

# THE SUPREME COURT OF WASHINGTON

IN THE MATTER OF WASHINGTON )  
 )  
STATE CELEBRATION OF PRO BONO )  
 )  
WEEK, OCTOBER 26-30, 2009 )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

NO. 25700-B-

## ORDER

FILED  
SUPREME COURT  
STATE OF WASHINGTON  
09 OCT 23 PM 4:12  
BY RONALD R. CARPENTER  
CLERK

WHEREAS, equal justice under law is a cornerstone of our democracy; and

WHEREAS, more and more working families are facing dire poverty and turning to Washington's safety net—many for the first time—just as these social programs, too, face cuts and an uncertain future; and

WHEREAS, civil legal aid programs are uniquely situated to provide targeted legal assistance designed to alleviate some of the harshest effects of the economic downturn and prevent a costly spiral of social problems; and

WHEREAS, civil legal aid is often an indispensable tool necessary to addressing critical survival needs such as employment and income, housing, healthcare, education, and family safety before irreparable harm is done; and

WHEREAS, overextended civil legal aid programs in Washington are being deluged with requests for assistance, and that fewer than one in five low income people in our state are able to secure timely legal assistance when faced with profound civil legal problems; and

WHEREAS, the need for civil legal aid is skyrocketing just as the traditional revenue streams for civil legal aid programs have evaporated in the economic downturn; and

WHEREAS, timely access to an attorney can mean the difference between shelter and homelessness, food on the table and hunger, economic stability and bankruptcy, productive work and unemployment; and

WHEREAS, in the course of this unprecedented crisis, our justice system has had the benefit of exceptional leadership and teamwork as reflected by a swift and coordinated response by the Legislature, the judicial branch, Washington State Bar Association (WSBA), local and minority bar associations and their members, our state's three law schools, the legal aid community and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, all acting together to minimize cuts in Washington State's civil legal aid delivery system; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, pro bono legal aid programs leveraged more than 80,000 hours of volunteer attorney assistance, harnessing private attorney engagement as an indispensable partner in the statewide Alliance for Equal Justice, and promoting public service in the legal profession and justice system; and

WHEREAS, RPC 6.1 establishes a uniform expectation that all attorneys licensed in our state provide at least 30 hours of volunteer legal services to low income people unable to retain counsel on their own; and

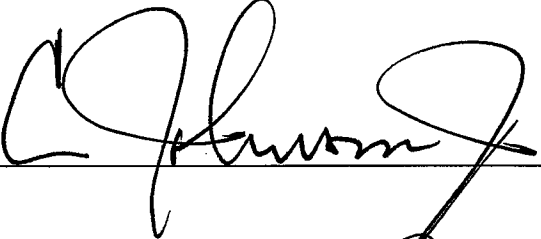
WHEREAS, the Alliance for Equal Justice, in partnership with the Supreme Court, the Access to Justice Board, the WSBA's Pro Bono and Legal Aid Committee, the corporate counsel community and many others are working to expand the level of volunteer involvement in the provision of critically needed civil legal aid services; and


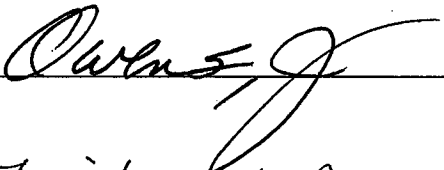
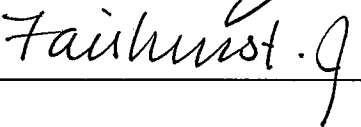
WHEREAS, during October 26-30, 2009, communities, bar associations, the justice system, business, corporate and governmental entities will join together to recognize pro bono efforts statewide;

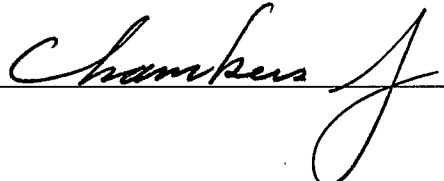
Now, therefore, October 26-30, 2009, is recognized by the Washington Supreme Court as Washington State Celebration of Pro Bono Week to honor the work of those who provide


volunteer legal services and as a reminder to all attorneys of their responsibility to assist in ensuring our nation's, our state's and our profession's commitment to equal justice under law.

DATED at Olympia, Washington this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2009.

  
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Madsen, J.  
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Alexander, C. J.  
  
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Parks, J.  
  
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Fairhurst, J.  
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Chambers, J.  
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Steyer, J.  
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