

## LASNEM Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) Program

March 2021



### In Honor of Tracy Podpeskar

#### Judge Nancy C. Dreher Pro Bono Distinguished Service Award Recipients

Peter Greenlee and Yvonne Michaud Novak

#### Honoring Our 2020 Volunteers

1,360 hours and over \$275,000 in value donated!

#### 2020 North Star Lawyer Recognition

Deadline March 13, 2021

#### Upcoming events and opportunities

LASNEM virtual Family Law clinic and CLE opportunities

## In Honor of Tracy Podpeskar

1977 - 2020

We remain heartbroken by the sudden and unexpected passing of Tracy Podpeskar. Tracy was a LASNEM Board Member, a dedicated pro bono volunteer, an advocate for civil legal services, and a friend to many at LASNEM.

"For the last decade, Tracy was a dedicated advocate for equal access to justice through her years of pro bono work and service on the board at Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota. Tracy advocated that all individuals should have an attorney with them in court, regardless of their income. Tracy was an exemplary volunteer attorney who provided pro bono service to hundreds of low-income individuals, making her one of the top volunteer attorneys in the northeastern region. In her leadership role on the LASNEM board, she gave voice to the needs of not only the Iron Range communities but of all rural Minnesotans. The impact of Tracy's work will be her legacy in civil justice."

Dori Streit  
LASNEM Executive Director

"Tracy was an energetic, bright, diligent, and fun person, colleague, and attorney who generously used her time and talent to help clients with legal



## Iron Range colleagues remember beloved attorney

Tracy Rae Podpeskar, a mother, attorney and partner of Trenti Law Firm in Virginia, died on Dec. 4. She was 43. In her profession, Podpeskar was perhaps best known for carving her own path at the law firm from her beginnings as a legal secretary...

needs, regardless of their ability to pay or their status in life. Her career was exemplary and a credit to the Bar and stands as a model for other lawyers, young or old."

[Read more](#)

[www.mesabtribune.com](http://www.mesabtribune.com)

Rick Prebich  
Prebich Law Office, P.C.  
LASNEM Board Member

## Judge Nancy C. Dreher Pro Bono Distinguished Service Award Recipients



Peter Greenlee



Yvonne Michaud Novak  
[Law Office of Yvonne Michaud Novak](#)

## Judge Nancy C. Dreher Pro Bono Distinguished Service Award

Over her career, Judge Nancy C. Dreher's impact, influence, and contributions to the legal profession were substantial. Through her leadership, she showcased a steadfast commitment to professional excellence, legal education, and accessibility to ...

[Read more](#)

[www.mnb.uscourts.gov](http://www.mnb.uscourts.gov)

Honoring 2020 LASNEM PAI Volunteers

Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota  
Private Attorney Involvement (PAI)



Over 50 hours:

- Tom Witt
- Rachel Weis
- Gerald Wallace
- Jenna Jahn
- Don Erickson
- Eduardo Aburto Ortiz

Over 20 hours:

- Brenda Denton
- Jason Fitzgerald
- Hannah Forti
- Benjamin Kaasa
- Shari Larson
- James McGill
- Bhupesh Pattni
- Sara Swanson
- Ellen Tholen
- Bruce Williams
- George Wetzel, Jr.
- Michael Bjerke
- Jonathan Baker
- Yvonne Novak
- Michael Orman

Over 10 hours:

- Erica Backstrom
- Henry Brucker
- John Dimich
- Leah Fisher
- Peter Greenlee
- Daniel Griffith
- Paul Jacobson
- Paul Loraas
- William Paul
- Cheryl Prince
- Christopher Stocke
- Mark Vavreck
- Paul Voge

## 2020 North Star Lawyer

If you've contributed 50 hours or more of pro bono in 2020 don't forget to submit your North Star Lawyer [verification form](#) by the deadline of March 13, 2020.

Members who report their voluntary service will be recognized as North Star Lawyers and included on the annual roster insert published in the May/June Bench & Bar magazine, as well as in other recognition opportunities. If you would like to know your total hours with LASNEM, contact **Eve**, Private Attorney Involvement Coordinator.

In 2020, Legal Aid Service of Northeastern

**North Star**  
**LAWYER**

Northstar

Minnesota had six PAI volunteers automatically qualify for North Star Lawyer status through our program. They are:

**Tom Witt (62 hours)**  
**Rachel Weis (132 hours)**  
**Gerald Wallace (71 hours)**  
**Jenna Jahn (59 hours)**  
**Don Erickson (68 hours)**  
**Eduardo Aburto Ortiz (57 hours)**

Thank you for supporting equal access to justice!

The Minnesota State Bar Association is proud to recognize members who provide 50 hours or more of pro bono legal services per year as North Star Lawyers. Lawyers who serve the poor without charge should be celebrated. By generously donating...

[Read more](#)  
[www.mnbar.org](http://www.mnbar.org)

## \*NEW\* Pro Bono Family Law Clinic



[Sign up for the Family Law Clinic](#)

LASNEM has launched a new virtual family law clinic for Northeastern Minnesotans.

The clinic serves low-income residents throughout our 11-county service region in all areas of family law. Interested participants can call (218) 623-8100 to make an appointment.

The clinic is held on the first and the third Wednesday of each month from 12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Volunteer Attorneys: sign up for a shift, click [HERE](#).

If you have questions or would like to learn more about the Pro Bono Family Law Clinic, please contact [Lilo Schluender](#), Director of Private Attorney Involvement.

## \*\*STOP PREDATORY DEBT COLLECTION DURING THE PANDEMIC\*\*

LASNEM will be offering Judicare funds for attorneys willing to assist qualifying exempt clients with letters to their creditors and providing clients with advice about their protected rights.

- March - June 2021
- \$400/per case assisted
- Form letters/templates/information sheets available to all volunteers.

Interested? Contact PAI Coordinator, [Eve](#).



## CLE opportunities for Volunteers

[Advising the Disadvantaged Client 2021](#)

[COVID Conflicts In Family Law And Tips For Effective](#)





**TUITION ONLY \$45\*!**

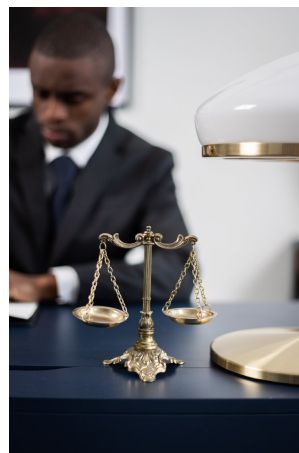
**March 26, 2021**

**8:55 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.**

Includes a session presented by LASNEM's Director of Private Attorney Involvement, [Lilo Schluender](#)!

\*If you are a volunteer attorney, please contact [Lilo Schluender](#) to receive a code waiving the \$45 fee. Limited supply.

**Advocacy In Virtual Hearings**



**REGISTRATION ONLY \$15!**

**Thursday, March 11th, 2021**

**12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Three judicial officers from the second judicial district, all of whom are former legal aid practitioners, will discuss COVID issues in family law.

**Initiating and Responding to Third-Party Custody**

Need a refresher on Third-Party Custody? What is the difference between an Interested 3<sup>rd</sup> Party and a De Facto Custodian?

Click [here](#) to view a recently recorded Legal Services State Support presentation on **Initiating and Responding to Third-Party Custody cases**. To view just enter your name and email. Note that the content portion of the CLE begins at 4:27.



**Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota | [lasnem.org](http://lasnem.org) | 800-933-1112**

Serving Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Crow Wing, Itasca, Kanabec, Koochiching, Lake, Pine and St. Louis counties.



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