



CENTER FOR ARKANSAS
LEGAL SERVICES

— Equal Justice for All —

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Center for Arkansas Legal Services Executive Director Jean Turner Carter Announces Retirement

Little Rock, AR.- Executive Director Jean Turner Carter announced that she will retire in 2022 from the Center for Arkansas Legal Services (CALS) after 25 years of service. Jean will long be remembered for her extensive career in public service and leadership roles.

Carter has led CALS as the executive director since 1996. During her tenure, the organization's size and breadth of legal work has significantly increased, which has led to 8 offices throughout Arkansas and a staff of 56. Under her direction, CALS has six continuously running projects with an annual budget of over \$4.2 million. In addition to the 30 staff attorneys, Carter oversees the VOCALS pro bono program (Volunteer Organization of Center for Arkansas Legal Services). VOCALS is a large network of volunteer attorneys and donors, who provide free legal assistance and support for indigent clients.

The Arkansas Bar Foundation and Arkansas Bar Association recently announced that Carter will be the recipient of the 2022 Equal Justice Distinguished Service Award. The award is given annually to an individual in recognition of their commitment to and participation in equal justice programs for those in poverty, including pro bono efforts, through legal services programs.

Board Chair Nicholas Kahn-Fogel, who has served with Carter for the past 6 years, said, "It has been a great privilege to work with Jean over the course of the last six years. She personifies decency, humility, and professionalism, and she has demonstrated throughout her long career an unparalleled dedication to public service. She will be sorely missed, and we wish her the very best as she embarks on new adventures at the outset of a well-earned retirement." The Board is looking forward to finding a successor who is willing to take Carter's accomplishments and continue to build upon them with positive results.

Carter has dedicated her career to working in legal services, first as a staff attorney for the Legal Services of Arkansas, where she worked her way up to the executive director, focusing on helping low-income Arkansans and migrant farmworkers in civil legal cases. She then became the deputy director for the Center of Arkansas Legal Services, where she worked her way up to become the executive director she is now known for. Carter has committed 42 years to the non-profit legal services profession. Additionally, she has a law degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and is a member of over eight professional organizations, including the Arkansas Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the Pulaski Bar Association. She also serves on the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission and the Pulaski County Bar Association's Board of Directors.

In announcing her retirement to the CALS Board of Directors and staff, Carter said, "It has been my honor and privilege to lead CALS for the past 25 years. I have been able to work with amazing legal advocates, who are dedicated to serving their community and their clients. CALS mission is about providing access to justice for all Arkansans, which I believe is essential to ensure our legal system is fair. It has been my life's journey helping our clients and their families by



providing legal solutions to the barriers that have negatively impacted their lives. This rewarding experience has forever changed my life.”

A search committee comprised of board members, the CALS leadership team, staff members, and union members has begun identifying a successor in partnership with Patricia Pap, the executive director at Management Information Exchange. Information about the position and search can be found at www.ArkansasLegal.org/careers. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. A deadline of June 2, 2022, has been set to receive full consideration.

ABOUT CALS

CALS’ mission is to defend the legal rights of people with low incomes and work for systemic solutions to balance the scales of justice for low-income people and communities. CALS is a private nonprofit public interest law firm that provides free legal help in civil (non-criminal) matters to individuals and families experiencing poverty. CALS also works to increase the public’s knowledge of their rights and responsibilities through community legal education opportunities.

CALS has the following priorities for its organizational work, including legal advocacy, outreach, and community education:

- Improve economic stability and conditions;
- Protect families and children;
- Ensure habitable, affordable housing; and
- Advocate for the needs of marginalized populations and communities.

These are the areas in which clients are most likely to develop legal problems that they cannot address themselves. With experienced attorneys on staff, CALS works to ensure that clients do not lose their housing due to eviction or foreclosure; that they are not harassed by debt collectors or victimized by unfair business practices; that they and their families have fair custody and support arrangements in the event of separation or divorce; and that they can receive the public benefits and other forms of income support they need to maintain their financial stability.

CALS also has specialized programs to address the legal needs of veterans, seniors, survivors of domestic violence, persons who face legal barriers to re-entry due to past criminal offenses, and individuals/families experiencing the effects of opioids and substance use disorders.

CALS’ service area includes the counties of Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot, Clark, Cleveland, Columbia, Conway, Crawford, Dallas, Desha, Drew, Faulkner, Franklin, Garland, Grant, Hempstead, Hot Spring, Howard, Jefferson, Johnson, Lafayette, Lincoln, Little River, Logan, Lonoke, Miller, Montgomery, Nevada, Ouachita, Perry, Pike, Polk, Pope, Prairie, Pulaski, Saline, Scott, Sebastian, Sevier, Union, White, and Yell.