

2018 Hawai'i Access to Justice Conference  
"Fighting for Access to Justice for All"  
Friday, June 29, 2018

Summary of the closing plenary:<sup>1</sup>

**"Fighting for Access to Justice for All"**

Presenters: Professor Calvin G.C. Pang (facilitator); Dean Aviam Soifer; Robert LeClair, Executive Director, Hawaii Justice Foundation; Chief Judge Robert Katzmann, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit

Professor Pang began the closing plenary with a quote about Mr. Rogers. He said, "Mr. Rogers's greatness came from his patience and conscientiousness." He encouraged conference participants to go forth with patience and conscientiousness. Each panel member then gave a brief reflection on the conference and how to advance the access to justice movement.

Dean Aviam Soifer described the uniqueness of Hawaii because of the aloha spirit and the culture of good-faith cooperation. He stressed the importance of moving forward with both optimism and hope. He said, "Optimism is a very important characteristic. It gets you through a lot. It inspires. But it has the problem of being overcome sometimes by the facts, so you also need hope. And we have hope."

Robert LeClair discussed the changing nature of the legal market. He said that when lawyers don't continue to serve a market, they lose that market over time. He gave the example of optometrists' competition with Costco's eye examination service. The access to justice movement is more than the question, "do they get served or not." It also has a lot to do with lawyers and the continuation of legal services within the various markets. He stressed the importance of encouraging paralegals to deliver basic legal services to a larger number of people who need limited legal assistance. He also emphasized the need to serve the lower-middle, middle, and upper-middle classes to avoid losing those markets and because it is the right thing to do. He concluded with the observation and admiration of the increasing interest in the access to justice movement.

Chief Judge Katzmann expressed his gratitude to be a part of the conference and described the atmosphere as inspiring and energizing. He said, "You give me hope for all the challenges that we have that the world will be a better place because of the individual commitments that each of you have to ensuring that there will be access to justice." Chief Judge Katzmann was then awarded the "Landshark Award" for being the Keynote Speaker in the Access to Justice Conference 2018. The trophy was a bobblehead shark in a suit.

One conference participant asked about volunteer opportunities for lawyers who want to further the access to justice movement. Robert LeClair suggested that if lawyers decide to volunteer, they should insist on getting good training. He mentioned that the Access to Justice Commission has many committees that lawyers can serve on. Nalani Fujimori Kaina, Director of the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii (LASH), spoke about various volunteer opportunities with LASH. LASH is currently recruiting volunteers for disaster relief efforts on the Big Island and Kauai (applications available here <https://www.legalaidhawaii.org/volunteer.html>). There are also opportunities to help Micronesian immigrants with employment authorization documentation. Additional opportunities include the Self-Help Centers in each of the circuits, the Access to Justice room in Honolulu, the Hawaii Appellate Pro-Bono Program, and Legal Line, a one-hour legal assistance program at HSBA offices on Wednesdays. There is also an opportunity to provide pro-bono assistance to pro-se civil litigants in Federal Court with Judge Kobayashi.

There was a brief discussion about the possibility of LSC funding cuts next year, which would harm Legal Aid services across the country. Robert LeClair mentioned that the President of the Legal Services Corporation, James Sandman, expressed hope because there is bi-partisan support for the funding of Legal Services Corporation. James Sandman has also created a group comprised of prominent individuals, such as Jim Harbough and John Grisham, who strongly advocate for increased LSC funding.

The conference closed with attendees joining hands and singing Hawai'i Pono'i.

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<sup>1</sup> A draft was prepared by Cynthia Moore, law clerk, Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, and edited by the presenters.