







2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

### **Faces of GBLS**

GREATER BOSTON LEGAL SERVICES









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### Dear Supporters

FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The pandemic has permeated all aspects of our lives for almost two and a half years. We have often been separated from each other, whether behind computer screens or glass barriers or face masks.

We hope through this report, however, to bring some light and celebration to our community. In these pages, we remove the masks and honor the many faces of our community – our staff, clients, donors, volunteers, and more – and commemorate the remarkable things we have accomplished together and will continue to achieve in partnership.

While this is technically an "annual" report, in actuality it is a bi-annual report, representing both GBLS' 2021 fiscal year and our 2022 fiscal year. In 2021, after much consideration, GBLS' Board of Directors decided to change our organization's fiscal year from a calendar year to a July-to-June schedule. 2021 represented our final calendar-based fiscal year, and fiscal 2022 was comprised of six months from January to June 2022. Herein, you will find information and accomplishments from throughout both periods, coinciding in many ways with the experiences of our community members in the late-stage pandemic world in which we now find ourselves.

The last eighteen months have been strenuous and exciting, routine and unusual all at the same time. We returned to in-office work on a hybrid basis, while continuing to challenge ourselves to rethink how we run our operations to best meet the needs of our clients and staff. We welcomed a group of tremendously talented new faces and said fond farewells to others. We filed, litigated, negotiated, lobbied, counseled, listened, learned, and examined. Our clients have stayed in their homes, secured shelter, fed their children, called out bad actors, avoided deportation, shared their experiences, rebuilt their lives, found safety, received medical care, asserted their rights, and been our partners in changing the laws and policies that harm people living in poverty.

Whether you have been with us for a long time or are new to our community, I thank you for being one of the "faces of GBLS." We are profoundly grateful for

your support and involvement in our work. After reading the community vignettes in this report, I invite you to visit GBLS' social media pages (@BostonLegalAid on Twitter and Facebook) and share your story. Why do you support this work? What drives you to pursue equal justice for all? We have all been through a lot, and I am so glad we are in this together.



Juguelym Breman

Jacquelynne J. Bowman Executive Director

BY THE NUMBERS

BY THE NUMBERS

2021

JAN-DEC

### **CASES & CLIENTS**

13.904

**LEGAL MATTERS** 

11,394

FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED



# CASES BY ISSUE 21% Employment/Unemployment Unemployment Prevention 9% Wellfare 4% Miscellaneous 7% DV/Family Law 3% Social Security/SSI 6% Consumer Rights 2% Health & Disability 4% CORI and Re-Entry 1% Education/Juvenile

### **CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

0

83%
PEOPLE OF COLOR

63% Female-identified

36% Male-identified

1% Non-binary or not stated



22% ELDERS (60+ YEARS OLD)



21%
LIMITED ENGLISH
PROFICIENT

### 2022

JAN-JUNE

### **CASES & CLIENTS**

9,747

**LEGAL MATTERS** 

8,151

FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED



### **CASES BY ISSUE**

27% Housing/Eviction Prevention

16% Employment Law

16% Immigration

12% Welfare

8% Consumer Rights

7% DV/Family Law

6% CORI/Reentry

3% Social Security/SSI

2% Miscellaneous

2% Health & Disability

• 1% Education/Juvenile

### **CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS**



86%

PEOPLE OF COLOR

63% FEMALE-IDENTIFIED

37% maleidentified

*,* )

29% LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

19% ELDERS

(60+ YEARS OLD)



### **GBLS AT A GLANCE**

### History

Greater Boston Legal Services was formed in 1900 as the Boston Legal Aid Society, the third oldest civil legal aid organization in the United States. Today, GBLS is the largest legal aid provider in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, serving Boston and the 31 surrounding cities and towns, plus an additional 15 municipalities through our elder law work.

### Mission

GBLS' mission is to provide free civil legal aid to help individuals and families who are living in poverty to achieve justice and meet their basic needs, such as food, security, safety, and adequate shelter. GBLS helps vulnerable individuals and families retain affordable housing, gain protection from domestic violence, obtain subsistence income for food and necessities, access health care, seek immigration relief, and recover earned wages.

### Services

CBLS serves clients and community members through individual representation, impact advocacy, community legal education, and outreach, working closely with a wide network of organizational partners to seek justice, stability, and fairness for everyone in our community.

### 2021-2022 Impact Advocacy Highlights

GBLS' attorneys and advocates leverage the information gained through our high volume of direct service cases to tackle the repeated and systemic problems that keep families and individuals in poverty. By working closely with community partners, client groups, and other advocates, we achieve significant positive outcomes through policy, legislative, and other legal advocacy. In 2021-2022, GBLS' impact advocacy included:

### **CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

💰 An Equal Justice Fellow began a two-year project in September 2021 targeting legal assistance to parents involved with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as a result of domestic violence committed by the other parent. The Fellow is working with a statewide coalition interested in expanding the role of legal services in this family preservation project. Helping domestic violence survivors obtain protective orders, custody, and child support often enables children to remain in the home, free of abuse, and spares placement in DCF custody.

### **CONSUMER RIGHTS**

✓ In April 2021, GBLS favorably settled a class action complaint, Fuentes et al. v. SFE Energy Massachusetts, Inc., challenging the unfair and deceptive door-to-door solicitation practices of the alternative energy company that caused plaintiffs and other class members to pay more for utility services.

### **DE-CRIMINALIZING POVERTY**

🔥 GBLS' CORI & Re-entry Project opposed MBTA regulations that would have resulted in suspension of drivers' licenses as punishment for evasion of MBTA fares. The MBTA abandoned the proposed change, which would have caused harm to low-income communities of color, and made situations worse for the poorest of the poor who could not afford even nominal fares.

### **EDUCATION**

♠ A GBLS Senior Attorney co-chairs the COVID School Discipline Subcommittee of the statewide Education Law Task Force, which has been focused on COVID Recovery School Discipline advocacy with the statewide MA Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, urging policy guidance to discourage schools from using exclusionary school discipline (e.g., suspensions/expulsions) for behavioral issues, since many students already lost educational and social/emotional supports during remote schooling, and so many were already experiencing trauma, with the attendant mental health and behavioral challenges.

### **ELDER RIGHTS**

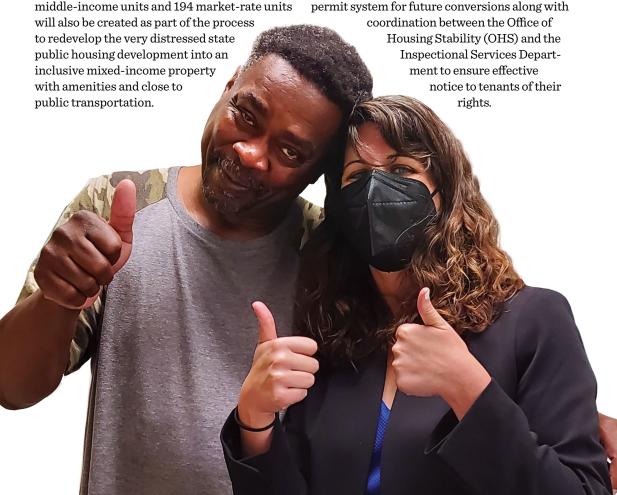
♠ In 2021, GBLS, along with attorneys from the Center for Public Representation and Justice in Aging, began pursuing systemic advocacy with officials from the state Executive Office of Health and Human Services on behalf of people unnecessarily institutionalized in nursing homes. This initiative seeks to require the state to develop a more comprehensive system of residential services and necessary supports that would enable many people currently institutionalized in nursing facilities to be able to live safely in the community.

units are preserved for the next 99 years, and 40

HOUSING 💰 After six years of hard work representing the Innes Resident Alliance in collaboration with La Colaborativa, GBLS has helped to preserve almost 100 public housing units at Innes Apartments in Chelsea. The public housing

← GBLS attorneys worked for four years with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) to submit a fair housing proposal for the City of Boston that was adopted in May 2022. Mayor Michelle Wu signed a groundbreaking executive order, which stated: "The only way to affirmatively further fair housing is to embed the principles of freedom of choice, equal access, diversity, and inclusion in the areas of urban planning, housing development, and zoning so that location does not determine anyone's quality of life or ability to prosper."

← On behalf of the Boston Tenant Coalition and City Life/Vida Urbana, GBLS advocated for and made revisions to condominium conversion legislation with City of Boston and Boston City Council members. In March 2021, legislation passed that includes enhancements in tenant protections, including requiring a permit system for future conversions along with



### **FACES OF GBLS**

Analiza Tavares is relatively new to GBLS, having started in 2020, but she's already making waves.

As a Senior Paralegal in GBLS' Elder, Health, and Disability Unit, she plays a key role in the School to Prison Pipeline Intervention Project and has recently spearheaded a community outreach effort within the Cape Verdean community in Boston.

### WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO LEGAL AID AND WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO BE A LEGAL ADVOCATE?

Ever since I was in high school, I have always been interested in Law. I enjoy helping people, especially within low-income communities, and that is why I was drawn to legal aid. Being able to change my clients' lives for the better is what inspires me most and motivates me every day. My job is extremely rewarding, I reassure my clients that they are not alone and accompany them through the difficulties they are facing.

### YOU WORK WITH SOME OF GBLS' YOUNGEST CLIENTS – WHAT SETS THEIR NEEDS APART FROM YOUR ADULT CLIENTS?

I represent low-income students in school discipline and special education cases. My students tend to be of color, have disabilities, and/ or are homeless. I use legal tools such as direct representation, impact litigation, and policy advocacy to prevent them from being excluded from school and ensuring that they have the necessary services and resources to succeed. My younger clients' needs are much different than my adult Social Security clients. My younger clients have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and require support both in school and in the home. They require my advocacy immediately whereas with my adult Social Security clients' cases take a bit more time since this area of law is slowmoving. Also, with my younger clients. I often have to balance the needs and wants of both the student and

parent.

WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO START THE OUTREACH PROJECT WITHIN THE CAPE VERDEAN COMMUNITY?

I am Cape Verdean and I was surprised that we weren't receiving many Cape Verdean clients within my education work. I knew that there was a need there and they probably were not reaching out due to language barriers and not knowing about GBLS and its services. I knew that with my ties to the CV community and my ability to speak the language fluently, I could start a project that could have a major impact on our community. Additionally. I wanted to start the project because I grew up watching many Cape Verdean counterparts end up in the School to Prison Pipeline — something that I and many other legal advocates have been working to dismantle. I've seen intelligent, capable children excluded from school due to suspension or expulsion instead of receiving the support they desperately needed to

push forward.

🔥 As a member of the Somerville Know Your Rights coalition, and in conjunction with other Somerville agencies and state and local elected officials, GBLS contacted the three largest providers of affordable housing in Somerville who were proceeding with evictions. As a result of this outreach and advocacy in early 2021, two of the providers signed the eviction diversion pledge (the third provider had already signed it), all agreed not to file court complaints where a tenant was working with an agency on funds, and the providers agreed to other procedures including entering into out of court repayment agreements in certain circumstances.

← GBLS is working with residents of Our Lady's Guild House (OLGH) to preserve housing for older women. GBLS has also been working with the Civil Rights Division of the MA Attorney General's Office to resolve discrimination complaints in which the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination found probable cause. GBLS is hopeful that any settlement will enable our clients to remain at OLGH with affordable rents, as well as be compensated for the discrimination they have experienced.

Representing the citywide
Alliance of Cambridge
Tenants, GBLS commented
on the Cambridge Housing
Authority's (CHA) Moving to
Work (deregulation) Annual Plan
for 2022. GBLS was successful in
convincing the CHA to withdraw
its "rent simplification" proposal
for the Section 8 youcher

program which would have resulted in the loss of child care and medical expenses deductions for many tenants and an increase in rent for 1,179 tenants (28% of all tenants with CHA "Moving to Work" Section 8 vouchers), that could have led to increased evictions if enacted.

### **IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS**

GBLS raised issues of critical importance and initiated or joined other organizations in bringing litigation in federal courts pertaining to immigration rights. For example, a First Circuit case decided in March 2022 found that an Immigration Judge must provide notice and an opportunity to explain if an applicant for asylum cannot produce specific evidence required by the Court.

major project addressing the humanitarian crisis of local resettlement of large numbers of Haitian immigrants who entered the U.S. at the Southwest border, arriving with no financial resources, GBLS engaged in extensive advocacy - including by involving three federal agencies (Food and Nutrition Service, an agency of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture; U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services) – to convince the MA Dept. of Transitional Assistance to recognize the eligibility of children born to Haitian parents in third countries.

### **PUBLIC BENEFITS**

GBLS co-leads with
Massachusetts Law Reform
Institute the Lift Our Kids
Coalition, made up more

than 150 Massachusetts organizations dedicated to improving policies that harm the Commonwealth's lowestincome children. In January 2021, their efforts succeeded in the enactment of a 10% increase in both of the state's safety net cash benefits programs, Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC). The Coalition then worked with bill sponsors to file a new bill in February 2021, to continue raising benefits by 20% a year, until families are at least up to 50% of the Federal Poverty Limit—a seemingly low bar, but a very significant increase in income to these families. The FY22 budget included another 9.1% increase that was adopted retroactive to July 2021.

← GBLS achieved a significant  $\mathbf{V}$  victory in the case of *Lee* vs. EEC Comm'r Samantha Aigner-Treworgy and EEC, challenging the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care's (EEC's) unaffordable family copay fee schedule. In April 2021, a Superior Court judge ruled that the prior fee schedule was unlawful and that EEC may not terminate subsidies, deny reapplications for subsidies, or impose any form of sanction based on fee arrears accrued prior to EEC's revised parent fee schedule for subsidized child care. The outcome is a dramatically-improved subsidized child care parent fee schedule under which very low-income parents pay less than 7% of family income, which is a ceiling recommended by federal regulations as necessary for affordability.

GBLS' Children's Disability
Project continues to advocate
for the Social Security Administration to loosen the rules that
block families from accessing
funds that have been set aside
and are owed to children with
disabilities. Success in this
matter will have national
implications with the release of
millions of dollars to children
with disabilities in Massachusetts and across the U.S.

### **TAXES**

awareness of and access to stimulus payments, the expanded Child Tax Credit, and other tax credits through an extensive and ongoing partnership with the Shah Foundation and Children's HealthWatch in developing and updating the FindYourFunds.org website and on related outreach activities. The FindYourFunds. org collaborative was recognized by the White House for its work to help low-income households connect with available financial resources. GBLS also engaged in systemic advocacy with the Automatic Benefits for Children Coalition on access issues for clients with barriers to filing tax forms and dealing with any complications in their cases.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

In 2021, GBLS drafted and convinced the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to issue a policy that extended unemployment to workers who could not work during the pandemic because of caregiving responsibilities.

GBLS worked with legislators to keep the policy in place until all the federal Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs ended in September. Additionally, the agency is now required to provide 30 days' notice before discontinuing any guidance or policy affecting eligibility or benefits, and they must do so in the worker's preferred language and preferred method of communication.

GBLS successfully secured legislation exempting the first \$10,200 of unemployment benefits paid during 2020 and 2021 from state taxes for families with household incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, eliminated penalties for workers' late payments of state UI taxes in 2020 and 2021, and ensured multilingual information about these changes.

Because of GBLS' advocacy with Massachusetts legislators, the DUA paused collections of unemployment benefits overpayments by way of intercepting claimants' tax returns.

### **WORKERS' RIGHTS**

On behalf of the Coalition for Social Justice, GBLS drafted, with input from A Better Balance, and lobbied for a COVID-19 paid leave bill. In May 2021, Governor Baker signed the final bill securing paid COVID leave. Due to the shared efforts of GBLS. the Coalition for Social Justice, the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition, and allies in the House

and Senate, Governor Baker approved an extension to April 1, 2022 of An Act extending the COVID-19 Massachusetts emergency paid leave (House Bill 4127). The bill helped workers, their employers, and communities get through the cold weather season when ongoing COVID-19 risks were high in Massachusetts.

√ In May 2021, GBLS' Asian Outreach Project, in collaboration with community partners VietAID, released a groundbreaking new report on the state of the nail salon industry in Massachusetts. Through interviews with nail salon workers conducted from 2016-2020 and surveys of workers and salon owners through the pandemic, the "From Our Own Voices" report is a part of an effort to support nail salon workers, who are predominantly Vietnamese, in addressing challenges within the industry.

Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) benefits are now available in Massachusetts regardless of immigration status, thanks to advocacy by an Equal Justice Works Fellow in the Employment Law Unit. The Department of Family and Medical Leave dropped their policy of requiring work authorization and denying benefits to undocumented workers, allowing identity verification with a foreign passport.



### **Direct Services**

uring the past eighteen months, GBLS provided urgently-needed civil legal assistance to over 14,000 individuals and families. Through over 17,500 cases handled for clients in the past year and a half, GBLS' attorneys and paralegals used their poverty law expertise and decades of experience to ensure that community members were able to stay safely housed, access important resources and services, and provide for their families.

GBLS' direct services to clients range from issues of economic justice, to household stability, to preserving safety, to ensuring that our neighbors who are least likely to be able to advocate for themselves – including elders, people with disabilities, people with limited English proficiency, and families with children – have access to needed health care, food and financial resources, transit, and education.

Through GBLS' direct service work, our advocates educate and empower clients, teaching people about the rights and responsibilities afforded to them by law and ensuring that they have the resources they need to meet their basic needs. By serving thousands of clients each year, GBLS helps parents care for their children, keeps elders in safe and stable housing, and enables people to go to work and provide for themselves and their families. And our direct services work allows us to create broader change – laying the foundation for impact work that allows us to help even more people in our community and beyond.

### **Legal Community Support**

he Greater Boston legal community demonstrates a special commitment to GBLS and ensuring equal access to civil justice for all. Every year, generous individual attorneys, law firms, and corporate legal departments demonstrate the extent to which they respect and value the legal assistance that GBLS provides to impoverished members of our community by investing in our work. Their support is provided in a variety of ways – including the annual Law Firm Drive, Associates Fund Drive, Corporate Fund Drive, In-House Counsel Drive, legal fellowships, and more. We are grateful for their support.

### **2021 LAW FIRM DRIVE**

### **LEADERSHIP LEAGUE**

(\$850 or more per Boston attorney)

Choate, Hall & Stewart LLP

Goodwin Procter LLP

Goulston & Storrs

Hemenway & Barnes LLP

McNeill Baur

Meehan, Boyle, Black & Bogdanow, P.C.

Ropes & Gray LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Sugarman and Sugarman, P.C.

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

### PACESETTER LEAGUE

(\$700 - \$849 per Boston attorney)

Foley Hoag LLP

Nixon Peabody LLP

Sullivan & Worcester

### **REGINALD HEBER SMITH LEAGUE**

(\$550 - \$699 per Boston attorney)

Fish & Richardson

Landay, Leblang & Stern

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

### PRESIDENT'S LEAGUE

(\$400 - \$549 per Boston attorney)

Davis, Malm & D'Agostine, P.C.

Gilmore, Rees & Carlson PC

Morrison & Foerster LLP

Nutter, McClennen & Fish, LLP

### **SUPPORTER LEAGUE**

(\$250 - \$399 per Boston attorney)

Barnes & Thornburg LLP

Brown Rudnick LLP

Burns & Levinson LLP

Hogan Lovells

Jones Day

Locke Lord

Potomac Law Group, PLLC

Proskauer Rose LLP

Rackemann, Sawyer & Brewster

Robinson+Cole LLP

### **FRIENDS LEAGUE**

(up to \$249 per Boston attorney)

Adler, Cohen, Harvey, Wakeman & Guekguezian, LLP

Bernkopf Goodman LLP

Casner & Edwards, LLP

Cetrulo LLP

Conn Kavanaugh Rosenthal Peisch &

Dain, Torpy, Le Ray, Wiest & Garner, P.C.

Dechert LLP

Faber Daeufer & Itrato PC

Foley & Lardner LLP

Hamilton, Brook, Smith & Reynolds, P.C.

Healy, Fiske, Richmond & Matthew, LLP

Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP

Kirkland & Ellis

Klein Hornig LLP

Kotin, Crabtree & Strong, LLP

Krems, Jackowitz & Carman, LLP

Krokidas & Bluestein LLP

Laredo & Smith, LLP

Lathrop GPM

Lawson & Weitzen, LLP

Messing, Rudavsky & Weliky, P.C.

Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and

Popeo, P.C.

Murtha Cullina LLP

Nolan Sheehan Patten LLP

Petrucelly, Norris & Minsch, PC

Seyfarth Shaw LLP

Sidley Austin LLP

Smith Duggan Buell & Rufo LLP

Stoneman, Chandler & Miller LLP

Sugarman, Rogers, Barshak & Cohen, P.C.

Swartz & Swartz, P.C.

Tarlow, Breed, Hart & Rodgers, P.C.

Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP

Verrill Dana LLP

Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks, P.C.

Womble Bond Dickinson

### **LAW FIRM FELLOWSHIPS**

The following firms provided funding to support the salaries of GBLS attorneys.

Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner. LLP

Goodwin Procter LLP

Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.

Ropes & Gray LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

### CY PRES AWARDS AND OTHER AWARDS

We wish to acknowledge the following law firms who facilitated the award of class action lawsuit residuals received by GBLS.

Berman Tabacco

The Employee Rights Group LLC

Fair Work PC

Greenwald Davidson Radbil PLLC

Lichten & Liss-Riordan PC

Marcus and Auerbach LLC

Muller Law LLC

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

### **FACES OF GBLS**



### Marlon Hernandez Board member and former client

What prompted you to get involved with GBLS as a Board member?

My main intention was more than just interest, it was a matter of principles. I never forgot the importance of GBLS in my life, receiving so much support that I would not have been able to find anywhere else. And all that in exchange for nothing. I have the opportunity to give something back not only to our community but also to GBLS.

What do you think is GBLS' greatest strength? What should we be doing next as an organization?

The greatest strength of GBLS is the capacity to articulate the tools to confront any legal challenge. It does not matter how big it is. Sometimes even with limited budgets or resources.

### **Corporate Fund Drive**

In 2021, Boston-area corporations donated over \$192,000 to the Corporate Fund Drive to support access to justice for all. Thank you to the participating companies for their generosity.

Analog Devices, Inc. Hoffman Alvary & Co.

Arbella Insurance Hologic

Foundation Liberty Mutual Insurance

Biogen, Inc. LPL Financial Holdings Inc.

BioMed Realty MilliporeSigma

Boston Globe Plymouth Rock Assurance Corp.

Citrix Systems, Inc. Raytheon Company

Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

State Street Bank and Trust Company

Fiduciary Trust Company TripAdvisor

Floyd Advisory

## "Access to legal services can be just as important for people's health and well-being as any doctor's visit or medication." -SARAH POST, PHYSICIAN AND GBLS DONOR

### **In-House Counsel Drive**

### Attorneys from the following corporate legal departments participated in the 2021 In-House Counsel Drive.

The Belgrade Group
 Coverys
 Eaton Vance
 Fidelity
 Fiduciary Trust
 Harvard Management Company
 Liberty Mutual
 MFS Investment Management
 Natixis
 State Street
 Vertex
 Wellington

\$250 - \$499

### IN-HOUSE COUNSEL DRIVE DONORS

Employer matches included in giving level where applicable.

### \$5,000 AND ABOVE

Anonymous
Krista Busnach D'Aloia
Jonathan Chiel
Bill Coffey
Ramon Herrera
Michael Cappucci

### \$2,500 - \$4,999

Nati Davidi
Jonathan Davis
Nancy Keating
James Kelleher
Scott Kirwin
Ron Oppenheim
Meaghan Sanders
Christopher Sloan

### \$1,000 - \$2,499

Jennifer Inker

Meg Rehrauer

**Thomas Provost** 

Daniel Karnovsky

Anonymous Russell Aborn

Mark Belanger Maria Damico

Ira Bieler Lori Doyle Place

Margaret Carey Mirela Izmirlic

David Carter Diana Lo

Pamela Egleston Dennis Maher

Jay Haines Lawrence McNally Jr.

### Anonymous (2)

**UPTO \$249** 

Stacey Schmidt Shirin Baradaran John Basile \$500 - \$999 Daniel Bennett Alysia Coppelman Anonymous (3) Jennifer Boylan Elissa Coppinger Thomas Bridge **Ethan Corey** 1ill Damon **Ruth Frederick** Courtney Gribbon Michael Dube Alexander Gavis Christina Lee Susan Pereira Natalie Kavanaugh Karla Portocarrero Kathleen McGrath

> Beverley St. John Tengfei Wu

Susan Roberts

### **Pro Bono Spotlight**



uca is a quiet 11-year-old who is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), ADHD, adjustment disorder with anxiety, and asthma, among other serious conditions. He experiences difficulties with communication, concentration, learning, and social interaction, and as a result, struggles with functioning in almost every setting (school, home and in the community). In addition, Luca requires assistance with daily tasks such as brushing his teeth, taking a shower, and dressing himself. Luca is a clear candidate for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits and his case was moving towards a hearing when the COVID-19 shutdowns occurred.

Fortunately, Luca was represented by two pro bono attorneys from Proskauer Rose, through GBLS' Children's Disability Project. Luca's mother Tania\* found herself overwhelmed during the height of the pandemic when food, shelter, and safety were her primary focus and the family desperately needed SSI benefits. Tania was stretched to her limit between home-schooling and caring for her family, and she didn't have the capacity to think about her son's SSI case. Reflecting on that period, Tania says, "As a mom the [SSI] process was frustrating, but I always felt like [they] had my back."

Tania is grateful for the kindness, respect, and expertise of Luca's Proskauer lawyers, who, despite numerous barriers and delays caused by the pandemic, were dogged in their pursuit of a win for Luca. Luca's pro bono attorneys finally achieved a big victory for the boy following a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge in November 2021. In addition to securing monthly SSI cash benefits – a much needed resource for the family – Luca's attorneys also were able to get him \$6,000 in retroactive payments due to the extended delays. Tania hopes to use the retroactive benefits towards the purchase of a car so that she can safely transport Luca to school and medical appointments.

Together, GBLS and dedicated pro bono attorneys and volunteers make a difference for countless clients in their time of need.

Luca was represented by two pro bono attorneys from Proskauer Rose, through GBLS' Children's Disability Project. Pro Bono Partnerships

### **PRO BONO PARTNERS**

We are grateful to the following law firms and in-house legal departments who provided pro bono services to GBLS and our clients in 2021-2022, and to the many individual attorneys who dedicated their time and energy to ensuring civil justice for all.

Anderson & Kreiger LLP

Brown Rudnick LLP

Citizens Bank

Conn Kavanaugh Rosenthal Peisch & Ford, LLP

**DLA Piper** 

Duane Morris LLP

Fidelity Investments

Floyd Advisory

Foley Hoag LLP

Goodwin Procter LLP

Goulston & Storrs PC

Hemenway & Barnes LLP

Jones Day

Liberty Mutual Group

Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky and Popeo PC

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP

Murphy & King

Nicholson PC

Nixon Peabody LLP

People's United Bank

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

Pressman & Kruskal

Proskauer Rose LLP

Ropes & Gray LLP

Seyfarth Shaw LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Sullivan & Worcester LLP

Thomson Reuters

Vertex

Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

Wolf, Greenfield & Sacks PC

### **PRO BONO AWARDS**

GBLS' Pro Bono Awards celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of our dedicated pro bono partners, and recognizes outstanding firms, companies, and individual volunteers whose pro bono work is crucial to ensuring access to justice for all.

**THE PRO BONO CHAMPION AWARDS** recognize firms and companies that made an outstanding contribution to GBLS pro bono projects in 2021-2022. The 2021-2022 Pro Bono Champions were awarded to:

Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky and Popeo PC for their pro bono partnership on GBLS' Asian Outreach Project's Community Intake

Floyd Advisory for their pro bono financial and accounting consulting services to GBLS, including our Consumer Rights Unit, Elder Health and Disability Unit, and CORI & Re-entry Project.

**THE PRO BONO HERO AWARDS** recognize outstanding pro bono contributions from individual volunteers in 2021-2022. The 2021-2022 Pro Bono Champions Hero Awards recognized:

Tony Martin from Duane Morris LLP for his tireless work on behalf of GBLS clients in need of help with a will and work advising GBLS attorneys on trusts and estates matters related to bankruptcy cases.

**Lisbeth Britz** for her dedicated advocacy on behalf of immigrants as a volunteer paralegal in GBLS' Immigration Unit.

Special thanks to Ropes & Gray LLP for partnering on impact litigation with GBLS in 2021-2022.

\*Clients' names changed for confidentiality.

### **Associates Fund Drive**

### **2022 PARTICIPATING FIRMS**

GBLS is grateful to the following firms, whose associates raised over \$680,000 to support free civil legal assistance for survivors of domestic violence. Thank you!

Mintz Levin\*

Morgan Lewis

Nixon Peabody

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### **FACES OF GBLS**

### **Taramattie Doucette Senior Attorney**

Taramattie Doucette has rightfully achieved legend status at GBLS. With 34 years of legal experience under her belt and as the co-founder of GBLS' Children's Disability Project, Taramattie is an integral part of the fabric of GBLS. She may be best known for her role in one of GBLS' most significant and highprofile impact advocacy cases. As a lead attorney in Daniels-Feingold et al. vs. MBTA, Taramattie and her clients left an indelible mark on disability rights and transit access, fighting for a settlement that ensured that individuals with disabilities can readily travel on any services within the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority system.

### Taramattie, you have a lot of feathers in your legal cap. What is your proudest professional accomplishment to date?

My proudest professional accomplishment has been the creation of the Children's Disability Project (CDP). Sixteen years ago, long-time GBLS volunteer Jane G. Smith and I decided to focus on one of GBLS' most vulnerable populations – low-income children with disabilities – and get them

the Supplemental Security
Income (SSI) benefits and
related supports they need to
survive. Today, the majority of
CDP's clients are low-income
black and brown families—
populations hit hardest by
COVID-19. Many of the families we represent suffer from
trauma stemming from a range
of issues including domestic
violence, unstable housing,
and other problems connected
to poverty, and parents often

struggle to balance work and raising children with serious disabilities. Poverty greatly impacts the social and economic determinants of the health and well-being of children, and CDP has represented hundreds of children and families in our efforts to maximize access to SSI benefits. CDP is unique in the Boston area and our work has been recognized in research articles and expert panels about the harmful impacts of dedicated accounts and other issues that families face navigating the SSI system.

### You are very dedicated to your clients and ensuring positive outcomes for them. Is there a client or case that sticks out in your memory?

One case in particular stands out to me: Joanne, my client, is a young black woman who suffers from Sickle Cell Disease, a life-threatening condition she's had since childhood. She received SSI benefits as a child and came to CDP in her early 20s when, after some delays, SSA was finally reviewing her claim under the adult standard.

The medical racism that Joanne encountered caught my attention. Because of her disease, Joanne suffered from excruciating pain, but there were many occasions when clinicians did not believe that her pain was real. Some doctors and nurses even implied on her medical records that she was drug shopping for narcotics. Further, when we appeared before the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ), again we faced a similar type of systemic racism, where the ALJ simply did not find her credible.

As a woman of color and as Joanne's attorney, I was incredibly angry about everything that Joanne had experienced. After exhausting all lower levels of appeal, I took her case to the U.S. District Court and at the same time I filed and won on a separate second application, securing SSI benefits for Joanne as her case was pending in court.

In U.S. District Court. Judge Zobel issued a fantastic decision overturning the ALJ's findings. The decision is published, Elie v. Saul, 474 F. Supp. 3rd 367 (2020). Zobel accepted several arguments I presented and called out critical errors of law the ALJ made in Joanne's case, such as misreading the treating source records and assigning weight to flawed consulting examiners' reports. Joanne was incredibly pleased with the decision, and I am proud of this case and felt good about finally getting justice for Joanne.

### What made you want to do this work and how do you maintain the drive to keep doing it?

I was born and raised in a small farming village on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies. My parents earned their income by growing sugar cane and selling poultry and produce in an open market. My mother didn't want this hard life for her five daughters. Having been forced to drop out of school and accept an arranged marriage to help her family financially, she was determined that her daughters would have an education and the ability to earn our own income.

My parents saved every penny they could get their hands on, and we immigrated when I was 15. The seven of us moved into a one-bedroom basement apartment in Queens and adjusted to the American way of life. I saw something horribly strange in this country, though. Here, unlike in Trinidad, we were treated as "less than." It was a painful feeling knowing I was being discriminated against based on the color of my skin, my race, and thick Trinidadian accent-none of which I could change.

My mother's story, the social and economic inequities, and racial injustices I saw and experienced while living in New York drove my desire to practice law and make a difference.

My entire goal for attending law school was to represent

low-income people, adults and children with disabilities. and communities of color. I knew I wanted to work at legal services after taking a poverty law clinic course and successfully represented my first client, a Black man with a disability. I felt that legal services would provide the opportunity to address the many wrongs I saw as a young Trinidadian woman living in a place where institutionalized racism, unconscious bias, and social inequities can irreparably damage people's lives.

My brave mother's hope came true for her five daughters. Each of us was fortunate to build lives that honor our mother's dreams. My mother's sacrifices echo in the legal work that I am privileged to do every day.



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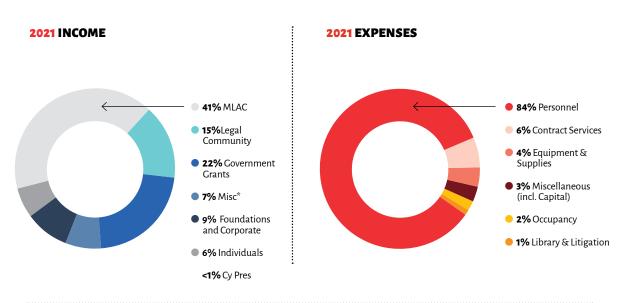
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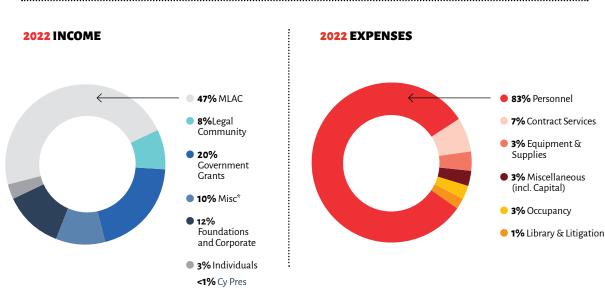
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We appreciate the generosity and support of all our donors, including our many friends who donated up to \$249 in 2021 and the first half of 2022. Thank you also to the many donors who recommended that GBLS receive a grant from the American Endowment Foundation, Boston Foundation, California Community Foundation, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Fidelity Charitable, Renaissance Charitable Foundation, Schwab Charitable, U.S. Charitable Gift Trust, Vanguard Charitable or other donor-advised funds or corporate matching programs.

### **Financial Statements**

Financial data from FY 2022 is preliminary and unaudited. This information represents a condensed, 6-month transitionary fiscal year.





\* Misc. includes Attorney's Fees, Investments, and Law School Contributions

### **Commemorative Gifts**

### BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2021 AND JUNE 30, 2022, GIFTS WERE MADE IN MEMORY OF:

Sarah Anderson by Sally A. Kelly

Paul Carroll

by John J. Carroll

Richard Doyle

by Marianna Dwyer; Tom & Pat McCarthy

### Brian Flynn

by Robert Brown; Esme Caramello; Antonia Domingo; Larry Goldsmith; David Guberman; Marlene Heroux; Pat & Burt Linscott; Wendy Miller; Rebecca Plummer; Stephanie M. Poggi

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### **FACES OF GBLS**

"With cases rising astronomically during the pandemic, especially employment issues and domestic violence cases, GBLS' work is more essential than ever."

STATE REPRESENTATIVE TRAM NGUYEN FORMER GBLS STAFF ATTORNEY



### **GBLS** Legacy Society

Members of the GBLS Legacy Society make a lasting commitment to legal services by including GBLS as a bequest in their will or through another planned giving instrument.

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### BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2021 AND JUNE 30, 2022, GIFTS WERE MADE IN HONOR OF:

### Asian Outreach Project

by Tatte Bakery; Five Forks Farm; Gina Fox; Christine Jee; Jenny Macintosh; Rory O'Dwyer; Gisela Rots

### Jacquelynne Bowman by Victoria Nguyen

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### Kristen Bor-Zale, Todd Kaplan, and Hannah Tanabe

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### **IN-KIND DONATIONS**

Thank you to the many individuals, companies, and firms who generously donated gifts of goods or services in 2021 and the first half of 2022. Your in-kind support helps GBLS conserve resources and serve as many clients and community members as possible.

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Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA)

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

U.S. Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women (OVW)

U.S. Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service

Senators Edward Markey and Elizabeth Warren Congressionally Directed Spending

We thank all of our funders for providing their support during these challenging times. We wish to acknowledge Liberty Mutual Foundation, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Boston Foundation, and the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance for their additional COVID-19 relief funding.

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

Asian American Resources Workshop (AARW)

Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK)

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Boston College Legal Services LAB

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Boston University School of Social Work

Boston Tenant Coalition (BTC)

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Thank you to the additional community-based groups and social service organizations with whom GBLS partners, which are too numerous to list here. We appreciate your hard work on behalf of our mutual clients. The collaborative work we do with partners to remedy critical community needs makes a significant impact in the lives of many. We look forward to continuing to work with you to find effective solutions and approaches to addressing emerging issues in the communities we serve.

### **EASTERN REGION PARTNERS**

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### **SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Fellows and students assisted GBLS' clients and staff through programs sponsored by the following school partners.

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### **VOLUNTEERS**

We are grateful to the following individuals who provided administrative or other services during the year.

Lisbeth Britz Julia Fissore-O'Leary Simon Klein Anthony Nekesha William Rosenfeld Maureen Serio Barbara Sullivan Lizbeth Valerio Rebecca Warner

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Barbara Sullivan

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### **VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS**

The following individuals, in addition to many law students, volunteered substantial commitments of time in 2021 and the first half of 2022 to GBLS and its clients. Their contributions are valued at over \$2.675,000 in in-kind services to GBLS in 2021. We are also very grateful to the many pro bono attorneys, too numerous to list here, who handled GBLS cases at their firms, participated in legal clinics, or provided research or other legal support.

Richard Bauer

Rhonda Berkower

Vali Buland

Jeanne Charn

Judi Diamond

Ron Eskin

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John Harrington

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Christina Moore

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Robert Sable

**Gregory Santos** 

Howard Silverman

Jane Smith

Alessandra Suuberg

**Constance Vecchione** 

Mary Wixted

\* Fellows | ∧ AmeriCorps

Maria Fernandes

### **Awards and Honors**

The following advocates were named Top Lawyers by Boston Magazine: CAROLINA AFRICANO and MANISHA BHATT, Family Law Unit Senior Attorneys; Ventura Dennis, CORI and Re-entry Project Senior Attorney; NANCY LORENZ, Elder, Health and Disability Unit Senior Attorney; LISA LOCHER, Immigration Law Unit Senior Attorney; and HANNAH TANABE, Employment Law Unit Senior Attorney.

RICHARD (DICK) BAUER, GBLS

Access to Justice Fellow and retired Housing Unit Senior Attorney, received the Rob Doyle Lawyer Award from the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) Massachusetts chapter. Rob Doyle was a founding member of the NLG's MA Chapter. The Access to Justice Fellows Program is a project of the Massachusetts Access to Justice Commission and the Lawyers Clearinghouse, "enabling senior lawyers and retired judges to partner with nonprofit organizations, courts, and other public service entities to increase equal justice for all."

NADINE COHEN, Managing
Attorney of the Consumer Rights
Unit, and MARGARET TURNER,
Housing Law Unit Senior
Attorney, received 2021 Open
Door Champion Awards from
Citizens' Housing & Planning
Association (CHAPA). They

were honored as members of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Community Advisory Committee (CAC) that worked with Boston City Councilor Lydia Edwards on Boston's first in the nation AFFH Zoning Amendment and Boston's new 2021 Assessment of Fair Housing. NADINE COHEN also received a 2022 Open Door Champion award from CHAPA at their Fair Housing Symposium. One of four Open Door Champion awardees, Nadine was recognized for her "career commitment to fair housing, legal successes, and innovation."

TARAMATTIE DOUCETTE, Elder,

Health and Disability Unit
Senior Attorney and director and
co-founder of GBLS' Children's
Disability Project, was honored
as one of Massachusetts Lawyers
Weekly's Top Women of Law.
The Top Women of Law event
"celebrates the achievements of
exceptional women lawyers who
are pioneers, educators, trailblazers and role models."

MARIA FERNANDES, Welfare Law Unit Senior Paralegal, and DAVID WHITE, GBLS Staff Accountant, received Dow-Gardiner-Landrum Awards at GBLS' 2021 Annual Meeting. This award was established in 1985 by the Board of Directors in memory of three former board members: Harry Dow, the first Asian attorney

admitted to the Massachusetts Bar, who was extremely active on GBLS' board and the boards of various community and social services agencies; Bob Gardiner, who was an attorney with significant involvement with community agencies, especially GBLS; and Lily Landrum, a community activist and long-time client-eligible member of GBLS' board. The board created the award to honor staff and board members who demonstrate the same longterm commitment to ensuring that people living in poverty have access to justice as was apparent in the lives of these three board members.

LAURA GAL, Family Law Unit Managing Attorney, was appointed co-chair of the Massachusetts Access to Justice Commission beginning July 2021. Her co-chairs are SJC Justice Serge Georges and Attorney Marijane Benner Browne of Ropes and Gray.

LILIANA IBARA, GBLS' Deputy
Director, was elected to the
Boston Bar Association Council,
the BBA's governing body, whose
members help the organization
further its mission to provide
tools, relationships, and opportunities to develop successful
careers and practices for its
members.

DANIELLE JOHNSON, then

Housing Law Unit Attorney, received a Women's Bar Foundation 2021 Emerging Women Leaders in the Law Award that recognizes the significant professional achievements of women lawyers in the first 12 years of their careers. The award "honors women who have excelled in the legal field while guiding other women in achieving success and supporting their communities through volunteerism and social justice."

SARAH LEVY, Welfare Law Unit Senior Attorney and leader of GBLS' Children's Practice Group, received a 2022 Massachusetts Bar Association Legal Services Award, an annual award presented by the MBA "to an attorney employed by a public or nonprofit agency to provide civil legal services to low-income clients, and who has made a particularly significant or meaningful contribution to the provision of low-income legal services, above and beyond the requirements of his or her position." Sarah was also selected by the Boston Bar Association (BBA) for the steering committee of the new BBA Children and the Law section. During fall 2021 the BBA resumed its efforts to get a Children and Law section started after a two-year hiatus.

DANIEL MANNING, GBLS'

Associate Director/Litigation
Director, received the Boston
Center for Independent Living's
Marie Feltin Award. Dan was
recognized for litigating "numerous cases with the GBLS team to
advance rights and services for
low-income people for decades,
including the ADA class-action
lawsuit against the MBTA."

ALEXANDER MILVAE, then Equal Justice Works Fellow Attorney with GBLS' Asian Outreach Project, was recognized by the City of Malden and its mayor Gary Christenson for his successful efforts with community groups over the years to improve voter access for Asian residents.

ALEXA ROSENBLOOM, then
Consumer Rights Unit Senior
Attorney, received the Reginald
Heber Smith Award at GBLS'
2021 Annual Meeting. The
award is presented for building
community within and outside
GBLS, innovation and excellence
in legal work, and for bringing
a fresh perspective to GBLS'
legal advocacy as an advocate for
justice with fewer than ten years
of experience.

ROBERT SABLE, Consumer Rights Unit volunteer attorney and former GBLS Executive Director, received a Richard W. "Archie" Southgate Volunteer Award at GBLS' 2021 Annual Meeting. The award was established in 1998 to honor "Archie" Southgate, former Managing Partner of Ropes & Gray, who upon retirement volunteered for three years as a staff

attorney in GBLS' Employment Law Unit and helped to establish the Senior Lawyer Volunteer Program. This award is made annually to honor an outstanding volunteer at GBLS.

LAUREN SONG, Housing Unit Senior Attorney, was selected to participate in the City of Boston's Rent Stabilization Advisory Committee. Mayor Michelle Wu formed the committee to examine local housing conditions and rent stabilization programs in other cities. Committee members are tasked with making recommendations to the mayor and the mayor's Office of Housing on strategies to stabilize Boston rents and protect tenants from displacement.

HANNAH TANABE, Employment Law Unit Senior Attorney, received the 2022 Massachusetts Bar Association Rising Star Award, one of the annual Access to Justice Awards presented by the MBA. The Rising Star Award is "given to an attorney employed by a legal services organization, a public defender organization, or a state or federal prosecutor's office, or an attorney who has engaged in significant pro bono activities, who has been a practicing attorney for seven years or less, who has distinguished herself or himself by a particular accomplishment or body of work that has made a significant and meaningful contribution to access to justice to an underserved population within Massachusetts."

### **FACES OF GBLS**

### Ilana Gelfman

### Senior Attorney, former Board member

By her resume alone, Ilana Gelfman is a superstar. Before becoming a Senior Attorney in GBLS' Housing Unit, Ilana was an appellate partner at Jones Day, having also served as a judicial clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, and the District Court for the District of Massachusetts. But she's always been a star to GBLS' clients. Ilana's GBLS bonafides run deep: She was a Skadden Fellow from 2009 to 2011, and more recently she served on GBLS' Board of Directors.

### What brought you to GBLS initially and did the same motivation inspire your return?

I first came to GBLS as a summer intern during law school, working with the Shelter Group. I returned the next summer to intern with the Welfare Law Unit; came back after graduation to serve as a staff attorney and fellow; rejoined the organization several years later as a member of the Board of Directors; and, finally, began in my current position in the Housing Unit in early 2021. You might describe my career as a series of returns—homecomings, really—to GBLS. Each time that I returned, my clients were facing new challenges. And each time, I brought back to GBLS a somewhat different skill set, hoping to use it to assist my clients. But the fundamental motivations remained the same: to advocate for individuals, families, and communities who cannot afford representation; to promote systemic change; and to make the justice system a bit more just.

### What do you think Boardm members should know?

Amazing things happen when GBLS is able to represent a person. I've seen my colleagues rise to the challenge again and again. A

colleague in the Consumer Rights Unit recently secured an important trial-court ruling about the resources that are excluded from garnishment, and now his client can afford rent and food. Another colleague helped a tenant with serious disabilities save her housing voucher even though it had been terminated months before. A colleague in the Elder Health and Disability Unit helped a homeless family obtain social security benefits for a child with disabilities and then helped the family use those benefits to find housing. I'm regularly blown away by the intelligence, creativity, and doggedness of my co-workers. They are tremendous advocates for their clients. But there are so many people whom GBLS cannot represent, because we just do not have the capacity to meet the need.

Frankly, it's hard to comprehend the level of unmet need, especially if you have not been in the shoes of a legal aid staff member, telling people calling for help that we do not have the capacity to represent them, or if you have not been in the shoes of a person who cannot find representation, forced to face opposing counsel and a judge without legal assistance.

Board members should understand the enormity of this crisis--and appreciate the importance of the work they are doing to ameliorate it.

### You're working on some pretty big projects these days. What excites you most about your current work?

I've been working on some really important impact advocacy. For instance, together with my colleagues in the Housing Unit, I litigated an appeal regarding the validity of Boston's COVID eviction moratorium. We worked with counsel for the Boston Public Health Commission and the City of Boston to secure a stay pending appeal that enabled tenants to stay housed during the height of the Omicron wave. The moratorium (and that court decision) very likely saved lives. The appeal is a great example of the kind of work we do at GBLS. The case was complex, challenging, and fast-paced. Our work responded to a crucial and immediate need. The issue disproportionately affected low-income people and people of color. And our team of

attorneys worked

collaboratively

to reach a

phenomenal

result. Who

wouldn't be

work like

this?

excited about

### **CONSTANCE (CONNIE) ROSSETTI** Michael L. Altman

Isaac D. Bantu

Carey L. Bertrand

Bernard J. Bonn

John E. Bowman

Gregory E. Bulger

Myrnairis Cepeda

Zachary Coseglia

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### **In Memoriam**

We are saddened to note the loss of a cherished community member.

In 2021, GBLS lost one of our longest serving employees. Constance (Connie) Rossetti was a Senior Paralegal at GBLS, most recently in our Consumer Rights Unit. She worked at GBLS for over 40 years, receiving the GBLS Founder's Award in 2020 for her exemplary service to our clients and community. We all miss her.

### **Corporation Members**

GBLS' Corporation is comprised of members of the community — including lawyers, clients, and interested citizens — who are elected to five-year terms. These individuals serve GBLS by electing the Board of Directors and Officers of the Corporation and by conducting any required business.

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As of June 30, 2022

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## Creater Boston Legal Services 197 Friend Street Boston, MA 02114

Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) provides free legal assistance and representation on civil isssues to thousands of legal residents in the city of Boston and 31 surrounding cities and towns.

When they have nowhere else to turn, families and individuals living in poverty, elders, and people with disabilities look to GBLS for help to secure the most basic necessities of life.

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