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## Fifth Annual Report of Legal Aid Society of Denver

Dicta Editorial Board

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## Fifth Annual Report of Legal Aid Society of Denver

## FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF DENVER

**T**HE Society is pleased to announce the successful consummation of its efforts to secure for Denver the eighth annual convention of the National Association of Legal Aid Organizations. The National Association will hold its convention in Denver, Colorado, September 4 and 5, 1930, at the Brown Palace Hotel. Some fifty or more of the largest cities in the United States will send delegates. This will be the first time in the history of the National Association that the annual convention has been held in the West, as the center of legal aid activities is east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio River. However, the legal aid movement has been spreading so rapidly that it is expected at the Denver meeting delegates will come, not only from the East and North, but also from the South, the Middle West and the Pacific Coast.

Denver thus has the distinction of being placed in the same class with Cleveland, 1923; Minneapolis, 1924; Memphis, 1925; New York, 1926; St. Louis, 1927; Detroit, 1928; and Cincinnati, 1929, as a convention city for National Legal Aid.

The Denver Bar Association will be hosts to the delegates at a dinner on the evening of September 4. All of the meetings are open to the public and it is expected that a number of Denver lawyers and social workers will attend the various conferences, for the National Legal Aid conventions are perhaps the only gatherings of their kind which are interesting to both the legal profession and to social workers.

Another important milestone in the history of the local Society during the past year has been the payment of the \$400.00 note which had been outstanding since August, 1926. This amount was obtained by subscription from fifteen of the leading law firms in Denver, with the last \$25.00 contributed by the Society. The response to this fund was most cordial and indicates that the attorneys of Denver are anxious to cooperate and assist the legal aid movement in Denver.

Since June, 1929, the Legal Aid Society of Denver has not been filing divorce, annulment and separate maintenance

cases in the Courts. Advice and counsel have been given as heretofore, but when it becomes necessary to file such actions, they have been referred to private attorneys, to a selected list, approved by the officers of the Society, to the legal aid committee of the Denver Bar Association and to the trial judges. Cooperation on the part of the majority of those asked to take these cases has been satisfactory.

The offices of the Society were removed from 328-329 Kittredge Building to 622-623 Kittredge Building during the last days of July, 1929, at the same rental as heretofore. The offices are larger, and are better adapted to the work of the Society. One advantage is that the Society now has its own exclusive waiting room, separate and apart from that used by any other attorneys.

Joseph P. Constantine, formerly assistant attorney, resigned August 1, 1929, to enter private practice. Beginning September 1, 1929, the Society has been served by Ida Nelson, assistant secretary, on the same salary basis as that heretofore paid to an assistant attorney.

In order to keep before the minds of the public and especially before the members of the bar, the aims, objects and purposes of the Legal Aid Society of Denver as stated in the Articles of Incorporation are here quoted, as follows:

"The Society has been organized to render legal aid (gratuitously if necessary) to any and all worthy poor, distressed persons needing assistance in the establishment and maintenance of their legal rights; to counsel said persons, and to assist them in the prosecution and defense of civil actions or special proceedings in any lawful manner; to study and promote measures for the protection of persons under total or partial disability, or who by reason of ignorance, improvidence or inability to procure assistance elsewhere for the establishment and maintenance of their legal rights, are the victims of misadventure or oppression; to cooperate with the judiciary and officers of the law and bar associations, and charitable organizations interested in securing a proper administration of justice in behalf of poor, worthy, distressed persons."

Could the Society have space, we could tell a number of stories of deep human interest in connection with this work, as could most attorneys who deal with humanity. These would be the recounting of help given to widows, orphans, the lame, the blind and those otherwise distressed in mind, body and estate. These cases naturally cover all phases of legal work,

including family troubles, parent and child, collections of wages and other claims, contracts, property, torts and estates.

Conciliation and arbitration, following as complete an investigation as time and facilities warrant, looking to satisfactory adjustments outside of Court are always the aim of the Society. Justice to all parties concerned is the object in view. Court cases are conducted in the same manner as private attorneys handle their cases, except as to the subject of attorney fees.

We have always sought the closest cooperation with members of the Denver Bar Association, and reciprocate with them in taking over any case, where the private attorney considers the case of a charitable nature. The object is not to deprive the private attorneys of fees where the client is able to pay normal or reasonable fees. However, there are cases where the client can pay a small fee after the services have been rendered, which would not compensate a private attorney for his time and trouble. Such fees, when voluntarily paid to the Society, are used to reduce a deficit of from twenty to twenty-five dollars each month for the running expenses of the Society over and above the allowance from the Community Chest.

The average cost per case for 1928 in Denver was \$5.55, as shown in our Fourth Annual Report. In 1929, with an increased number of cases, and the expenses about the same this average is \$4.77. As shown by comparative figures last year, Denver is operating on as economical basis as the average Legal Aid Society throuth the country.

The Society extends its heartiest appreciation for the assistance given by the various members of the Board of Directors, the officers of the Society, the Denver Bar Association and its various officers, the Denver Community Chest and the Denver public in general. The members of the Board have, with but few exceptions, served the Society since its organization. Mr. Tyson Dines, Jr., has taken the place of his father, Tyson Dines, Sr., who had served from the beginning until his demise. The Society has also lost another valuable member, Mr. John K. Mullen, who attended the organization meeting in 1925, and made the first contribution to the Society.

The membership of this Board of Directors indicates the non-political, non-sectarian, non-racial, and non-denominational character of the Society, and this fact has been one of the strongest appeals we have been able to make to the public.

In conclusion the Secretary and General Attorney wishes to express his sincere gratitude for the cooperation of those previously mentioned; to the officers of the Bar Association and to Dicta; to Mr. Karl C. Schuyler, who has waited for four years for the deficit of the Society to be paid; to all of those who helped to pay this deficit; and to all attorneys, social workers and others who have had a large share in the success of the Society in past years.

Finally we extend a hearty invitation to all those interested in Legal Aid work in Denver to attend one or more of the sessions of the annual convention of the National Association of Legal Aid Organizations at the Brown Palace September 4 and 5, 1930.

Respectfully submitted,  
 HARRY C. GREEN,  
*Secretary and General Attorney.*

**SUMMARY OF LEGAL AID SOCIETY'S STATISTICS  
 FOR FIVE YEARS**

(The Fiscal year ends November 30, to correspond to the Community Chest year.)

<i>Nationalities Served During the Five Years</i> .....						34
	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	
American .....	473	435	645	717	743	
British .....	14	14	18	19	60	
German .....	12	13	15	18	28	
Italian .....	5	9	14	13	18	
Spanish-Mexican .....	11	12	14	39	26	
Colored .....	10	17	20	29	39	
Jewish .....	12	14	13	21	22	
25 Other Nations .....	50	24	57	36	69	
Totals .....	587	538	796	892	1005	
<i>Source of Cases Referred. Number of Sources</i> .....						52
Courts .....	142	111	154	122	83	
City, County & State Officials .....	60	98	131	152	193	
Lawyers .....	58	48	44	59	76	
Other Professions .....	3	10	14	22	44	
Chest and Agencies .....	65	68	83	76	123	

	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year
City Charities .....	20	21	38	42	34
Other Welfare Soc. ....	10	9	17	15	20
Business & Industrial .....	7	8	14	17	22
Previously Served .....	34	40	73	107	103
By Another Client .....	37	54	98	115	97
General Publicity .....	152	71	130	165	200
Totals .....	587	538	796	892	1005

*Nature of Cases:*

Contractual Relation .....	175	200	299	357	402
Torts .....	56	55	52	60	55
Property .....	82	86	122	113	115
Estates .....	21	24	34	28	22
Domestic Relations* .....	208	152	249	258	283
Criminal Matters .....	14	8	19	20	14
Various, War Claims, etc. ....	14	2	11	19	44
Miscellaneous .....	18	11	10	37	70
Totals .....	587	538	796	892	1005

*Disposition of Cases:*

Investigated and Advice Given .....	331	285	392	551	664
Investigated and Referred to Social Agency .....	12	6	6	1	6
Investigated and Referred to Private Atty. ....	40	20	61	31	40
Lapsed or Terminated by Client .....	3	7	9	6	4
Adjusted by Settlement or Conciliation .....	55	70	134	106	126
Legal Documents Drawn (No Lit.) .....	6	8	14	29	27
<i>Pending Cases at Close of Report:</i>					
In Justice Courts .....	3	1	0	1	4
In Higher Courts .....	48	21	30	9	10
<i>Litigated Cases:</i>					
Settled after Litig. in J. P. Court.....	17	26	38	21	25
Won in J. P. Courts .....	19	19	18	29	32
Lost in J. P. Courts (Pl. & Def.).....	12	7	5	3	7
Settled after Litig. (Higher Cts.).....	7	11	21	16	20
Won in Higher Courts (Pl. & Def.) .....	26	50	91	82	34
Lost in Higher Courts (Pl. & Def.) .....	8	6	7	3	6
Total .....	587	538	796	892	1005

For the first five months of the current year, (Dec. 1, 1929 to April 30, 1930, incl.) the Society has docketed 510 cases, as compared to 418 cases for the corresponding period of last year. The Nationalities, Sources, Nature and Disposition compare about the same as for the similar period last year.

To date of compiling this report—May 18, 1930—the Society has docketed from the beginning—Nov. 11, 1924—a total of 4,258 cases.

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\*NOTE: Domestic Relations includes Juvenile Court cases on Non-Support of Wife, Children and Parents; desertion; guardianship and, prior to June, 1929, divorce, annulment and separate maintenance.

EXPENDITURES FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS IN COMPARISON.

	Fiscal year ending November 30, 1928	1929
Salary, General Attorney .....	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Salary, Asst. Atty. or Secretary .....	960.00	960.00
Office supplies .....	124.83	120.64
Letter heads .....	10.00	17.00
Postage .....	46.00	52.50
Telephone .....	157.91	142.82
Office rent .....	360.00	360.00
Filing cabinets .....	51.00	None
Window vents .....	None	8.30
Typewriter .....	35.00	60.00
Typewriter repairs .....	5.00	None
Auditing .....	15.00	None
Dues to National Association .....	None	25.00
Miscellaneous .....	1.25	15.90
	<u>\$4,765.99</u>	<u>\$4,762.16</u>
Paid to General Attorney from Deposits by Voucher on old salary deficit .....	150.00	None
Total .....	<u>\$4,915.99</u>	<u>\$4,762.16</u>

RECEIPTS FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS IN COMPARISON

	Fiscal year ending November 30, 1928	1929
Community Chest .....	\$4,500.00	\$4,455.00
Voluntary fees from few clients after services rendered; 10% collection fees; and from Adverse Parties by agreement or by Court Order .....	450.45	348.80
Total Received .....	<u>\$4,950.45</u>	<u>\$4,803.80</u>

NOTE: The above figures do not include the \$400.00 paid to cancel an outstanding note of the Society, as this amount was received after the close of the fiscal year for 1929.