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Report of the Legal Aid Committee

Dicta Editorial Board

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REPORT OF THE LEGAL AID COMMITTEE

September 13, 1932

TO THE DENVER BAR ASSOCIATION:

The Legal Aid Committee of the Denver Bar Association submits the following report of its activities:

Soon after the appointment of this Committee complaints were received, from responsible members of the Bar, to the effect that the Legal Aid Society of Denver, or its employees were preparing and filing bankruptcy petitions for applicants, who either were able to pay for legal services or should not have imposed upon the good offices of the Legal Aid Society by asking alms in the nature of charitable legal services.

These complaints, coupled with the fact that the committee of the Bar Association, had not met with the officials of the Legal Aid Society for several years, made it an opportune time to confer with the Society. The Committee presented certain recommendations to the Society, through Mr. Harry Green, its attorney, and Mr. James Pershing, its president, with the hope and thought in mind that these recommendations, if adopted, would be helpful in furthering a better understanding between the Bar of Denver and the Legal Aid Society.

After a thorough discussion of these matters it was concluded, at this conference, that the Society should refrain and limit its activities, as hereinafter set forth in detail. By so doing the original purposes of the Legal Aid Society will be more nearly fulfilled, and persons of financial responsibility will learn that the Society was organized for charitable purposes and functions solely for the purposes of aiding indigent litigants.

The Society heartily welcomed suggestions of your committee, and it was apparent to all present that Mr. Green, with the small amount of funds available, was compelled to attempt to render services far beyond the ability of the Society. To meet this situation the committee and the Society agreed that it was imperative that the Society should materially limit its services and in the future refrain from the following activities:

1. It shall not file petitions in bankruptcy.

2. It shall not file Forcible Entry and Unlawful Detainer cases; nor defend the same, unless the defendant clearly presents a meritorious and bona fide defense.

3. It shall not file nor appear in estate or probate matters.

4. It shall not file divorce suits.

5. It shall not defend litigants in divorce suits, unless requested so to do by the Courts.

6. It shall not file nor present Industrial Relation claims where the award may exceed one hundred dollars.

7. It shall not file suits, of any nature, where the amount involved exceeds one hundred dollars.

8. It shall not examine abstracts of title to real estate.

9. It shall not draw wills or trust agreements.

10. It shall not do scrivener work, in connection with the transfer or mortgaging of real or personal property.

11. It shall not accept for collection accounts in excess of one hundred dollars.

12. It shall not represent defendants in criminal defenses.

13. It, or any of its employees, shall not engage in any of the above prohibited activities before, during or after business hours, nor personally, directly or by indirection, receive any compensation, or gift for services rendered or performed from any applicant or recipient of charitable services.

It is the intention of the Legal Aid Committee to prepare and supervise a list of members of the Denver Bar, who may express their willingness to represent indigent litigants, in legal matters which may fall within the above prohibited classifications. Litigants having such business will be referred in rotation to Attorneys on this list. Within a few days letters will be sent to members of the Bar asking for volunteers for this attorneys list.

In view of the above prohibited classifications of professional services, compensation occasionally will be received by members of this list from litigants who may have benefited from said attorney's services. Any attorney who performs his duties in an unsatisfactory manner to the detriment of said litigants interest, shall have his name stricken from said attorneys list, and his services shall not be used in future matters.

That the Committee may cooperate with the Legal Aid Society and function efficiently, all fees obtained from referred litigants shall be reported to the Committee, together with a resume of the services rendered.

Much thought, time and attention has been given by the members of your Committee to this investigation and the preparation of this report. Our work is not finished, in fact it has just started, and your committee welcomes suggestions from the members of the Bar in order that the Legal Aid Society may serve the truly indigent citizens of Denver in the proper manner.

Respectfully submitted,

THE LEGAL AID COMMITTEE,
 J. F. Rotruck, Chairman,
 Carl Cline,
 Felder Cook,
 George H. Lerg,
 Stephen W. Ryan.

IN RE JURY TRIALS

RESOLVED by Judge Calvert that Section 1 of Rule XI of the Rules of the District Court be amended to read as follows:

“SECTION 1. Unless otherwise ordered by the Court, the jury in the civil divisions shall report on the first and third Tuesdays in the months of March, May and November; on the third Tuesdays in the months of January and September, and on the second Tuesdays in the months of February, April and October.”

(Above resolution carried.)

Mr. Frank N. Bancroft has resigned as Trust Officer of The Colorado National Bank of Denver and has again entered private practice. He has resumed practice with Bartels & Blood, the new firm name to be “Bartels, Blood and Bancroft”.