

Dan Bradley Award

Nominee

THE DAN BRADLEY AWARD Criteria: The recipient shall be a full-time attorney, employed by the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Inc. (ALAS), or the Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP) who has excelled in one or more of the following ways:

- a) The number or complexity of cases handled;
- b) The impact and benefit for the poor;
- c) The origination or implementation of innovative ideas, methods, procedures, or administrative work benefitting the smooth, effective, or efficient operation of ALAS or GLSP and the delivery of legal services to the poor;
- d) The quality of negotiations, development of the law, or advocacy used to benefit the poor; or
- e) A proven commitment to delivery of quality legal services to the poor and to providing equal access to justice.

2 Nominations in this packet:

- 1) Nancy Lindbloom Page 1
- 2) Erica Ahanotu Page 9
(does not meet award
criteria: not ALAS nor GLSP advocate)

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NON-ATTORNEY
HEALTH POLICY SPECIALIST

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104 MARIETTA STREET, N. W. SUITE 250
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-2743
(404) 206-5175 FAX (404) 463-1623
1-800-498-9469 (for clients only)
TDD 1-800-255-0056
<http://www.glsp.org>

April 14, 2009

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Pro Bono Project
State Bar of Georgia
104 Marietta St., N.W., Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30303

RE: Nomination of Nancy Lindbloom for 2009 Dan Bradley Award

Dear Friends:

We write to nominate Nancy Lindbloom for the 2009 Dan Bradley Award from the State Bar of Georgia. Nancy has dedicated her 34-year legal career to representing needy Georgians as an attorney with Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP).

Upon her graduation from Georgetown Law School in 1975, she joined the staff of the Macon office of GLSP, and spent almost three years there, circuit riding to remote rural counties and handling a wide variety of cases for hundreds of clients. Early in her legal career, she eagerly took the opportunity to act as co-counsel for the child plaintiffs in *J.L. and J.R. v. Parham*, a class action challenging the institutionalization of children at Central State Hospital with utterly no due process protections. Nancy and her colleagues prevailed on their claims before a federal three-judge panel that found the state statute on commitment of children to be unconstitutional. Although on appeal by the State the United States Supreme Court reversed and remanded the case, on remand the district court established the right of children in state custody to have a due process hearing every ninety days to evaluate their needs for ongoing institutionalization. The case is a landmark concerning the rights of children with mental disabilities who do not have "participating" parents. Today, in Georgia most children with mental illness receive treatment in the community rather than in mental hospitals.

Nancy soon developed a special interest in the core poverty law practice area related to public benefits, and she became a GLSP Public Benefits Attorney in January 1978. Her work thereafter has focused specifically on cases involving Food Stamp and welfare issues. She has



Offices in Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Brunswick, Columbus, Dalton,
Gainesville, Macon, Piedmont, Savannah, Valdosta, Waycross, and Farmworker Division
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worked in GLSP offices in Atlanta, Dalton, Gainesville, and now Athens, which gives her an appreciation for local as well as statewide issues.

As a specialist in the public benefits area, she has significantly impacted the lives of persons with low incomes throughout Georgia for more than thirty years. She has become the authority in Georgia – outside state government officials themselves – on Food Stamps and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and its precursor Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The law governing these programs is almost as complex as the tax code, yet Nancy has mastered and retained her expertise. Further, federal and state law, regulations, policies, and practices change on almost an annual basis, yet she has maintained current expertise and fresh eyes in evaluating the impact of changes on Georgia's neediest citizens. She has helped GLSP staff as well as Atlanta Legal Aid staff and private attorneys with individual cases where benefits are denied or terminated for unlawful reasons or based on mistaken facts. She has looked for adverse patterns in cases and developed strategies to efficiently and effectively advocate for change to bring state and local agency actions into compliance with law. She has developed a credibility and patient approach so that government officials will often seek her input when developing new policies.

She has also embraced and excelled in training clients, community groups, and legal services advocates, and she has a national reputation for her skill as a trainer. She has looked for ways to include law school professors and national experts in these training programs, benefitting both the academy and the experts with the opportunity to see "real life" from the perspective of poor clients. She has been innovative in using technology in all facets of her work, and led the effort to create GLSP's first "wiki" on Food Stamp fraud, which connects GLSP attorneys with criminal defense attorneys in a constantly developing conversation on new cases and changes in government's policies and practices. Currently she's working with business students who are developing a web site to share information on the impact and uses of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds in Georgia.

Nancy is creative in her strategies to challenge laws, policies, and actions that prevent low-income persons from receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. In the face of federal funding restrictions that limit the legal remedies available to her, she has been innovative in finding alternative advocacy strategies that result in better compliance by government officials in the administration of benefits programs, and positive changes for beneficiaries across the state. Her work to bring state policies in line with federal law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, concerning TANF benefits for persons with disabilities, is one of many examples. Another is her work to see that Food Stamp recipients accused of fraud are provided with due process and other constitutional protections against intimidation and unjustified "consent" agreements.

She sees her role also to expand the numbers of high-quality advocates for low-income persons. Nancy has been an informal mentor to countless young and new attorneys, including the undersigned, paralegals working with clients to secure benefits, and law students. She is a patient teacher who brings out the best in others.

Letter to Pro Bono Project

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Nancy also spends much of her non-GLSP time working to end poverty. She has worked with Partners for a Prosperous Athens on core poverty issues. She also has helped organize Earned Income Credit campaigns in Athens resulting in more low-wage workers receiving this work income tax credit.

It is appropriate for Nancy to receive this award during this year of economic disaster when GLSP has prioritized helping clients to achieve basic financial well-being, a large element of which is focusing on public benefits claims. We appreciate your consideration and hope you will agree that this tremendous advocate for Georgia's poor deserves the gratitude of and recognition by the State Bar.

Very truly yours,



Phyllis J. Holmen
Executive Director



Lisa J. Krisher *w/permission*
Director of Litigation *PSH*

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ATHENS, GEORGIA 30603-1788
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4/22/09

Pro Bono Project
State Bar of Georgia
104 Marietta St., Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30303

By Email to probono@gabar.org

Re: Recommendation letter for Nancy Lindbloom
Nominee for the Dan Bradley Award

To Whom it May Concern:

As a staff attorney with the Georgia Legal Services Program's Gainesville and Athens offices, I have worked closely with Nancy Lindbloom for the last ten years. Nancy has demonstrated consistent excellence in serving as an advocate for low income communities. I learn not only from Nancy's direct legal assistance with my clients, but also from the exemplary model she provides with her involvement in the community.

For much of my career as an attorney I have handled a large number of public benefits cases and I know Nancy can always be counted on to provide assistance with these cases. Whether we were assisting one client in obtaining the correct amount of food stamp benefits, or working towards systematic change, Nancy is resolute in her efforts. Nancy is especially good at perceiving where we can make systematic policy changes through a single client that will impact low income communities state wide. Nancy has the rare ability to bring together the people necessary to make these changes.

For years Nancy and I were involved with a civil rights complaint against the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) that alleged work requirements in its Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Welfare program violated the Americans with Disabilities Act. Through this litigation, and subsequent negotiations with DFCS, we were not only able to



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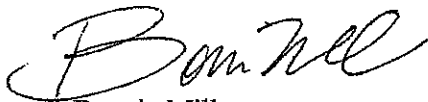
get back benefits for our clients, but also to make state wide policy changes. The policy change Nancy facilitated helped hundreds of low income families.

Currently, Nancy is advocating against DFCS violations of federal law with regard to its food stamp program. In this capacity, she has worked with several attorneys to file both court complaints and civil rights complaints against DFCS. In particular, Nancy is advocating for changes in food stamp fraud policies state wide. Many of the current policies lead to people losing their food stamps due to unfounded allegations. The unclear nature of the process and the allegations make it particularly difficult for families to defend themselves. Nancy is tireless in her efforts to induce change to unfair policies that impact low income families.

Nancy has traveled statewide to assist GLSP attorneys with their cases; training them to spot legally pertinent issues, and effectively advocate for change when needed. There is a consensus among attorneys that Nancy is an unbelievable asset to both our GLSP program and the Georgia communities she serves.

Nancy also works in non-legal capacity to strengthen and support Georgia communities. She has assisted in community gardens and has worked with numerous groups to make her community a better place for all its residents. I can think of no GLSP attorney more deserving of receiving the Dan Bradley award.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Miller
Attorney at Law

 LSC

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April 21, 2009

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Attorney Michael Monahan
Director, Pro Bono Project
State Bar of Georgia
State Bar Headquarters
104 Marietta Street, Suite 100
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Re: The Dan Bradley Award Support Letter

Dear Mr. Monahan:

More than thirty years ago I interviewed for a position in the Macon Office of Georgia Legal Services. I met the most astonishing attorney that day. She is the prototype legal services attorney and the embodiment of all of the reasons why I am still an attorney with Georgia Legal Services some thirty-three years later. Nancy Lindbloom is totally dedicated to the cause of those who work hard and struggle daily to put food on the table and care for and protect their children and loved-ones. She simply glows and radiates love, kindness and generosity of mind and spirit because this is truly her life's "calling." She speaks with a reverence and love for her work that inspires me to this day. She truly embodies the ideals, spirit, and commitment of that category of legal services attorney that is deserving of the Dan Bradley Award.

She was a Vista volunteer in Alabama, working with low income families on food stamp issues before she accepted a position as a legal services staff attorney in the Macon office. She is and has always been a tireless advocate for the clients we serve. She is and has always been involved in her community and conducted hundreds of community education and training sessions for our clientele.

Some years later she assumed the position of a public benefits specialist attorney with Georgia Legal Services. In that capacity, she focuses on legal issues involving Food Stamps and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs. She keeps legal staff members abreast of new legislation and other transitional changes within her area of expertise, and she traverses the state training lay persons and Georgia Client Council members to become lay advocates. The results have been nothing less than awesome. Lay client advocates using the information friendly advocate



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Dan Bradley Award Support Letter
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manuals she developed have been helping other similarly situated foods stamp and TANF clients secure and retain benefits. It also helps us because due to the sheer number of eligible low income individuals within our communities we cannot assist everyone who needs our help. Also, for those who had limited access to transportation and communication devices having someone there on a daily basis is invaluable.

We saw Nancy at her best during the period of Welfare Reform. She was appointed to the state Commission that was instrumental in the development of the structure of our current program. State leaders considered and used her research detailing the underpinnings of poverty within the state when making a decision as to how to structure Georgia's new TANF program. Her significant advocacy on the Commission ensured that due process notice and hearing rights were retained in Georgia's TANF program. Similarly she has worked tirelessly and secured successful implementation of the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act within the TANF program.

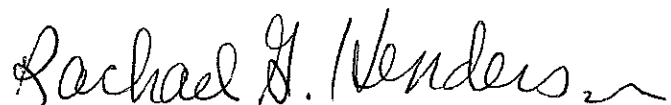
Nancy has also aggressively pursued litigation that is of significance. Her analytical skills are legendary and her persuasive ability is phenomenal. On a personal note she was my co-counsel in a case where we successfully challenged the methodology used to calculate AFDC lump-sum disqualification periods that were in derogation of the Federal statute. She is the consummate professional.

Nancy created and coordinates a statewide Public Benefit Task Force biannual program within Georgia Legal Services and Atlanta Legal Aid that is modeled throughout the nation. Program staff members and the specialist attorneys in both programs who are responsible for keeping the staff apprised of changes in the areas of Unemployment Compensation, Medicaid and Medicare, Health and Social Security Law attend the Task Force sessions and share strategies that can be implemented statewide with the goal of impacting an ever broadening client community.

She works with the Hunger Coalition and Food Banks within Georgia and is currently spearheading a community education program to increase Senior citizen participation in the Farmer's Market voucher program which will allow seniors to secure fresh fruits and vegetables.

She is the epitome of what a Dan Bradley awardee should represent and I enthusiastically write this letter in support of her nomination for the award.

Sincerely,



Rachael G. Henderson
Attorney at Law

SUTHERLAND

999 Peachtree Street, NE
Atlanta, GA 30309-3996
404.853.8000 Fax 404.853.8806
www.sutherland.com

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ALLEGRA J. LAWRENCE-HARDY
DIRECT LINE: 404.853.8497
E-mail: allegra.lawrence-hardy@sutherland.com

April 17, 2009

VIA-E-MAIL & U.S. MAIL

Ms. Terie Latala
Pro Bono Project
State Bar of Georgia
104 Marietta Street, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: Nomination of Erica Ahanotu for The Dan Bradley Award

Dear Ms. Latala:

I am honored to recommend Erica Ahanotu for The Dan Bradley Award of the State Bar of Georgia. I have had the pleasure of working with Erica as a summer associate while she was a student at Emory University School of Law and now as an associate with our firm. I have been fortunate to serve as Erica's *pro bono* supervising partners, which means I have had the pleasure of watching her competently and passionately advocate on behalf of her clients.

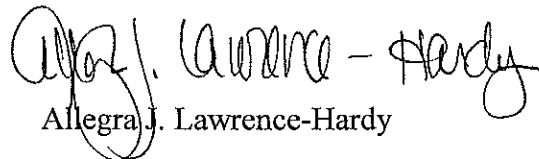
Erica has always been committed to *pro bono* work. Most recently, she was successful in handling a denial of benefits case for a ten-year old girl suffering from Fraser's Syndrome. Although Erica's client has severe cranio-facial abnormalities, is deaf, blind, and cannot eat solid foods, she was denied Medicaid benefits under the Katie Beckett Waiver Program. Erica worked tirelessly to gather the necessary documents, interview witnesses, and educate herself on her client's condition to effectively defend the case. Erica's dedication and hard work resulted in a complete reversal of the State's position and a full award of Medicaid benefits.

Erica believes in the importance of *pro bono* work and contributed more than 136 hours to this important work in 2008 and already more than 200 hours this year. She also is active as a volunteer with the Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta.

Ms. Terie Latala
April 17, 2009
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Erica is a first-rate lawyer and an excellent leader. She is very deserving of this award. I hope you will provide her nomination every consideration. If I may provide you with any additional information, please call.

Sincerely,


Allegra J. Lawrence-Hardy

AJLH/pre



ERICA M. AHANOTU

erica.ahanotu@sutherland.com
Associate
Atlanta
P: 404.853.8000

Education

J.D.
Emory University
School of Law, 2007

B.A. , *cum laude*
California
Polytechnic State
University, 2000

Bar Admission

Georgia

Erica Ahanotu, a member of Sutherland's Energy and Environmental Practice Group, focuses her practice on structured energy transactions, project development and finance, mergers and acquisitions, and other corporate transactions involving the energy industry. Erica also counsels clients on applicable renewable energy regulatory matters such as renewable portfolio standards (RPS) and regularly contributes to the [Offshore Energy Law Blog](#), a leading industry source focusing on issues at the intersection of offshore energy and federal policy, regulation and politics.

Prior to joining the firm, Erica worked in finance for Sun Microsystems Inc. and Ubisoft Entertainment. She is a member of the Steering Committee of Sutherland's Women Attorneys' Group.

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Erica's recent representative experience includes:

- Representing a publicly traded company in its acquisition of methane gas extraction and processing assets and roll-up of landfill gas and waste-to-energy projects.
- Representing borrowers in government-guaranteed financings for the construction and acquisition of generating facilities and improvements.
- Representing companies in the acquisition and divestiture of electric generation and transmission assets.

PROFESSIONAL HONORS AND AWARDS

- Member, Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA)
- Member, Georgia Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL)
- Volunteer, Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta, providing pro bono legal services to nonprofit organizations

Practice Focus

- Cooperatives
- Energy and Environmental
- Renewable & Alternative Energy