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## **Milwaukee Bar Association Highlights the Achievements of the Eviction Defense Project with the 2017 *Pro Bono Publico* Awards**

**MILWAUKEE, WIS., September 29, 2017** — The MBA is recognizing two individual attorneys, a law student and an organization for outstanding *pro bono* work with its annual *Pro Bono Publico* Awards to show its continued support of *pro bono* service by Milwaukee area legal practitioners. This year is slightly unique as two of the individual winners extensively volunteered with the *Legal Action of Wisconsin's* Eviction Defense Project. All recipients will be honored at the MBA's **14th Annual State of the Court Luncheon Tuesday, October 3 Noon - 1:30 pm at the Wisconsin Club.**

Winners of the *Pro Bono Publico* awards were reviewed and selected by the MBA Awards Committee. Numerous nominations were submitted and general criteria included: developing innovative ways to deliver volunteer legal services, participating in activities that provide legal services to the indigent, increasing access to justice and working on legislation that increases access to justice. These services are paramount to those living in poverty who desperately need legal representation to improve their circumstances.

The Eviction Defense Project (EDP) provides free legal aid for low-income tenants in Milwaukee County who are facing eviction. The project was developed in conjunction with a number of stakeholders, from civil legal services organizations to court-operations staff. Over 12,000 eviction suits are filed by landlords in Milwaukee County every year. The EDP addresses an acute need in Milwaukee, providing legal advice and limited scope representation to hundreds of Milwaukee tenants representing themselves in an eviction action. The project staff and partners have recruited firms and *pro bono* attorneys from across Milwaukee's legal community to staff the program, now operating three days per week. In many cases volunteer attorneys are able to negotiate payment plans, extra time to vacate or are able to have the eviction case dismissed and sealed.

The MBA is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2017 *Pro Bono Publico* Awards:

**Organization, *Legal Action of Wisconsin's* Eviction Defense Project.** A valuable resource for low-income tenants in Milwaukee County, the EDP has done exceptional work in helping clients navigate eviction suits. Since December 2016, volunteer attorneys and law students have assisted hundreds of clients in and out of the court room.

**David R. Cross** is an associate with *Quarles & Brady*. Cross works as an intellectual property litigator with extensive experience prosecuting and defending trademark and unfair competition cases. In addition, he volunteers with *Legal Action of Wisconsin's* Eviction Defense Project, helping 30 individuals avoid eviction in 2017. Most notably he assisted a former tenant of Will Sherard's, a "notorious inner-city landlord." Cross was able to have his client's case dismissed and have CCAP record sealed.

**Brenda Lewison** is an associate with the *Law Office of Arthur Heitzer*. Lewison has primarily worked representing individuals in employment discrimination cases and other employment-related matters; she regularly volunteers with *Legal Action of Wisconsin's* Eviction Defense Project. During this time she has appeared in several court cases including a lengthy litigated eviction that went to trial and involved significant briefings.

**Jason "J.J." Moore** is a student at *Marquette University Law School*. Moore has completed over 700 hours of *pro bono* work, a record for the law school. Over 450 of his *pro bono* hours have been spent at the Milwaukee Justice Center Family Law Forms Assistance Clinic as a skilled client interviewer. He has also volunteered for many of the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinics and is a member of its Student Advisory Board.

#### **About the Milwaukee Bar Association**

Established in 1858, the Milwaukee Bar Association is the fifth oldest bar association in the country. The MBA aids in the administration of justice, promotes high standards of learning and professional conduct, provides opportunities for law-related community service and fosters collegiality within the legal community. For more information, visit [www.milwbar.org](http://www.milwbar.org).