



# Access to Justice Achieved by Pro Bono Appellate Work

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briefs. Young lawyers get a chance to manage a case and hone writing and oral argument skills. And with great mentors and fairly contained records on appeal, you don't have to be an appellate specialist."

To date, Austin lawyer volunteers have achieved important victories for pro-bono clients and gained valuable experience in the process. **Susan Kidwell** of Locke Lord prevailed on behalf of a single mother who had been assessed crippling fines by her homeowners' association.

"I took this case because the client appeared to have suffered a real injustice but did not have the financial resources to present an effective case on appeal. After a lively oral argument, the Third Court of Appeals rendered judgment wiping out the illegal fines. The result was legally satisfying, but it was even more rewarding to be able to help someone access the courts and obtain the justice she deserved."

**Michael Heidler** of Vinson & Elkins obtained reversal of a vexatious-litigant finding against a mother in a family-law case.

"Working on a pro bono appeal is a rewarding experience and a great way to sharpen one's appellate skills," said Heidler.

**Sean Flammer** of the Edwards Law Firm handled an appeal he initially believed would be about the rights to music.

"But the case transformed into an access-to-courts case, where I advocated for the rights of low-income Texans to have access to the appellate courts," said Flammer. "I wrote the brief and had an oral argument with a 'hot' panel. It was a great, rewarding experience. After the case ended, my opposing counsel referred me paying clients."

**Chief Justice Woodie Jones** emphasized the importance of having representation on appeal.

"The Third Court greatly appreciates the efforts of the attorneys in the Pro Bono Program," said Justice Jones. "We are all in the business of trying to see that justice is done, and Program attorneys play an important role in that endeavor at the Third Court."



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— CHIEF JUSTICE WOODIE JONES

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A wide variety of issues and cases are available — at your convenience. Add your name to the screening committee's email list. Then wait until the timing is right and you see a case that interests you. You will have an opportunity to discuss the case with a screening-committee member and gauge the likely time commitment before deciding whether to take the case.

Whether you are an appellate novice or an old hand, this could be the pro-bono opportunity you have been waiting for!

For any questions, or to be added to the list, email **Amy Warr**, screening committee chair, at [awarr@adjtlaw.com](mailto:awarr@adjtlaw.com). • *AL*

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