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Fourth Annual Report of the Legal Aid Society

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Fourth Annual Report of the Legal Aid Society

REPORT OF PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

We have created no sensations; we have done nothing spectacular; but we have attempted to give publicity to the meetings of the association and to its activities, not only for the benefit of the public but for that of the lawyers as well.

Among other things, we have contributed an item once each month to the American Bar Association Journal on the activities of our Denver Bar Association, and we commend this task to our successors as one we believe worthy of perpetuation.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH C. SAMPSON, *Chairman*

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

This Fourth Annual Report* of the Secretary and General Attorney of the Legal Aid Society of Denver covers the period from December 1, 1927 to November 30, 1928, as far as the tables of statistics and the financial tabulations are concerned, in order to conform to the fiscal year of the Denver Community Chest. The financial report of the Treasurer is also appended.

Events in the life of the Society, to date March 9, 1929, will be covered. The Society was organized November 11, 1924 under the auspices of the Denver Bar Association, and incorporated February 26, 1925.

The officers and other members of the Executive Committee and the members of the Board of Directors selected at that time are to be commended for having served the Society faithfully. Since then Mr. Halsted L. Ritter, the president, left Denver, and Mr. George C. Manly, former Dean of the Law School of the University of Denver, has been the acting president. Mr. Wallbank has been the Treasurer during the whole period.

**Editor's Note:* The Society being closely allied with the Association, it is appropriate that its annual report be presented in conjunction with those of the committees of the Association. Due to limitations of space, certain portions of the report are omitted; the summary of statistics is also reduced.

On March 7, 1929 at a meeting of the Board of Directors the following changes were made: Mr. James H. Pershing was elected president; Mr. Horace N. Hawkins was elected vice-president; Mr. Stanley T. Wallbank was re-elected treasurer.

The other members of the Executive Committee chosen are: Mr. Albert A. Reed; Mr. Clem Collins; Mr. Jacob V. Schaetzel; Dr. Lillian Pollock.

The Society has been in operation for a sufficient period of time for the Denver Community to be fairly well acquainted with the aims, objects, purposes and to some extent, the results of the organization:

The Articles of Incorporation state:

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.

To date, May 16, 1929 we have 3125 cases docketed on our records, a fair proportion of which are court cases, referred by federal, state, county and city officers, judges, city district and private attorneys, Legal Aid Organizations in other cities, the various social agencies and city charities of Denver and elsewhere, newspapers, other organizations, clergy, societies, business houses, industries and individuals.

Cases cover all phases of legal procedure, relating to contracts, torts, property, estates, domestic relations, parent and child, war claims, collections, etc. etc.

Cases are disposed of as far as possible, out of Court. Investigation is made as fully as possible before court action is undertaken. A number of cases, increasing in proportion to Court cases, have been amicably and satisfactorily adjusted through the attorneys for the society acting as mediator, conciliator and arbitrator.

Sometimes it is necessary, in the relation of attorney and client, for the attorneys of the Society to oppose an organization or an attorney, or others who may have contributed or referred other cases to us, but an effort is always made to obtain justice for all parties concerned.

When a case is undertaken in court, either for plaintiff or defendant, then the case is conducted in the same manner as in private practice, except as to the matter of attorney's fees.

The Society in the beginning adopted the policy followed by Legal Aid Organizations throughout the country, of endeavoring not to interfere with the practice of private attorneys, in the matter of their income, but rather to cooperate with them in relieving them as much as possible of their free or charitable cases. We have entered our special appearance in cases for attorneys who were out of the city or for other good reasons could not appear, and have handled the case in court on motions; and even in the trial of the case. The attorneys of the Society are anxious to render as complete a service to all members of the Denver bar as is possible under our limited facilities. Investigation of each case is made with this end in view, and a number have been referred to private attorneys, where a fee may be had.

Since December 1, 1926 the Society has been financed as a full member of the Denver Community Chest. Some additional revenue has been received from clients paying small voluntary fees after services rendered; also by a few adverse parties by agreement or court order. The budget committee of the Community Chest two years ago suggested a ten per cent collection fee on money actually collected wherein to do so, will not work an actual hardship upon the client. These fees so far have been sufficient to make up the deficit of about Twenty to Twenty-five Dollars each month for the running expenses of the Society, over and above the amount contributed by the Community Chest. Also there has been some money to apply on the deficit in the salary of the General Attorney during the period prior to the Society becoming a full member of the Chest. In this manner we also hope to clear up the deficit existing during the time the Society was sponsored by the Bar Association, as shown in the financial statement.

These small fees so collected have not been of sufficient amount to indicate that any private attorneys have been deprived of legitimate fees in their private practice. In many instances attorneys, after making an investigation sent their clients to the Society stating that the small fee would not warrant them in taking the case as a private case.

Community Chests in Albany, Cleveland, San Francisco and other cities have been supporting the Legal Aid Societies for some time on the same basis as they have supported other Social Agencies, because the Legal Aid Societies have cooperated with the various Chest and Charitable Agencies in solving their legal problems, thus preventing many legal cases from becoming acute social cases.

The average cost per case for 1928 was \$5.55 in Denver. This compares favorably with the following cities:

City	Number Cases	Average Cost Per Case
Albany	681	\$5.45
Louisville	1258	5.58
Providence	474	8.05
San Francisco	1947	4.84
Springfield	830	6.74
Rochester	1325	5.45
Boston	8241	4.63
Montreal	585	6.81

John S. Bradway, Esq., Secretary of the National Association of Legal Aid Organizations revisited the Society in 1928. He has stated that the work done in Denver is on a par with that done in other cities. We have enjoyed the fullest cooperation with the National Association, as well as with other Societies in other cities, where our clients or adverse parties have left Denver, and likewise have rendered assistance to other Societies and their clients.

Last fall the Denver Society in conjunction with the Denver Chamber of Commerce extended an invitation to the National Association to hold the convention here this year. There were invitations from Dallas, Denver, Memphis, Atlantic City and Cincinnati. The later named city was finally chosen, as it was felt that Cincinnati was more centrally located to arouse interest in Legal Aid work at this particular time. Denver has been asked to renew the invitation for 1930 and Mr. John Keating, chairman of the Convention Committee

of the Denver Chamber of Commerce has written that he will renew it.

The Society is located at 328-329 Kittredge Bldg., because of its proximity to the Court House and business district. Both attorneys are members of the Denver Bar Association and have the use of the Bar Association library at the Court House. We also have the use of the Mills library in our building.

Gladys V. Cline, a graduate of Westminster Law School was Assistant Attorney and Office Secretary for a period of 18 months until May 1, 1928. Joseph P. Constantine has filled these positions since that time. Carl M. Perricone a graduate of Northwestern University law school, has rendered valuable aid in the investigations, solutions, and adjustments of cases during the year.

The list of Directors has been of great value by reason of the moral effect of their names upon the letterheads of the Society. They have entrusted the management to the office staff under the general supervision of the officers and executive committee. The list shows the non-sectarian, non-denominational, non-racial and non-political character of the Society.

Each year the Legal Aid Committee of the Denver Bar Assn., has held meetings with the Legal Aid Society to cooperate in making the work a success. On February 15, 1929, the present committee under the chairmanship of James L. Goree, Esq., accompanied by Senator Henry W. Toll, president of the Denver Bar Assn., met in the office of the Society and discussed at length with the General Attorney the scope, policies and methods of carrying on the work. These attorneys expressed a deep interest in the Legal Aid work of Denver. Other members of the present committee are: G. Dexter Blount, J. E. Gorsuch, James A. Wood, Moreland M. Humphreys, Nicholas Lakusta and H. N. Hawkins Jr.

The General Attorney, in conclusion, expresses his sincere appreciation for the assistance and cooperation of those already mentioned; also to George C. Manly, who has been acting president; to Treasurer Stanley T. Wallbank, other officers and members of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors; to Senator Henry W. Toll and Albert J. Gould, Jr., president and secretary of the Denver Bar Association respectively; to Mr. Karl C. Schuyler, who has made it pos-

sible for the Society to function during the year; to Guy T. Justis and others of the Denver Community Chest and to all attorneys, social workers and others who have cooperated with the Society in the past. We bespeak the same hearty cooperation for the future.

HARRY C. GREEN, *Secretary and Gen'l Atty.*

SUMMARY OF LEGAL AID SOCIETY'S STATISTICS FOR FOUR YEARS

Nationalities Served during the four years..... 32

	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
American	473	435	645	717
British	14	14	18	19
Germans	12	13	15	18
Italians	5	9	14	13
Spanish-Mexican	11	12	14	39
Colored	10	17	20	29
Jewish	12	14	13	21
25 Other Nations	50	24	57	36
Totals	587	538	796	892

Source of Cases Referred. Number of Sources..... 52

	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
Courts	142	111	154	122
City, County and State Officials.....	60	98	131	152
Lawyers	58	48	44	59
Other Professions	3	10	14	22
Chest and Agencies	65	68	83	76
City Charities	20	21	38	42
Other Welfare Soc.	10	9	17	15
Business & Industrial	7	8	14	17
Previously Served	34	40	73	107
By Another Client	37	54	98	115
General Publicity	152	71	130	165
Totals	587	538	796	892

Nature of Cases:

	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
Contractual Relations	175	200	299	357
Torts	56	55	52	60
Property	82	86	122	113
Estates	21	24	34	28
Domestic Relations*	208	152	249	258
Criminal Matters	14	8	19	20
Various, War Claims etc.	14	2	11	19
Miscellaneous	18	11	10	37
	588	538	796	892

*NOTE: Domestic Relations includes Juvenile Court cases on Non-Support of Wife, Children and Parents; desertion; guardianship; divorce and annulment.