

volunteer legal services

Be a “Happier and Better Lawyer” – Here’s How!

Iris Gibson, an associate with Haynes and Boone, was named as this year’s recipient of Volunteer Legal Services’ J. Chrys Dougherty Award for outstanding pro bono service. As a VLS volunteer, Gibson has donated more than 500 hours of expertise and recovered more than \$36,000 for her pro bono clients.

Gibson’s professional legal specialty is franchise law, not a common legal concern for low-income clients. For VLS clients, she handles a wide variety of cases: family law, consumer matters, contracts and warranties, and social security disability appeals, to name just a few.



Gibson’s favorite cases involve fighting unfair sales practices. She notes that some businesses seem to target low-income customers, whether because they are vulnerable due to language barriers, low literacy, poor credit, or because they don’t have the financial resources to fight back. Imagine their surprise when they receive a phone call from Gibson, representing a VLS client pro bono.

Not all of Gibson’s cases are easy and quick to resolve. One of her more memorable ones involved healing a broken friendship as much as righting a legal wrong. A young man with a major physical disability had hired an aide to help him meet his basic needs. They became good friends within the employer-employee relationship, to the point where the disabled man added his aide to his telephone plan and loaned him money. When the time came to repay the loan, however, the aide stopped coming to work.

Gibson involved a mediator to help the two parties come to a successful resolution, which, for both men, was as much about restoring the friendship as it was about recovering payment.

While Gibson embraces the feeling of satisfaction she receives from pro bono service, she also values the career-serving aspect of taking cases through VLS. Her first deposition was for a pro bono case, and she regularly seeks out cases that will expand her experience base and allow her to build new practical legal skills.

“Volunteering through VLS can make you a happier and better lawyer,” she advises. “When I help VLS clients with their legal struggles, I am often reminded of how lucky I am.”

If you’d like to join Gibson and the other 1,000 attorney volunteers who give time through VLS, please contact Anna K. Meyers at akmeyers@vlsoc.org. • AL

Five Austin Attorneys Admitted to U.S. Supreme Court

By Lisa Bowlin Hobbs, VINSON & ELKINS

The Austin Bar Association’s Civil Appellate Section recently hosted a ceremonial swearing-in to the U.S. Supreme Court by the Court’s clerk, General William K. Suter. Arranged by the Civil Appellate Section, the ceremony took place during a special luncheon for local lawyers who wanted to be admitted to the Court and who completed the application process in advance.

The section’s past-chair, **Kurt Kuhn**, who is already admitted to the nation’s highest court, moved admission for local appellate attorneys Dylan O. Drummond, **Lisa Bowlin Hobbs**, **Susan Kidwell**, **Laurie Ratliff**, and **D. Todd Smith**. General Suter then administered the oath of admission.

After the ceremony, General Suter spoke on “The Supreme Court in Transi-

