



**RLS** | *Because Justice Really Should Be For All*

## **This Saturday,**

**the Fredericksburg Area Bar Association and UMW will host Jazz 4 Justice<sup>®</sup> to be held at**

**UMW's Dodd**

**Auditorium on Saturday, November 8th at 7:30 PM.**

**Proceeds to benefit the UMW Jazz Ensemble and RLS.**

**Want a preview? Watch a clip at <http://bit.ly/1tIZJle>.**

**Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors. Buy yours at [www.raplegal.com](http://www.raplegal.com).**

## **Three Cheers...**

**for Joey Kirchgessner and Mark McMurray, RLS interns past and present, who recently passed the Virginia State Bar Exam. Congratulations to you both and best wishes as you begin your legal careers.**

## **Annual Appeal**

**RLS' annual letter campaign will soon commence. We transitioned to a once a year ask, so please be as generous as you can when making end-of-year philanthropic decisions. As always, thank you for your support!**



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

## **RLS Provides Assist to Dad Seeking Custody**

Child custody cases are, by their very nature, filled with multiple complexities, complicated variables and conflicting perspectives. They can be lengthy, contentious, stressful and often destabilizing to a child's sense of security. In poverty law, the dynamic is further magnified by other issues commonly present in RLS' cases: the mechanisms mediating the effects of poverty.

Consider the case of Joe, who sought help from RLS to amend a child custody order because he feared for the safety of his 3 year old son, Cody. Joe and Sara, Cody's mother, had been awarded joint legal custody of Cody, but he spent most of the time living with his mother. During a stay with Joe, Cody cried inconsolably after having an accident and asked his dad if he was going to beat him as his mother and her boyfriend typically did under similar circumstances. That was the first in a string of events prompting deep concern for Cody's well-being and what led Joe to seek a change in the custody order.

Sara lived at home with her parents, but her boyfriend, who had moved in with them, ultimately became a looming presence in the household. Joe learned that Sara's boyfriend was charged with several counts of felony possession of cocaine with intent to distribute and several counts of child endangerment related to other children. These developments along with Cody's behavior intensified Joe's distress.

While greatly concerned for Cody, Joe also needed full-time employment and his quest led him to accept a job in another state, giving rise to a nightmarish dilemma. But Joe persevered.

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As the months leading to the custody hearing slowly passed, visitation exchanges had become increasingly more confrontational. The Guardian ad Litem appointed to the case observed a video of one of these episodes and her testimony of Sara's behavior was instructive. But it was RLS Attorney Tamara Moore who got Sara to admit that she had withheld visitation without any justification; entered into evidence the convictions of Sara's boyfriend on both the drug and child endangerment charges as well as Sara's own conviction on drug charges; conducted a sharp cross-examination of Sara's mother who conveyed a blasé attitude regarding Sara's boyfriend and his activities; and worked with Joe to ensure that he had compelling documentation demonstrating his fitness as a custodial parent.

Tamara's legal advocacy ensured that Cody is now living in a safe environment. Joe was awarded primary physical custody of Cody and was given permission to relocate Cody to his new state of residence, none of which would have been likely if not for the skillful work of Tamara Moore.

## **Q & A with Local Attorney and RLS Supporter Paul Simpson**

**2014 President of the Fredericksburg Area Bar Association & Jazz 4 Justice<sup>®</sup> Committee Chair**

RLS: You have been such a stalwart supporter of RLS. Why is that?

*PS: My first 8 years of practice were in Richmond. For several of those years, I volunteered with the Legal Aid office in Richmond working with tenants in disputes with landlords. I have several very vivid recollections of individuals who had very legitimate problems and concerns, but because of their economic circumstances, had no way to properly address those problems through the legal system. Since moving to Fredericksburg more than 20 years ago, I have supported the work of RLS because it provides assistance to those who would otherwise be without resources to remedy serious legal problems.*

RLS: What was the genesis of your involvement with Jazz 4 Justice?



*PS: As the president-elect of the Fredericksburg Area Bar Association last year, I attended a meeting of the Virginia State Bar and learned of the Jazz 4 Justice<sup>®</sup> program that has been held in Fairfax for more than 10 years in conjunction with George Mason University. When I became president of FABA for 2014, I reached out to Rick Hurley, the president of the University of Mary Washington, and Doug Gately, the director of jazz studies at UMW, to gauge their interest in trying to bring this concept to Fredericksburg. They were both enthusiastic about the possibility, and so we have worked*



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*collaboratively to try to make this idea a reality in our community. The Virginia State Bar, and in particular, its president-elect, Ed Weiner, has also been a treasure trove of information and inspiration to get the program off the ground.*

RLS: Has the project been a rewarding one for you?

*PS: It has been very satisfying to work on this project and to see the members of the Bar, the University and the community all come together for a common purpose. The ability to raise money – in a very fun and enjoyable way – for two worthy causes like the UMW jazz program, and RLS, make the efforts worthwhile. I have been very gratified by the support and positive response that has been received from both the community and so many members of the local Bar.*

RLS: Do you have a vision for Jazz 4 Justice<sup>®</sup> in Fredericksburg?

*PS: I really hope that this will become an annual event for Fredericksburg, and that it can grow each year, as it has in Fairfax. We have a wonderful university community, and the ability for the Bar Association to work cooperatively with UMW on such a worthwhile project should, I hope, ensure Jazz 4 Justice's<sup>®</sup> continued success for years to come.*

*Paul is a partner with the firm of Parrish Snead Franklin Simpson, PLC in Fredericksburg. He has been practicing law for 27 years, and prior to that worked in higher education administration for 8 years. A graduate of Wake Forest University Law School, Paul represents businesses and individuals in a variety of civil matters. Paul and his wife, Debbie, live in Spotsylvania County and have two adult daughters.*

## Working Toward the Future

*RLS has been a launching pad for countless legal careers since opening its doors in 1973.*

### Mark McMurray

BS in Management and BA in Political Science, Virginia Tech  
JD, Syracuse University

“As a result of my time with RLS, I have gained substantial experience working with clients and the local court systems. I will be better prepared to practice as an attorney because of it. By working with the staff and attorneys at RLS, I now have a deeper understanding about how to successfully represent the interests of clients while working with limited resources. Finally, clerking at RLS has reminded me of the importance of giving back to the local community by donating to a worthy cause such as Rappahannock Legal Services.”

-Mark McMurray  
RLS Law Clerk, 2014



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**Erin Perugini**

BA in political science and geography, University of Mary Washington  
MS in Justice Law and Society, American University  
2L, Howard University School of Law

"I have always wanted to work in the public interest arena, and Rappahannock Legal Services has allowed me to do that. Every day I come in I feel like I am helping to improve the quality of someone's life. I have learned so much about family law and courtroom procedures from RLS' staff attorneys, practical aspects of the law not taught in a classroom. But I have also learned about the intricacies of working for an organization that relies on donations and grants. So much time and effort is put in behind the scenes. Interning with RLS has been such a rewarding experience."

-Erin Perugini  
RLS Law Clerk, 2014

"Just a quick note to thank you a little more formally for all the preparation for, and your great work at, the hearing this week. So Thank You! John!!! You provided great legal representation and kept me from getting too upset. No easy feat, that."

-Excerpt from the thank you note of a recent client

*On behalf of our clients, thank you for funding the work of RLS.*

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