

I Love My Job: The Positive Culture of Broward's Legal Aid Organizations

by Melisa Malone



Cindy Woodward is recognized for 25 years of service by Barbara Prager, Executive Director of CCLA.



Lisa Goldberg and Elvira Sears are recognized for their years of service at the employee appreciation lunch.

During a recent employee recognition event, Legal Aid Service of Broward County (LAS) and Coast to Coast Legal Aid of South Florida (CCLA) celebrated milestone employment anniversaries for eleven employees. This annual event, held each December, highlights the dedication that employees have for the organizations and for the clients they serve. Here is a listing of their years of service plus what a few of them had to say.

5 Years: Berbeth Foster, Esq. (Attorney, Senior Law Unit, CCLA)

10 Years:

- Marilyn Bach-Nunez (Grant Specialist, LAS)
- Marta Estevez, Esq. (Attorney, Family Law Unit, CCLA)
- Yasmin Jacob, Esq. (Supervising Attorney, Immigration Unit, LAS)
- Aven Morrison (Social Worker, LAS)
- Heidi Vainio (Administrative Assistant, CCLA)

20 Years:

- Maria Gonzalez (Broward Lawyers Care Paralegal, LAS)
- Michele Moyel (Paralegal, Senior Law Unit, CCLA)

25 Years:

- Elvira Sears (Paralegal, Family Law Unit, CCLA)
- Cindy Woodward, Esq. (Attorney, Family Law Unit, CCLA)

30 Years: Lisa Goldberg, Esq. (Supervis-

ing Attorney, Family Law Unit, CCLA)

40 Years: Tony Karrat, Esq. (Executive Director, LAS)

Marta Estevez, Esq.

"I was immediately drawn to this position as a new law school graduate because I knew I would be helping people directly. Little did I know when I interviewed, in the dark, three days post Hurricane Wilma, I would still be here, ten years later, loving my job. I have seen the true definition of survival from my clients. I am blessed to wake up every morning and come to work with amazing colleagues who share the same enthusiasm and love for our clients."

Marilyn Bach-Nunez

"Every day I get up and go to work knowing that Legal Aid is making a difference in the lives of our society's most vulnerable citizens, continuing to fight for access to justice for the poor. This is one of the many reasons for why I continue to work for and believe in Legal Aid."

Cindy Woodward, Esq.

"I started working at Legal Aid as a temporary employee while another attorney went on maternity leave, and here I am 25 years later. I love my job because it enables me to help victims of domestic violence at probably the worst time of their lives. After their divorce is finalized, I hear from those same clients about how well they and their children are doing, and how well their lives have

turned out. While I will never be rich in monetary terms, I am rich in a deeper sense, as I love my job and the people I work with. How many people can say that?"

Lisa G. Goldberg, Esq.

"Both of my parents grew up in large families whose incomes, in today's language, fell within Federal Poverty Guidelines. They never forgot their heritage, and impressed upon us the importance of helping those less fortunate.

I believe that each of us was placed on this earth with a purpose. In meeting so many deserving and appreciative clients over my 30+ years as a legal aid attorney, I am confident that mine is to help these folks navigate the frightening reality of leaving a domestic violence situation. Their transformation from our first meeting to the final hearing is so heartening.

Being a legal aid attorney is a commitment that my entire family has made to this community."

Both LAS and CCLA were designated 2015 Sun Sentinel Top Workplaces.



Melisa Malone is the Marketing & Communications Manager at Legal Service of Broward County and Coast to Coast Legal Aide of South Florida. For more information visit www.browardlegalaid.org