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Anne-Marie Fulfer

University of Idaho College of Law, amfulfer@uidaho.edu

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Random Thoughts on Access to Justice in Idaho

Anne-Marie Fulfer
Idaho State Bar Commissioner
First and Second Districts

As I write this column, it is a beautiful spring day on the Palouse in northern Idaho. My husband recently bought me a new bicycle, and it is so lovely to zip through town to the University of Idaho campus, my long “COVID hair” flowing from beneath the helmet I will never get used to wearing. The ride gives me time to reflect on random thoughts such as the life cycle of a mosquito or my upcoming *Advocate* column focusing on Access to Justice or enhancing law students’ legal experience or Idaho’s legal deserts. It’s not a long bike ride, but it is long enough for me to sketch out my random thoughts.

Idaho Access to Justice

I have written about Idaho Access to Justice before and A2J’s annual campaigns

to raise supplemental funds to support three state-wide organizations that provide pro bono services to low-income, vulnerable Idahoans: Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program, Idaho Legal Aid Services, and DisAbility Rights Idaho. I recently received a letter from A2J stating that Idaho attorneys and judges contributed to the organization’s raising of over \$200,000 in 2020! The need for our help continues in 2021, so please give if you are able. For more information on Idaho Access to Justice, or to donate, please go here: www.isb.idaho.gov/AccessstoJustice.

Enhancing Law Students’ Legal Experience

The life cycle of the law student is usually three years. In that time, the Career Development Office (CDO) assists law students in their transition from student

to lawyer. CDO professionals help our students recognize their pre-lawyer skills and abilities that are directly translatable to their future careers. We provide workshops and opportunities that allow, and encourage, them to enhance those skills and abilities, as well as introduce them to the nearly endless possibilities of what they can do with a law degree, and where they can do it.

The goal of a CDO is for all our graduates to find meaningful employment as they enter the workforce. Students have several avenues to gain legal experience while they are in law school including summer internships, field placement courses, and pro bono cases. I want to thank all the amazing lawyers and judges in Idaho who speak to, work with, and hire law students. I wish I could properly express to you how grateful students are for the time you take to answer their ques-

tions and for the opportunities you give them. Many law schools, including U of I, require students to complete 50 hours of pro bono work, which works as an introduction to rules such as IRPC Rule 6.1, so if you have a pro bono client/case, you can get research help from a law student, while providing them in-the-field experience.

Legal deserts

Kurt Holzer and I are entering our third year as commissioners on the Idaho State Bar Board of Commissioners, splitting the year as President. We are looking at solutions for areas in Idaho that have become “legal deserts” – communities that have few or no lawyers available to residents. What can the Bar do to help increase easy access to lawyers for people who need help with matters such as divorces, custody issues, misdemeanors, and wills? Who else should be or will be part of the discussion? How will Zoom help with access to lawyers?

According to the *ABA Profile of the Legal Profession 2020* (July 2020), which includes the number of lawyers by county throughout the US, 24 of Idaho’s 44 counties had 10 or fewer attorneys and three of those counties had no attorneys (See <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2020/07/potlp2020.pdf>, p. 5).

If you have thoughts on how we begin to address the access to justice issues a legal desert raises, please reach out to me and/or to Kurt, with your ideas and suggestions.

Mosquitoes

I must confess that thinking about mosquitoes has not been that random a thought. My father-in-law was a taxonomist whose area of expertise was mosquitoes. In his career he discovered over 25 new species of mosquitoes. He was a consultant at the British Museum of Natural History, and he collaborated with the Smithsonian for their project on the mos-

quitoes of Southeast Asia. He was a professor at the University of Malaysia in the Parasitology department, and frequently consulted for the World Health Organization. My favorite story of mosquitoes concerns the species he discovered and named after my mother-in-law, Vijaya. It was one of the first stories I heard from Dr. R.: *Topomyia vijayae*, he assured me, was the perfect mosquito to name after his wife: “it’s a beautiful mosquito, AND it’s vegetarian!” Shivaji Ramalingam, Ph.D., died peacefully at home on April 29, 2021; I will miss him.



Anne-Marie Fulfer is the Assistant Dean for Career Development at the University of Idaho College of Law and is a 1999 graduate. Based in Moscow, Anne-Marie has overseen the Career Development

Office for Moscow and Boise since 2003. Anne-Marie is a member of Idaho Women Lawyers and the Rotary Club of Moscow (celebrating 100 years in February 2020).

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