



Bulletin

Community Building with Attorney Resources • May 2003

Attorney Volunteer Spotlight: Jones Day Attorneys Form Community Counsel Partnership

Attorneys from the law firm of Jones Day in Houston have formed a Community Counsel partnership through Texas C-BAR with the Greater Houston Urban Redevelopment Corporation (GHURC). GHURC is a nonprofit formed in 1993 to encourage the redevelopment of northeast Houston by creating affordable housing, business development, and job



Accessible home rebuilt by GHURC

expansion opportunities for low-income families and economically distressed areas of the community. Houston was particularly hard-hit during the floods of Tropical Storm Allison and, as a result, the nonprofit has turned its focus to helping families whose homes were damaged by the floods to rebuild. GHURC also plans in the next two years to build 30-50 single family homes and a subdivision that will include an additional 100 homes and a park.

As a Community Counsel Partner, Jones Day is serving as general counsel for the nonprofit, handling the nonprofit's various business law needs. For example, the nonprofit recently rebuilt a home for a paraplegic man whose home was destroyed in the floods, and Jones Day attorneys prepared the agreement for the renovation of the property.

"We really appreciate this help," said Robin Curtis, President and C.E.O. of GHURC. "These legal services are invaluable, and we are very happy to have an ongoing relationship with Jones Day as we devote our time to providing the housing needs of our low-income clients." The Jones Day

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Legal Resource Library Update

"By the way, I hadn't visited the website until recently. This is a great resource!"

—Bobby Calvillo, McAllen
Affordable Homes

Have you wondered where you can get a checklist of the laws that nonprofits in Texas should follow? Do you know what the reporting and filing requirements are for a nonprofit? Does your nonprofit have a conflict of interest policy? Do you know when the law requires a corporate resolution to take an action? Look in the Texas C-BAR Legal Resource Library at www.texasbar.org. One of many documents available in the library is the Texas C-BAR Nonprofit Legal Toolkit. Here is some of the information you can find in the Toolkit:

- Overview of Legal Requirements
- Corporate Resolutions
- Conflict of Interest and Procurement Policies
- Federal Tax Matters
- Reporting and Filing Requirements
- Risk Management
- Useful Resources on Nonprofit Management
- Legal Compliance Checklist for 501(c)(3) Nonprofits



Texas C-BAR Leads Efforts to Clear Title to Land in Low-Income Neighborhoods

Texas C-BAR has recently geared up its work with community-based nonprofits on one of the biggest problems plaguing lower-income neighborhoods: land without clear title. In most inner-city neighborhoods across the State, thousands of lots lie abandoned and vacant, yet nonprofits who want to build affordable housing on these lots face enormous legal barriers because of unclear ownership, back taxes, liens, and other title problems.

These lots have typically passed through several generations of a family, none of whom have left wills. The end result is that joint ownership of the land is held by dozens of known and unknown heirs. In order to build housing or a community center on one of these lots, a nonprofit has to locate each and every heir, as well as deal with the back taxes and other liens that have mounted on the lot. Due to these legal difficulties, more often than not, the lot will remain undeveloped, becoming a source of crime and an eyesore in the community.

Texas C-BAR has taken a leadership role in developing comprehensive solutions at the state and local levels to help nonprofits overcome this legal impediment. Texas C-BAR recently led a statewide summit examining this issue and worked with the City of Dallas to develop a land bank proposal. The proposal, if approved by the Texas Legislature this month, will be a national model for how cities and nonprofits approach the issue of clearing title to land. In addition, Texas C-BAR continues to match volunteer real estate attorneys with nonprofits to help them



Abandoned Lot

clear title to individual lots. And later this year, Texas C-BAR will roll out a comprehensive manual for nonprofits and pro bono attorneys on clearing title.

Texas C-BAR's work on title issues has been supported by several of our funders, including the Enterprise Foundation. Special thanks to attorneys Richard Black and Frank Oliver for all of the assistance they have provided to Texas C-BAR in this area.

For more information about Texas C-BAR's work on title issues, please contact D'Ann Johnson at 512-447-7707, ext. 379, or djohnson@texasabar.org. Also visit Texas C-BAR's website, www.texasabar.org, for information about existing laws in Texas that help nonprofits address title problems. 🏠

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attorneys like this holistic approach to pro bono work. "We enjoy this relationship with Robin and GHURC," said Phillip Schmandt with Jones Day. Other Jones Day lawyers participating in the Community Counsel Partnership include Julia Lynn Nye, Lori Khan, David Mackie, and Lauri Thanheiser.

A total of seven law firms and corporations are currently volunteering as Community Counsel Partners. Besides Jones Day, they include the following: Dell Computer; Graves, Dougherty, Hearon, and Moody; Vinson & Elkins; Winstead Sechrest & Minick; Bracewell & Patterson; and Patton Boggs. For more information on Texas C-BAR's Community Counsel Partnership initiative, contact D'Ann Johnson, at 512-447-7707, ext. 379. 🏠

Texas C-BAR Welcomes New and Returning Attorney Volunteers


Nancy Belinsky – *Akin Gump*
Mark Biskamp – *Baker Botts*
Martin Bolt – *Baker Botts*
Diana Borden – *Graves, Dougherty, Hearon, and Moody*
Maura Brady – *Gardere Wynn Sewell*
Denise Cheney – *Bickerstaff Heath Smiley*
Nathan Christensen – *Baker Botts*
Sheri Crosby – *Scott Hulse*
Will Dibrell – *Graves, Dougherty, Hearon, and Moody*
Gregory Dillard – *Winstead Sechrest & Minick*
Michael Eaton – *Eaton Deaguro & Bishop*
J. Robert Fischer – *Winstead Sechrest*
Julie Frey – *Graves, Dougherty, Hearon, and Moody*
Judith Gray – *Matthews & Branscomb*
Barnett Hammond – *Locke Liddell & Sapp*
Brian Harris – *Jackson Walker*
David Hartman – *Graves, Dougherty, Hearon, and Moody*
Jordan Herman – *Baker Botts*
David Herndon – *Graves, Dougherty, Hearon, and Moody*
Allan Hilton – *USAA Federal Savings Bank*
Jolie Howard – *Vinson & Elkins*
Kristie King – *Baker Botts*
Jonathan Lass – *Bracewell & Patterson*
Mike Lawson – *Baker Botts*
Steve Lindsey – *Baker Botts*
Eric McCord – *Bracewell & Patterson*
Sarah McLean – *Thompson & Knight*
Stuart Miller – *Haynes & Boone*
William Moon – *Jenkins & Gilchrist*
Ashley Morgan – *Baker Botts*
Patrick Perryman – *Haynes & Boone*
Jennifer Rangel – *Locke Liddell & Sapp*
Robert Sanchez – *Ray, Valdez, McChristian & Jeans*
Consuella Simmons – *Baker Botts*
D. James Sorenson – *Kemp Smith*
Cassie Stinson – *Andrews & Kurth*
William Sultemeier – *Skadden Arps*
Brian Trachtenberg – *Andrews & Kurth*
Le Tran – *Wilson Sonsini*
Marni Zarin – *Baker Botts*

Baker Botts Wins 2003 National Public Service Award for Involvement in Texas C-BAR



Bill Stutts accepts ABA award for Baker Botts

The Pro Bono Committee of the American Bar Association Section of Business Law recently presented the 2003 National Public Service Award to the law firm of Baker Botts at the Section's spring meeting in Los Angeles.

The National Public Service Award is presented annually to one individual and one firm that have demonstrated a commitment to providing free legal services to the poor in a business context. Baker Botts was selected based on the firm's work as a leading supporter of Texas C-BAR. Through Texas C-BAR, Baker Botts attorneys have provided services to more than 22 nonprofit clients and have delivered 414 hours in closed matters, at a value of more than \$85,000. "The firm is extremely honored to receive such a prestigious award," says Managing Partner Walter J. Smith. "This award reaffirms our belief in the work we do." 

About Texas C-BAR

Texas Community Building with Attorney Resources (Texas C-BAR) is a statewide business law pro bono project which provides community-based nonprofits with the legal tools they need to succeed in transforming distressed neighborhoods into healthy communities. As a special project of Texas Rural Legal Aid, Texas C-BAR currently partners with more than 45 law firms and corporations to help nonprofits build communities and ultimately better the lives of thousands of low-income families throughout the state. For more information about Texas C-BAR, or to participate in our pro bono program, please contact the staff of Texas C-BAR at:

phone: 512/447-7707, ext. 370
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email: info@texasbar.org
web: www.texasbar.org

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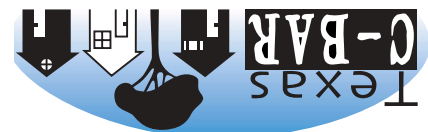
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