

18th Annual  
Robert J. Beckham

Equal Justice

**AWARDS**

*Celebration*

Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront



**Jacksonville Area Legal Aid**  
A WAY TO GET JUSTICE FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T GET IT



FloridaProBonoMatters.org

## Father's Eviction Threatens Son's Education

Description

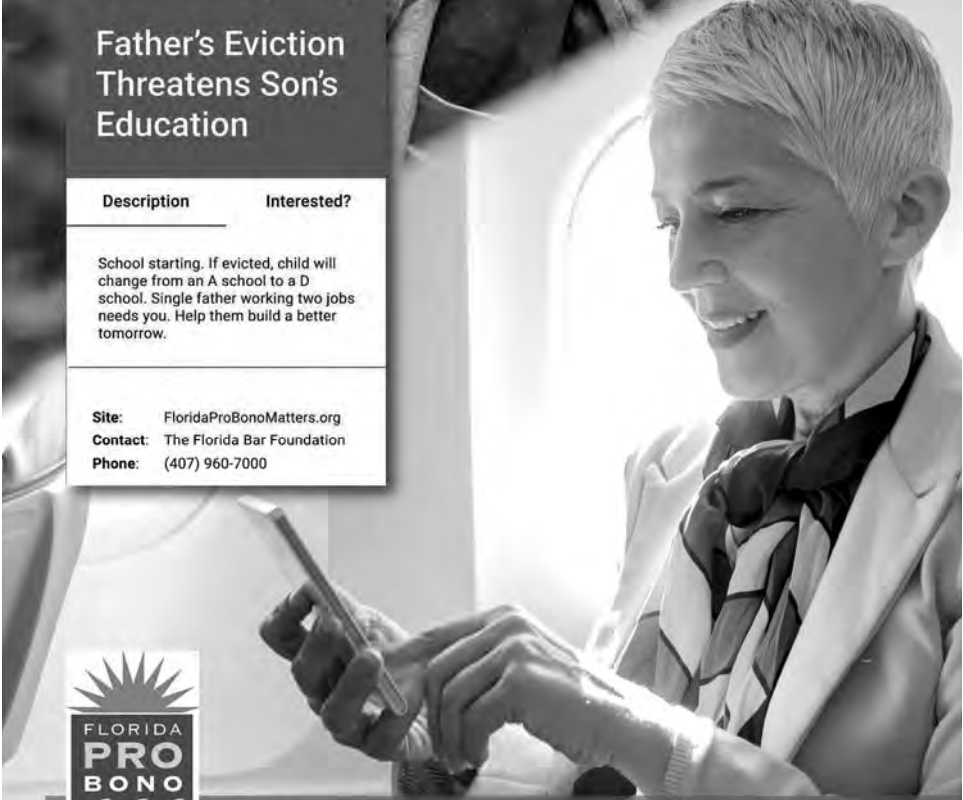
Interested?

School starting. If evicted, child will change from an A school to a D school. Single father working two jobs needs you. Help them build a better tomorrow.

**Site:** FloridaProBonoMatters.org

**Contact:** The Florida Bar Foundation

**Phone:** (407) 960-7000



Where YOU make the connection.

# AWARD CELEBRATION

## Welcome & Opening Remarks

T. A. "Tad" Delegal III  
President, *Jacksonville Bar Association*  
Master of Ceremonies

## Pro Bono Awards

The Honorable Hugh A. Carithers  
*4th Judicial Circuit*

## Fellow Awards

James A. Kowalski, Jr.  
President & CEO  
*Jacksonville Area Legal Aid*

## Equal Justice Awards

Honorable Henry Lee Adams, Jr.  
Senior United States District Judge  
*Jacksonville Division*

## Keynote Speaker

Honorable Jorge Labarga  
Chief Justice  
*Florida Supreme Court*

## Closing Remarks

James A. Kowalski, Jr.

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For more information, visit: [www.JaxLegalAid.org](http://www.JaxLegalAid.org)

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# ENCORE

## EVENT TECHNOLOGIES

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# 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ROBERT J. BECKHAM EQUAL JUSTICE AWARD CELEBRATION

## Equal Justice Awards

The Equal Justice Awards celebrates philanthropy and volunteerism within the legal community and recognizes those who have advanced the mission of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid – providing justice for the poor and marginalized – through volunteer pro bono service, philanthropy, and an unwavering dedication to fairness and equality.

Since 1999, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid has honored an individual or organization that has done the most to promote the cause of equal justice for low-income persons with the Equal Justice Award. The event was renamed in 2009 as *The Robert J. Beckham Equal Justice Award Celebration* to honor the late Robert J. Beckham, Esq., a longtime supporter of JALA, former JALA Board Member, and past recipient of the award.

Proceeds from this evening's event support the provision of free legal aid to the community's most vulnerable populations and allow Jacksonville Area Legal Aid to react quickly to the changing needs of those seeking assistance.

***Thank you for your support!***



## Creation of the Awards

The Equal Justice Award and other recognition pieces for this year's honorees were handmade in the Jacksonville University glass studio by Brian Frus, Assistant Professor of Glass, and his students.

## About Jacksonville Area Legal Aid

A concept born out of ten members of The Jacksonville Bar Association in 1937, the organization known today as *Jacksonville Area Legal Aid* is a non-profit law firm dedicated to providing social and economic justice for low-income and marginalized individuals in North Florida.



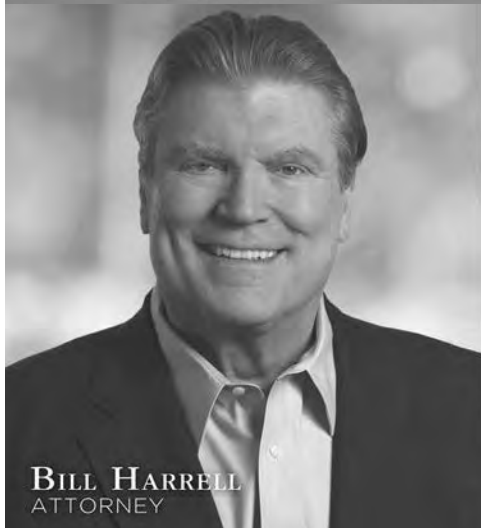
With a staff of more than 30 staff attorneys in three offices throughout Northeast Florida and tremendous pro bono support from the legal community, JALA provides more than 11,000 people annually with critical, often life-saving, legal assistance.

To learn more or find out how to get involved, visit [www.JaxLegalAid.org](http://www.JaxLegalAid.org)  
or call (904) 356-8371

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## Jacksonville Area Legal Aide Equal Justice Awards Celebration 2017



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## PAJIC & PAJIC LITIGATION FELLOW



The Pajic Family has been host to JALA's Yard Golf fundraiser for since 2012. This year, all JALA fundraising records were surpassed. With overly generous, "matching plus" donations from the Pajic Law Firm - \$100,000 was raised for JALA.



Pajic & Pajic Yard Golf collage—on display in the reception area.

## #FREEDTORUN MEDICAL/LEGAL PARTNERSHIP FELLOW



In a monumental effort to raise funds for JALA, Gunster business litigator **Michael Freed** ran from Tallahassee to Jacksonville – 6 Marathons in 6 Days. In doing so, Mike raised awareness of JALA's efforts to provide civil legal aid to all, while raising almost \$70,000.



#FreedToRun collage—on display in the reception area.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

### The Honorable Jorge Labarga Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court

Jorge Labarga was born in Cuba in 1952. He is married to Zulma R. Labarga, and they have two daughters. He arrived in the United States at the age of 11 where he initially lived with his family in Pahokee, Florida. He graduated from Forest Hill High School in West Palm Beach in 1972 and received his B.A. (1976) and J.D. (1979) from the University of Florida.

Justice Labarga began his legal career in 1979 as an Assistant Public Defender with the Public Defender's Office in West Palm Beach, assigned to the appellate, misdemeanor and felony trial divisions.

In 1982 he joined the State Attorney's Office in West Palm Beach, where he tried cases ranging from theft to homicide. In 1987 he joined the firm of Cone, Wagner, Nugent, Roth, Romano & Erickson, P.A., and specialized in personal injury trial work. In 1992 Justice Labarga participated in founding the law firm of Roth, Duncan & Labarga, P.A., in West Palm Beach, where he continued to specialize in personal injury litigation and criminal defense.

Governor Lawton Chiles appointed Justice Labarga to the Circuit Court of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, in and for Palm Beach County, in 1996. In that capacity he served in the family, civil and criminal divisions. He also served as the administrative judge of the civil division.

In December 2008 Justice Labarga was appointed by Governor Charlie Crist to the Fourth District Court of Appeal. On January 1, 2009, he was appointed by Governor Crist to the Florida Supreme Court, where he presently sits as the 84th Justice to take office at the Florida Supreme Court since statehood was granted in 1845. On June 30, 2014, he was sworn in as the 56th Chief Justice of Florida — the first person of Hispanic descent to lead the state judicial branch.



## Pro Bono On The Go



### Now Offering Pro Bono On The Go

Finding just the right pro bono case is now a snap – or at least just a couple of clicks – thanks to FloridaProBonoMatters.org, a new interactive website funded by The Florida Bar Foundation.

Jacksonville Area Legal Aid is among about 20 legal aid and pro bono programs around the state now posting available pro bono cases to FloridaProBonoMatters.org. No matter where you are, whether on your smartphone, laptop or desktop, the site enables you to search available pro bono cases quickly and easily. You can then submit a brief form to indicate your interest in taking a particular case. You can sort available cases by participating organization, county and the area of law. So far about 200 cases have been posted in 28 counties and 52 practice areas, and the site is growing all the time.



### **JALA and the other organizations posting cases follow up on the interest forms submitted and provide ongoing support just as with any other pro bono case.**

The first-of-its-kind website was designed and built with input from Florida lawyers by SavvySuit, whose web developers are lawyers themselves. They are continuously improving the site, which now includes a feature that enables users to share specific cases with colleagues as well.

If you haven't visited FloridaProBonoMatters.org, test drive it today. The site puts you in the driver's seat when it comes to finding just the right case.



## EQUAL JUSTICE AWARD HONOREES



### **William "Bill" Sheppard**

*Sheppard, White, Kachergus, & DeMaggio, P.A.*

Throughout his career, William J. Sheppard, has been a vocal and active champion of the work of JALA. A board certified criminal trial lawyer who has established a reputation as a preeminent criminal defense, civil rights and appellate attorney during his nearly 50 years practicing law by committing both himself and his practice to his clients' cases. Throughout his career, he has fought at every level of the judicial system for individuals' protections against violations of their rights and he has litigated virtually every type of criminal case,

from death penalty cases to complex white collar defense.

His pursuit of the vindication of his clients' rights has resulted in his having argued before the United States Supreme Court on three different occasions. Because of such accomplishments, Mr. Sheppard has been recognized by his peers through many accolades, including being chosen as "Lawyer of the Year" three times.

His accomplishments have been further recognized by his appointments to membership on the Florida Governor's Advisory Committee on Corrections, the Middle District of Florida Civil Justice Reform Act Commission, and a term as chair for the Judicial Nominating Commission for the Fourth Judicial Circuit of Florida. He also received the Florida Bar Foundation Medal of Honor, which is the highest honor bestowed upon a lawyer by the legal profession in Florida, the Tobias Simon Pro Bono Award, and countless other local, state, national, and international recognitions.



### **Samuel S. Jacobson**

*Bledsoe, Jacobson, Schmidt, Wright & Sussman*

Mr. Jacobson served two terms as JALA Board President in 1971 and 1998. His work with JALA includes assisting those whose homes were being foreclosed during the housing foreclosure crisis in 2008. He is frequently engaged for complex cases, both civil and family. He has won recognition in ratings by Jacksonville lawyers in both areas. His clients in all areas come to him largely by referral from other lawyers. He has represented lawyers, law firms, and judges, as well as clients referred by them.

Mr. Jacobson is a native of Sanford, Florida. His undergraduate education was at Duke University and his law school training at Duke Law School. Upon completion of law school he began his practice of law as an Assistant United States Attorney in Jacksonville. He has been in private practice in Jacksonville since 1965.

Mr. Jacobson is a member of The Florida Bar and of the bars of the Middle District, United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and the Supreme Court of the United States. He is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and is a master attorney of the Family Inns of Court. He has been included in the BEST LAWYERS OF AMERICA in three areas: family law, white collar criminal defense and personal injury.

Mr. Jacobson loves practicing law. He believes that one of the greatest blessings in his life was the decision to become a lawyer.

**Sometimes lending a hand is the most important lending a bank can do.**



Regions bankers understand there are people in our communities who need a little extra help from time to time. Help that goes beyond offering banking advice or personal financial solutions, and makes a profound impact on someone's life. After all, our mission statement is to *"Make Life Better."* So it's not uncommon to see our associates volunteering at shelters, giving people hope when they need it most. Or stocking thrift store shelves to help families keep clothes on their backs. Or teaching financial education classes so people can stay on the road to financial independence. That's just who we are. And it's who we're proud to be.

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Farah & Farah	Ronald E. Sholes, PA
Gunster	Shuster & Saben LLC
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Holland & Knight, LLP	Terrell • Hogan, PA
Liles, Gavin, George, Carlisle, Lee & Callen	Weaver & Weaver, PA
McGuireWoods, LLP	

### Pro Bono Notables

#### Florida Supreme Court Pro Bono Awards, January, 2017

The Honorable Virginia B. Norton, Distinguished Judicial Award  
The Jacksonville Bar Association, Voluntary Bar Association Award

#### Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Awards, January, 2017

Laura J. Boeckman, Fourth Judicial Circuit  
Jay S. Grife, Seventh Judicial Circuit

#### 2017 OUTSTANDING PRO BONO SERVICE HONOREES

Howard Lykins Dale	Kathleen Meagher Krak
Lisa A Dasher	Maxine Master Long
Valerie C. Faltemier	Donato Joseph Rinaldi
William Stephen Graessle	Ann R. Shorstein
Jay S. Grife	Barry L. Zisser

CSX Law Department  
Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP, Jacksonville Office

# OUTSTANDING PRO BONO SERVICE AWARDS

## Pro Bono Efforts Cross International Borders

The pro bono team that agreed to represent a Japanese-speaking mother included

**Barry L. Zisser** (Zisser Law PLLC), **Kathleen Meagher Krak** (Shutts & Bowen LLP, Orlando office) **Maxine Master Long** (Shutts & Bowen L L P, Coral Gables office)

**William Stephen Graessle** (William S. Graessle PA). In spite of significant hurdles, this team reunited a mother and child across international borders. At the start of the case, JALA family attorney, Jennifer Jerome, was involved with a motion to change custody in an emergency pick up order with the grandmother. Zisser and Graessle offered their services to assist in getting a rehearing and possibly appealing the case. During the time of their work, the mother returned to Japan and the client relationship ended. However, the Japanese attorneys with whom Jerome had contact assisted the client in filing a petition with the Hague Convention. Krak and Long offered their pro bono services to the client through the Hague Convention Network. The challenges of this case included language barriers and great geographic distances. Armed with the protections of Florida law and the Hague Convention, Krak and Long prevailed at trial and the baby and mother were reunited in Japan earlier this year. The work of this pro bono team is an inspiring example of collaboration in our local, state, and global legal community on behalf of the vulnerable and voiceless.

## Pro Bono Lobbying Efforts Impact Health and Safety of Tenants

When JALA began working with tenants of the Eureka Gardens low-income housing complex in 2016 to ensure safe habitability, it wasn't difficult to enlist the assistance of

**Howard Lykins Dale** and **Ann R. Shorstein**. A significant problem tenants faced was a lack of air flow as most tenants live without air conditioning, ceiling fans or screen doors. Dale proposed that a simple amendment to Jacksonville's Code to require screen doors in rental housing could offer an inexpensive solution to the lack of air flow while limiting entry of disease-carrying mosquitoes and other insects. Shorstein joined the effort. The pro bono team made the case to members of the City Council and were able to secure a sponsor for the proposed amendment in Jacksonville's Code. Shorstein's and Dale's expertise in working with City government and their commitment to low-income clients provided the formula for success. Jacksonville's Code was amended and all tenants of rental housing living without air conditioning will have a screen door to let in fresh air. The pro bono work of Shorstein and Dale has improved the quality of life of hundreds of families in our community.

## Clay and Nassau Pro Bono Initiatives Impact Hundreds

Shortly after JALA started the family law group information clinics in Duval County,

**Lisa A. Dasher** (Clay County) and **Valerie C. Faltemier** (Nassau County) spearheaded efforts in their respective counties to provide the service in venues accessible to persons in their areas. The family law group information clinics are offered monthly and serve persons faced with filing their own family law matters with information and forms. Dasher and Faltemier, started their respective clinics five years ago and continue to serve as the administrators of the resource making arrangements with the venues, ensuring packets are available, recruiting other pro bono attorneys, and serving as the attorney presenters on clinic nights. In addition, they each accept clients for representation and serve as expert resource persons for new pro bono attorneys. The impact of Dasher and Faltemier in Clay and Nassau counties has far reaching positive impact on countless families.

# OUTSTANDING PRO BONO SERVICE AWARDS

## St. Johns County Pro Bono Attorneys Protect the Rule of Law

**Jay S. Grife** and **Donato Joseph Rinaldi** have served as part of the volunteer backbone at the St. Johns County Consumer Pro Bono program for years. Grife and Rinaldi interview clients, participate in group case review sessions, and accept cases for full representation each and every month. In addition, both attorneys generously mentor other members of the bar who are interested in accepting consumer cases, but who may not have the experience necessary to handle the case on their own. The efforts of these two pro bono attorneys have resulted in significant victories for their clients both at the trial and appellate levels. One example, is Rinaldi's recent Fifth DCA victory protecting the rights of our veterans in foreclosure cases. Their pro bono efforts are invaluable to other consumer advocates statewide and across the country who are fighting to protect their clients' rights.

## Pro Bono Support for NFMLP Focuses on Special Needs Individuals

In 2012, the **CSX Law Department** responded to a request to consider assisting with the increase in guardian advocacy cases being referred to the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership, a project of JALA. The clients were family members of special needs young people. The CSX attorneys responded with enthusiasm to the request. Some corporate legal departments focus only on the barriers to offering pro bono assistance in their communities: attorneys licensed only in other states and practice areas outside their areas of expertise. CSX Law Department overcame these barriers by pairing Florida licensed attorneys with out-of-state attorneys. Leading the effort were Erin O'Brien and Cathy Hilf. The staff in the Law Department requested training in guardian advocacy and ongoing support as needed. These simple steps enabled the CSX in-house attorneys and support staff to begin assisting families in need of guardian advocacy assistance. For five years the CSX Law Department has accepted cases and provided stability for families in need. For families faced with the challenges of caring for a loved one with disabilities these attorneys have eliminated one source of stress.

## Landlord/Tenant Pro Bono Project Results in Assistance and Training

In the spring of 2016, Steve Brust and James Cummings of the Jacksonville office of the law firm **Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP**, came to JALA to brainstorm ways that the firm could be more involved in assisting low-income persons with civil legal matters. Their goal was to offer all of their attorneys and especially their newer associates an opportunity in which they would help fill a gap in existing legal services, assist clients, and provide representation experience that could involve appearances in court. What developed was the Landlord/Tenant Pro Bono Project. The attorneys received two training sessions: Landlord/Tenant Intake and Resolving Common Landlord/Tenant Legal Matters. The firm committed to staffing Landlord/Tenant Intake on one afternoon every month and to identifying one or two pro bono cases for full assistance and representation. Brust states, "We are finding that the program has been invaluable in teaching our young lawyers how to interact with members of the community and assist with solving problems. We hope to be able to perform this service for years to come." The need for landlord/tenant assistance is immense, but often difficult because of time sensitive matters. The participation of the pro bono attorneys in intake means that more meritorious cases will receive representation. Families are more likely to avoid a wrongful eviction, children avoid the possibility of changing schools, credit reports aren't damaged. The positive impacts on the family and on the community are immeasurable and are a direct result of the work of Smith, Gambrell & Russell.

# OUTSTANDING PRO BONO SERVICE AWARDS

## Gold Level (100 hours or more)

Brandon Beardsley	Jay S. Grife	Michael Pelkowski
Connie Jackson Byrd	Gerald Thomas Harper	Joseph Daniel Pickles
Brian Joseph Cabrey	Nikki Hawkins	James Clifton Poindexter
Ericka Curran	John Wilson Humes	Thomas R. Pycraft
Paras Desai	Aaron Irving	Donato Rinaldi
Howard Lykins Dale	Kennetha R. Julien	George E Schulz
Lisa DiFranza	Melissa Kauttu	Ann R. Shorstein
Ronald G. Duryea	Lee G. Kellison	Jason Short
Amanda Edwards	Kathleen Meagher Krak	John Spence
Crystal Freed	Maxine Master Long	Sarah Sullivan
Leanna S.A. Freeman	Dominic C. MacKenzie	Bradley A. Waldrop
Anne Marie Gennusa	Joseph Meux, Sr.	Felicia Leann Walker
Jhanelle O. Grant	David D. Naples	Barry L. Zisser
Suzanne W. Green	William Jason Odom	

## Silver Level (50—99 hours)

Lucreita Becude	Valerie Faltemier	Jane Miller	Craig Sherar
Imani Boykin	William Flournoy	Cynthia Nichols	Timothy Snyder
James Russell Collins	Hollyn Foster	Susanna Quesenberry	Vincent Sullivan
Carol Daniels	Tiera Henry	Andrea Reyes	T. Ryan Williams
Lisa Dasher	David King	F. Susannah Robinson	
Jessica Dumas	Beth Luna	Jamin Rubenstein	

## Bronze Level (20—49 hours)

Mike Abel	James Cummings	Katharine Hartland	Kelli Luekert	Kimberly O'Steen	Thomas Sullivan
Jamal Aleem	Diane Davison	James Hatfield	Matthew Lufrano	Michael Parisi	Clyde Taylor III
Debra Alexander	John DeJesus	Michelle Hawthorne	John Macdonald	Chip Parker Jr.	Amanda Thoele
William Anderson	T. A. Delegal III	Jonathan Hay	Frank Maloney Jr.	Mark Parsons	Clay Tousey III
Alessandro Apolito	Lisette DeLeon	Neil Henriksen	Sarah Mannion	Eva Paulk	Cynthia Trimmer
Karla Ayer	Bruce Duggar	Amber Hilterbran	Tom Mayton	Rhonda Peoples-Waters	Carla Trinca-Conley
Enrique Barquinero	Samantha Dunlap-Smart	Corinne Hodak	Kim McCall	Kyle Peters	Charles Trippe
Daniel Bean	Thomas Edwards Jr.	Christean Hollinger	Blane McCarthy	Adina Pollan	Natalie Tuttle
Rebecca Beller	Katie Fackler	Sarah Hulsberg	Patrick McCormack	Rose Marie Preddy	Patricia Vail
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Tammy Butler	James Grange	Cameron Kynes	Robert Morgan	John Schmidt	Bonnie Yamani
Christopher Calhoun	Chelsey Grife	Emily Lange	Virginia Morgan	Tania Schmidt-Alpers	Jonathan Zisser
Hal Castillo	Larry Griggs	Debbie Lee-Clark	James Moseley Jr.	Joseph Scone	
Ramona Chaplin	Christie Guerrero	Amy Leitch	Jessica Narducci	Angela Scott	
Robby Cook	G. Thomas Harper	Shana Loomar	Katherine Naugle	Judith Setzer	
Raelyn Covington	Debra Harrington	Jared Loucel	Vanessa Newtonson	Marianna Smith	
Juan Croussett	Geraldine Hartin	Ryan Ludwick	Erin O'Brien	Rick Stockton	



## EQUAL JUSTICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Dominic C. “Donny” MacKenzie (2015)  
Robert Spohrer (2014)  
The Honorable William A. Van Nortwick, Jr. (2013)  
Paul C. Doyle, Esq. (2012)  
Florida Coastal School of Law (2011)  
The Jacksonville Bar Association (2010)  
Harrell & Harrell, PA (2009)  
Jack D. Webb, Esq. and Glorious Johnson (2008)  
Robert J. Beckham, Esq. (2007)  
Kevin E. Hyde, Esq. (2006)  
Rogers Towers, PA (2005)  
Hank Coxe, Esq. (2004)  
Eddie Farah, Esq. (2003)  
Gary C. Pajcic, Esq. and Stephen J. Pajcic, Esq. (2002)  
Douglas J. Milne, Esq. (2000)  
J. Wayne Hogan, Esq. (1999)

## President’s Award Recipients

Jeffrey Goldhagen, MD MPH; Rhonda Peoples-Waters (2015—*Outstanding Philanthropy*)

Jacksonville Bar Association; Rogers Towers (2014—*Outstanding Philanthropy*)

Councilman Bill Gulliford; Councilman Warren A. Jones;  
The Honorable J. Michael Traynor (2013)

The Honorable Hugh A. Carithers, Jr.; Renu Heda; M. Kimberly Martyn, Esq.;  
Jacksonville Women Lawyer’s Association; Pajcic & Pajcic, PA; Tom Slater, Esq.;  
Lois Ragsdale, Esq. (2012)

Jacksonville Area Legal Aid Board of Directors (2011)

Edwards & Ragatz, PA; Norm & Lenora Gregory; Robert W. Murphy, Esq.;  
Regions Bank (2010)

Jake Schickel, Esq.; Patrick Canan, Esq. (2009)

Danya D. Duncan, Esq.; Caroline C. Emery, Esq.; Christa F. Figgins, Esq.;  
Deborah McDuffie; Rose Marie Preddy, Esq.; Deborah Reid, Esq.;  
Susan W. Sowards, Esq.; John Wolfel, Esq. (2008)

Billy Catlin (2007)

Evelyn Mew (2006)

John Duvall, Esq. (2005)

Emily Magee, Esq.; Kathy Para, Esq.; Donald Robinson, Esq.;  
Deann Sessions-Mitchell, Esq.; Kimberly Smith, Esq. (2004)

Harrell & Johnson, PA; Emerson Lotzia, Esq. (2003)

Donny MacKenzie, Esq.; Lynn Drysdale, Esq. (2002)

Thank

You



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access to those who need  
but can't afford it.*

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