steady stream of panel cases including contract disputes, tort defense, landlord tenant, corporation dissolution and collection. Roenan is a true advocate for social justice and is committed to helping people.

Not only does he aggressively fight for his clients, he has also made himself available for other volunteers for legal support and advice. We are very lucky to have Roenan as a CVLS volunteer!

Elaine Johnson ***Visitation Legal Clinic***



Elaine Johnson is a longtime supporter of CVLS, having volunteered her time and legal talent for more than 20 years. In that time, she has taken on an extraordinary number of cases and has proven a valuable asset to CVLS' Visitation Church Legal Clinic. Elaine is a friendly face at both the clinic, located near Englewood, and at CVLS' offices.

She takes on cases of many types, from divorce and custody to foreclosure and real estate, embodying one of the reasons CVLS' volunteer-based model works - volunteers can take on cases outside their typical purview to expand their legal knowledge and help as many clients as possible.

CLIENTS SAY ...

"Thank you really does not even begin to cover it!!! Without you we were dead in the water. All of your hard work is making our dreams come true. So ... from my whole heart ... Thank You."

CLIENTS SAY ...

"Matt worked very hard, always answering my questions, and helping me with my poor English. I am very grateful to have had an attorney like Matt."

A2J Intern Rachel Recounts Her CVLS Experience



I spent the past 11 weeks as an intern in the Access to Justice Program here at CVLS. The experience was challenging, engaging, thought-provoking and always educational. Two things from this summer really stuck with me - the exponential difference that legal representation makes for a litigant, and the lessons in how to be a good legal aid lawyer. Meeting with potential clients, I saw how much having a lawyer would make a difference. Someone who could explain the legal context of their case, present their particular set of facts and legal arguments to the judge, and guide them through what was going to happen next. So many of them, like most people who have had no legal training, had no idea how to do any of those things.

All of the staff attorneys and volunteer attorneys work incredibly hard to serve as many people as possible, and they do an exceptional job serving those clients. I observed and tried to contribute to that work and the attorneys were always focused, responsive, compassionate and creative in their

work. It just really stuck with me what a difference it makes when someone has a lawyer and the importance of making sure that as many people as possible do.

As a law student, real-life experience is always the most valuable opportunity one can get. This summer was the first time that I really felt the full weight of responsibility for clients and the full challenge of needing to accomplish fifteen things in one day when there is only time to accomplish seven of them.

Luckily I was surrounded by supervisors that were attuned to how they could help and I felt able to approach them with questions whenever I had them (which was quite often). Additionally, I could talk candidly with my supervisors about how they juggle the innumerable things they had to do and how to prioritize tasks and set expectations for yourself. I watched how people interacted with clients, treating them with respect and having difficult conversations about their cases when necessary. I also saw how people relied on one another and were flexible in their tasks so that they could accomplish what needed to be done.

These lessons are things I will carry with me into my next internship, my first job and my whole career. I am very grateful to everyone in the Access to Justice Program and CVLS generally for being such incredible teachers and giving me the opportunity to learn from and work with them.

Board President Elected to Bankruptcy Committee



Folarin S. Dosunmu, an associate at Much Shelist, P.C. and the President of our Board of Directors, has been selected as a member of the Northern District of Illinois Bankruptcy Court Liaison Committee!

In this two-year role, Folarin - part of Much Shelist's creditors' rights, insolvency and business bankruptcy practice group - joins 14 other members in creating more efficient communications between the court and attorneys about court procedures, etiquette, filings and other issues.

As a CVLS volunteer, Folarin regularly takes on bankruptcy-related cases, as well as Minor Guardianships. Congratulations, Folarin!

Civil Filing Fee Increase: Effective September 1

Pursuant to Public Act 99-0281 and Illinois Clerks of Courts Act 705 ILCS 105/27.3g(a), all Clerks of the Circuit Court shall charge and collect a fee of \$2.00, in addition to any other fees, at the time of filing the first pleading, paper or other appearance filed by each party in all civil cases.

No additional fee shall be required if more than one party is represented in a single pleading, paper or other appearance.

Susan in ISBA's Blog on Volunteering

Staff Attorney Susan DeCostanza recently wrote a post for the Illinois State Bar Association's blog on creative ways to volunteer in the legal field!

As part of the ISBA's spotlight on pro bono, Susan mentions an amazing variety of opportunities to get involved and use your legal skills for a good cause. Take her advice and check out illinoisprobono.org, Illinois Legal Aid Online, Catholic Charities Legal Assistance, Prairie State Legal Services, Borderless Pro Bono, and - of course - CVLS!

<http://iln.isba.org/blog/2015/08/18/volunteering-has-never-been-so-easy>

Vino & Van Gogh 2015

Friday, October 16, 6-10PM
National Hellenic Museum, 333 S. Halsted
Tickets \$60 in advance, \$75 at the door

**Purchase tickets online at
[cvls.org/vinovangogh!](http://cvls.org/vinovangogh)**

Join the Junior Board of Chicago Volunteer Legal Services as they host the 6th Annual Vino & Van Gogh!

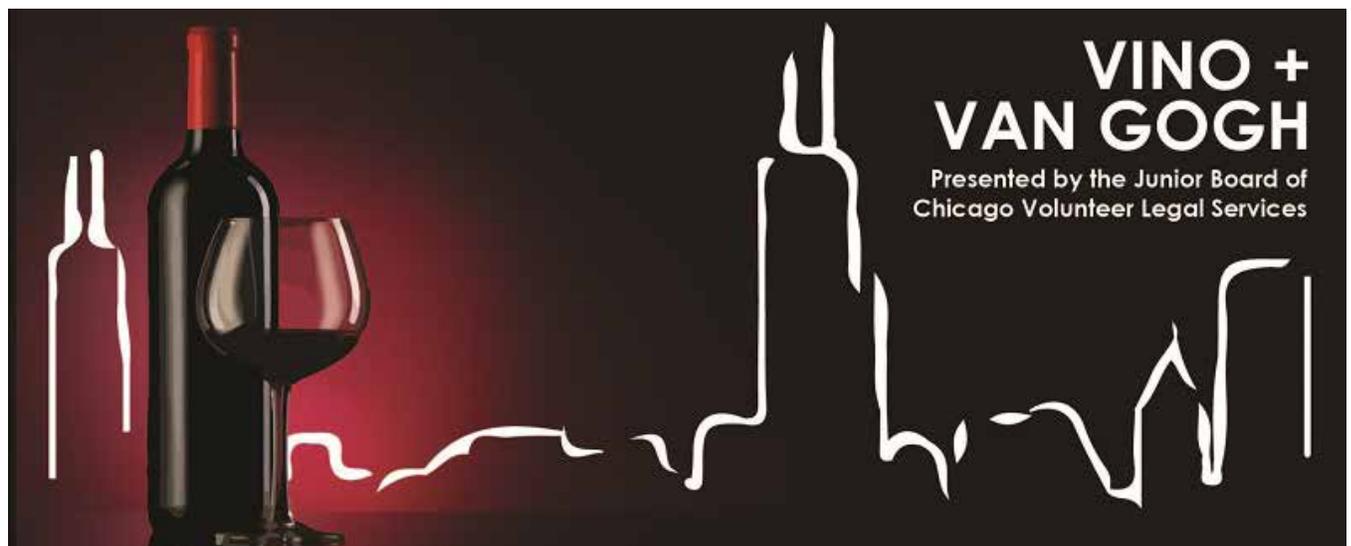
Vino & Van Gogh is a wonderful opportunity for all professionals to enjoy art, food, music and drinks while mingling with old friends and making new connections.

Every year local Chicago artists and students display their artwork for guests to enjoy and add to the alluring atmosphere customary for this event.

Art will be available to purchase through the artists at reasonable prices with a percentage donated to CVLS, and all proceeds of Vino & Van Gogh go toward CVLS.

INTERESTED IN SPONSORING VINO & VAN GOGH?

This event is a great opportunity to gain exposure among key audiences in Chicago's legal community, while supporting a worthy cause. For sponsorship information, visit cvls.org/vinovangogh and download the sponsorship form.



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Upcoming CVLS Events

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE:

Administration of Small, Uncontested, Decedent Estates In Cook County

CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM

Wednesday, July 22

- Presented by Steve Raminiak

CVLS volunteer and Board of Directors member Steve Raminiak, Esq. presents an introduction to decedents' estate administration in the Circuit Court of Cook County.

This seminar is meant to provide a solid foundation in the administration of small, uncontested, decedent estates. Steve will cover:

- Introduction and preliminary considerations
- Filing a will and opening a probate estate
- Designation of a personal fiduciary and the affidavit of heirship

*CVLS is proud to present a **GAL for Minors seminar series** in conjunction with the **Chicago School of Professional Psychology!** Masters and doctoral students from the Chicago School will present on a variety of mental health topics as they relate to Guardian ad Litem cases.*

GAL for Minors | GALs & School-Related Issues

CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM

Wednesday, October 7

- Presented by Brianne Dotts

Most GALs for Minors are not experts in education or school law, but virtually all GALs work with children who are in school (or may be entitled to school services or early intervention). Therefore, it is critical to know the basics of education law, how it can impact your representation as a GAL, and how to advocate for your child in common school-related issues.

GAL for Minors | Trauma Informed & Motivational Interviewing

CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM

Thursday, November 19

- Presented by Lisa Parsons

Lisa Parsons, Supervising Attorney at The Legal Council of Chicago, will provide an overview of trauma informed and motivational interviewing for attorneys, how to employ these techniques and how the approach might benefit pro bono clients and cases.

TRAININGS

New Volunteer Orientations

CVLS Offices, 12:15 PM

- Thursday, September 17

- Thursday, October 8

We'll cover the skills required to be a successful volunteer attorney, as well as the issues that may come up during cases. Training is for new volunteers working with CVLS.

Please visit www.cvls.org/cle to register for a seminar!

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