



Media Release

LEGAL AID OF EAST TENNESSEE
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Legal Aid Attorneys Retire; Successors Named

KNOXVILLE (July 18, 2016) – Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET) announces the retirement of Deborah J. Herzel and Terry J. Woods, both long-time attorneys in LAET’s Knoxville office. Although Ms. Herzel and Ms. Woods retired as of July 1, 2016, both continue to work on a part-time basis to aid in the transition of professional responsibilities to their respective replacements.

Ms. Herzel came to LAET in 1988, when the organization was known as Knoxville Legal Aid Society (KLAS). For eleven years, she focused on benefits law for low-income clients. In 1999, her practice shifted to civil law concerning senior adults and eldercare issues.

After 22 years in private practice, Ms. Woods joined LAET in 2000. Since that time, she has served as Director of the Knoxville Pro Bono Project. In this capacity, she has coordinated the volunteer efforts of area attorneys in private practice who donate their time and expertise to aid those who otherwise could not afford the services of an attorney.

“LAET certainly will miss the legal expertise and professionalism of Deborah and Terry,” said Sheri A. Fox, LAET Executive Director. “They are leaving a legacy of excellent civil legal representation to clients, as well as strong relationships within the private bar and other professions. Terry and Deborah are part of the fabric of LAET; they are friends as well as colleagues, and we will miss working side-by-side with them every day.”

Ms. Fox also announced that Kathryn Ellis, Ph.D., J.D., succeeds Ms. Woods as Knoxville Pro Bono Project Director, and George C. Shields II, J.D., assumes the practice of elder and senior adult law from Ms. Herzel. Added Ms. Fox, “I am confident that Kathryn and George are the right choices to carry these critical LAET programs into the future and to honor the legacies of Deborah and Terry.”

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Dr. Ellis joined LAET as a staff attorney in 2012. For the past year, she has been the primary attorney serving domestic violence and stalking victims in Blount, Loudon, and Sevier Counties, while also representing clients in Knox County. She is active with the Knoxville Bar Association's Barristers, serves as a Mock Trial Coach for students at the University of Tennessee College of Law, and co-chairs the Blount County Task Force Against Domestic Violence.

Mr. Shields is a 2014 graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Law. Prior to joining LAET in July of this year, he was an associate attorney with Ritchie, Dillard, Davies & Johnson P.C. in Knoxville. During law school, he clerked at several Knoxville-area law firms, including LAET.

For more information, contact Bill Evans in LAET's Knoxville office at (865) 637-0484.

Legal Aid of East Tennessee's mission is to ensure justice for elderly, abused, and low-income people by providing a broad scope of civil legal assistance and advocacy. LAET serves eligible persons in 26 counties through offices in Chattanooga, Cleveland, Knoxville, Johnson City, Maryville, and Morristown.

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