

# NH JUSTICE MATTERS

Campaign for Legal Services | [www.nh-cla.org](http://www.nh-cla.org)

*Supporting New Hampshire Legal Assistance and the Legal Advice and Referral Center*

## Donor Spotlight



**Jonathan Frizzell, partner, Waystack**

**Frizzell, Colebrook**

“I support the Campaign for Legal Services because the areas in which NHLA and LARC do their work are too easy to overlook

and too easy to underfund, and their accomplishments are too often taken for granted. We need to continue this work not just because of the individual stories of success, but also the systemic need across the state.”

*To make a tax-deductible donation to the Campaign for Legal Services, visit [www.nh-cla.org](http://www.nh-cla.org)*

### Thank you to our new first-time donors!

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- Susan Zago

## Campaign welcomes new leadership council members

Welcome to the first edition of NH Justice Matters, the newsletter of the Campaign for Legal Services. The Campaign is a joint fundraising initiative to support New Hampshire Legal Assistance (NHLA) and the Legal Advice and Referral Center (LARC).

NHLA and LARC provide free and low-cost civil legal aid to poor and elderly New Hampshire residents. Justice Matters will bring you stories of those clients and the advocates who ensure they receive equal access to justice.

The first quarter of 2015 was successful, coming on the heels of a record-breaking Campaign Kick-off breakfast which raised nearly \$40,000, thanks in part to keynote remarks from U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and an introduction from U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-New Hampshire).

To maintain and continue that momentum toward our goal of \$350,000, the Campaign Leadership Council will soon launch some new initiatives, so stay tuned.

Aiding in this work are new members of the Campaign

Leadership Council, Erica Bodwell of Southern New Hampshire Health System, and Michael Delaney of McLane. Attorney Delaney also serves on the NHLA/LARC joint board of directors, also joined the council.

The Campaign also thanks Bob Wells of McLane and Joe DiBrigida of Sheehan, Phinney, Bass + Green for their service as they transition off the council.

### Thank you again to our kick-off sponsors!

*Justice Sponsors*  
Bernstein Shur  
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## NHLA in Action: Saving home for Concord widow

Eleanor “Ikey” Knee and her husband Bob bought their Concord home in 1952, excited to live near White Park, where they had met and where both spent hours playing and skating growing up in the 1940s.

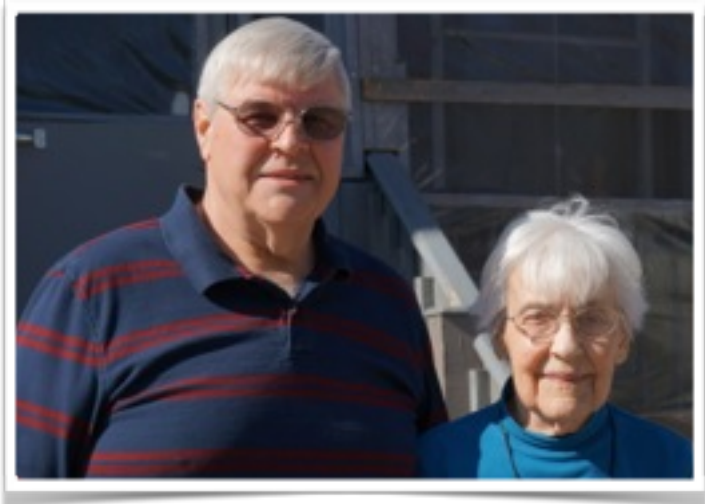
In the little grey house, the only one they ever owned, Bob and Ikey raised their three kids. The couple stayed healthy enough as they grew older to continue living in their home into their 90s, with a little help and lots of visits from children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Despite a limited income, they were able to afford keeping the house thanks in part to a state law that reduces

property taxes for low-income elderly residents.

Ikey is now 96, and living alone after Bob passed away in late 2013. In June 2014, she learned the city assessing department used the income they received together the year before to determine her tax exemption eligibility for 2014. Being held to the eligibility of a single person, but having the income of two for almost all of 2013, she was ruled ineligible.

“I’m a pretty laid back person, but that just set me off,” her son-in-law George West says. He set out looking for a lawyer to help her appeal the ruling. He found Elliott Berry at NHLA.



Ikey and her son-in-law George

“The intent of the law that Elliott really did such a wonderful job researching, is to help elderly people keep their home,” George said.

“Elliott went above and beyond my farthest expectations. I knew in the back of my mind, it would have killed her if

she had to leave this house,” George says. The day her appeal was approved was “a happy day, a very happy day,” Ikey said.

**“Here I am. It means everything to me. I just couldn’t imagine living anywhere else,” she said.**

## NHLA and LARC in the community

NHLA and LARC advocates spend considerable time educating low-income and elderly residents about the legal system, and other available resources and programs.

- Sarah Burke-Cohen and Chris Wellington, attorneys at NHLA, hosted a focus group in Concord for people in the **deaf community about their rights under anti-discrimination housing laws**.
- NHLA paralegal Candace Cappio Gebhart has held **monthly educational forums at the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter**, informing visitors about tenants’ rights and public benefits programs.
- Beathan Regan, an attorney at LARC, teaches monthly classes about **financial literacy and taxes for adult students** at an evening English language class in Manchester.
- Cheryl Steinberg, director of NHLA’s Senior Law Project, helped train pro-bono volunteer attorneys to expand the Periodic Payment Clinic to Plymouth, after **18 months of success helping low-income debtors** in Candia District Division court.

## LARC celebrates Gilman's 7 years



Paula Gilman, pictured seated above, retired in March after 7 years with LARC

This quarter's *LARC in Action* story came to the Campaign from paralegal Paula Gilman. "Doris" is one of the last clients Gilman worked with before retiring in March after more than seven years.

Much of "Doris's" case developed over repeated phone calls. Gilman kept calling to check in, to encourage Doris to keep hope, and to make sure she was alright.

"I'm a big softie," she said. "Especially with the women who are afraid or when there's abuse, because I can honestly say I've walked in their shoes."

Gilman's previous work included managing a physician's practice and creating a cut-flower farm on the family land.

"But I always wanted to make a difference...When clients call here, they are empowered. That's the key: Give them information about the website, about the courts, help them learn the language.

***Knowledge is power, and that's what LARC does: It gives hope to clients who don't have hope.***

## *LARC in Action: Safe haven for a disabled woman on the Seacoast*

Doris\* is a disabled 56-year-old woman who lived with her brother and niece in a mobile home in Dover before her brother, the homeowner, was sent to prison in 2014. Doris and her niece lived alone, happily – until the niece invited her boyfriend to move in earlier this year.

The boyfriend soon began threatening to hurt Doris and to kill her beloved cat. He terrorized her by periodically shutting off electricity and heat to her bedroom. He even locked her out of the home on nights when the temperature dipped below zero.

She lived in such fear that she locked herself in her bedroom for hours.

When she told him of the situation, Doris's brother agreed the boyfriend had to go, but he could not help from prison. Doris had asked the police and the park owner for help, but no one intervened.

LARC advised Doris to call the local domestic violence crisis center, where she could get help applying for a restraining order.

The next day, LARC called to check in. Doris said she hadn't gotten through to the crisis center. LARC coached Doris not to give up and to be a squeaky wheel.

Doris followed LARC's advice and eventually did

connect with the crisis center, which helped her get a court order restraining the boyfriend from harassing her in any way. So far, the boyfriend has complied with the order, Doris reports. Most importantly, ***with her safety and confidence restored***, Doris found a new apartment of her own, which will allow her to keep her pet.

She said the good advice, direction, and encouragement she received from LARC lifted her out of harm's way and to an infinitely better place.

*\*Client name has been changed*

### Staff Anniversaries

#### LARC

Audrey Logan, 3 years  
Karen Makocy Philbrick,  
19 years

#### NHLA

Dennis Labbe, 2 years  
Michelle Wangerin,  
5 years  
Erin Jasina, 7 years  
Brenda Turgeon, 7 years  
Sarah Burke-Cohen,  
8 years  
Lynne Parker, 16 years  
Cheryl Steinberg, 16 years  
Ben Mortell, 35 years

## **Legal services and our programs in the news**

Concord Monitor and Union Leader letters:

[Portman giving support to Campaign for Legal Services](#)  
and [Thank you, Sen. Portman](#)

[patch.com](#) Community Bulletins:

[Property tax relief information for elderly, veterans](#)

NHPR feature story:

[In Berlin, domestic violence victims no longer risk  
eviction for calling for help](#)

Martha Minow and Sharon Browne in The Hill:

[Funding civil legal aid: A bipartisan issue](#)

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