



TEXAS

ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION

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Commission Honors Texas Tech Law Student and St. Mary's Law School for Commitment to Legal Services

AUSTIN, Texas — The Texas Access to Justice Commission (ATJ) Commission honored Texas Tech University School of Law student Renee Brosch and St. Mary's University School of Law on Nov. 16 at the New Lawyers' Induction Ceremony in Austin. The Commission awarded Brosch the second annual ATJ Law Student Pro Bono Award and St. Mary's University School of Law with the ATJ Law School Commitment to Service Award.

Renee Brosch, a recent graduate of Texas Tech University School of Law, received the ATJ Law Student Pro Bono Award, established in 2007 to recognize a law student who has demonstrated his or her commitment to the delivery of legal services to poor and low-income Texans. Brosch utilized all of her experiences in law school clinics and volunteer work to gain an appreciation for the significant unmet need for legal services underserved populations. She intends to practice law on behalf of such populations after graduation.

During the summer of 2008, Brosch volunteered to work with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) in Austin. In June of that year, she worked a total of 170 hours exclusively assisting attorneys on a number of cases involving the removal of children from members of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints (FLDS) in Eldorado. Brosch enrolled in Texas Tech's Civil Practice Clinic for the 2008-09 school year and handled a wide variety of cases referred to the Clinical Program by Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas (LANWT), including several family law matters, a social security disability claim, and the preparation of estate planning documents. In addition, she volunteered at pro bono clinics through LANWT and was an active volunteer with the Night Court Divorce Project, a collaboration of the Texas Tech University School of Law Civil Practice Clinic and LANWT.

Nominations for the ATJ Law Student Pro Bono Award were solicited from each of the nine Texas law schools, legal services programs, and law students themselves. Brosch received a

crystal award and a \$2,000 stipend from the Commission for winning the Law Student Pro Bono Award.

St. Mary's University School of Law received the Law School Commitment to Service Award, which recognizes a law school that most prominently advances the delivery of legal services through clinics, public interest programs, student involvement, and other initiatives. Nominations for the award were solicited from each of the nine Texas law schools, legal services programs in Texas, local bar associations, alumni, and law students.

"St. Mary's University School of Law has a significant impact on the poor in South Texas through its outstanding clinical programs and pro bono projects," said Harry M. Reasoner, chair of the Texas Access to Justice Commission. "The dedicated faculty and staff at St. Mary's encourage and instill in their students a commitment to public service and access to justice issues that makes them true professionals and better lawyers."

The Clinical Programs at St. Mary's University School of Law primarily provide representation in SSI appeals, family law, domestic violence, consumer protection, crime victims, immigration and criminal defense in misdemeanors and low-grade felonies through weekly office hours at seven local shelters and day centers, and bi-monthly visits to five other locations. Approximately 1,465 clients are served annually, affecting the lives of more than 2,700 individuals. For the past 16 years, the San Antonio Bar Foundation and St. Mary's have partnered to present the annual People's Law School, an outreach project that offers free one-day seminars on legal topics of interest to the residents in the community.

For the past seven years, St. Mary's University School of Law has provided the facilities, infrastructure and law student assistance for the Foundation's monthly pro bono Wills Clinic program, which is able to serve approximately 20 clients each month. During the clinic, low-income residents are provided legal advice regarding the preparation and execution of a will, power of attorney, and directive to physicians.

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The Texas Access to Justice Commission was created in 2001 by the Supreme Court of Texas to develop and implement policy initiatives designed to expand access to and enhance the quality of justice in civil legal matters for low-income Texans. The Commission has created several initiatives to increase resources and awareness of legal aid. For more information, please visit www.TexasATJ.org.