

ALABAMA LAW FOUNDATION

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Keeping A Family Together

The Alabama Law Foundation's mission is to make access to justice a reality for all of Alabama's citizens. The foundation's annual IOLTA and endowment grants are the working muscle for the mission as they support a variety of programs that provide access to legal assistance for the poor. A 2006 grantee, the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program assists clients with civil legal issues. Sandra Rutrowski explains that she is "one person forever thankful," for the help she received from the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program.

Sandra Rutrowski lives in Empire, Alabama, which, regardless of its name, is a small rural community. Many people believe that crime, drug abuse, and danger do not reside in small towns, but Sandra Rutrowski knows from sad experience that trouble can show up anywhere. Sandra quietly tells the story of her daughter, Suzy, who became addicted to prescription drugs. Suzy realized she was in trouble, and also realized her children, Destin and Savannah, were in harm's way. Sandra explains that Suzy took the children where they would receive love and care and be safe. Savannah was only five-months-old and Destin was seven-years-old when they came to live with Sandra, their grandmother.

Despite Sandra's advice and help, Suzy was unable to break her dependence on the people surrounding her and the drugs that were destroying her. Caring for Savannah and Destin required most of Sandra's time and energy—in her words, "I was keeping up with her children, I could not keep up with her." In 2003, Sandra received the heart-breaking news that Suzy had died of a drug overdose. Sandra realized that taking care of two small children on her disability check presented a daunting challenge. She was not able to apply for other public assistance as she lacked the paperwork designating her as the children's legal guardian. She could not locate either of the children's fathers. And, worst of all, she worried that Destin's father might suddenly appear and take him away, breaking-up their family. In addition to her overwhelming grief at her daughter's death, Sandra "lived in fear of losing the children." The family's crisis peaked when Sandra was not able to enroll Destin in school, again due to the absence of paperwork showing her as the children's legal guardian.

Sandra remembered hearing about legal aid organizations and finally found the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program. Attorney Greg Williams took her case and drew up papers that allowed Sandra to legally adopt Savannah and Destin. The process involved finding one father, who agreed to sign adoption papers, and sending out public notification through announcements in newspapers when the other father could not be located. For Greg, the situation was a matter of legal process and paperwork, according to Sandra, it was the answer to a prayer.

Now, a year later, Destin takes his baby sister, Savannah,

to another room so Sandra can easily retell the events of a year ago. Sandra says she still doesn't understand how her daughter became so lost. But she will be thankful "for as long as I live" for the legal assistance that made it possible for her to adopt her grandchildren. Sandra explains that she is "so grateful that she can't say it enough." And while the children laugh and play in the background, Sandra says again she is "forever grateful that a family could be kept together."

Supporting Those Who Share The Vision

Annual IOLTA (Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts) grants provide funding for programs that share the Alabama Law Foundation's goal: making access to justice a reality for all of Alabama's citizens. Alabama's IOLTA program was established in 1987 and awarded its first grants in 1989. Since that time the Alabama Law Foundation has awarded \$12.8 million in grants. Along with the IOLTA grants, the first endowment grants were awarded this year. The endowment grants are a result of the new Atticus Finch Society whose mission is to build the endowment for the Alabama Law Foundation. The IOLTA and endowment grants for 2006 total \$249,000.

Programs that provide legal services for the poor received IOLTA grants totaling \$90,000 and endowment grants totaling \$66,500, for a total of \$156,500.

Projects in the category of "Administration of Justice" improve the judicial system or some judicial process. IOLTA grants for this category totaled \$81,000 and endowment grants totaled \$2,500, for a total of \$83,500.

Programs that provide law related education to the public received a total of \$9,000 in IOLTA grants.

Through the IOLTA program and the Atticus Finch Society, the Alabama Law Foundation supports a variety of programs across Alabama that share the vision of equal justice and opportunity for all Alabama citizens.



(L-R): Tracy Daniel, executive director of the Alabama Law Foundation, presents a grant check to Alison Ingram, chair of the Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers committee, and Linda Lund, director of Volunteer Lawyers Program.

ATTICUS FINCH SOCIETY

In serving the legal needs of the poor and those no one else would represent, Atticus Finch also personifies the mission of the Alabama Law Foundation. The Atticus Finch Society is a new organization whose mission is to form a solid financial future for the Alabama Law Foundation.

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For Charter Membership Information In
THE ATTICUS FINCH SOCIETY

contact:

Tracy Daniel, Executive Director
Alabama Law Foundation
1.800.354.6154 or
334.269.1515

Contributors

General Fund

Moses & Moses,
In Memory of Hon. John Madison
Tom Lawson,
In Memory of John A. Caddell
Sydney S. Smith
Catherine J. Randall

Kid's Chance

Adams, Umbach, Davidson & White
Alabama Power Company
Alabama Workers Compensation
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Graffeo & Helms
Gary Weaver
Wilmer & Lee
Wolfe, Jones, Bowell, Wolfe & Hamner
Brian Woodfin
Workers Compensation Association
of West Alabama

IOLTA And Endowment Grantees

- Legal Services Alabama \$80,000 IOLTA grant;
\$56,500 endowment grant
- The Alabama State Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program
\$10,000 IOLTA grant
- The Mobile Bar Association Volunteer
Lawyers Program \$10,000 endowment grant
- The Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama
\$35,000 IOLTA grant
- The Alabama Prison Project \$25,000 IOLTA grant
- The Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice
\$15,000 IOLTA grant
- The Alabama CASA (Court Appointed Special
Advocates) Network \$3,500 IOLTA grant
- The CASA of Florence/Lauderdale County
\$5,000 IOLTA grant
- The Child Protect Program \$2,500 endowment grant
- The Alabama Center for Law & Civic Education
\$6,500 IOLTA grant





(L-R): Ronnie Davis, Rick Davidson, Buddy Davidson & Wade Wright



(L-R): Thanks to Wendy Ladd Thornton, Marissa Howell, Michele Puckett, Carol Lockhart & Tracy Daniel for their help and for wearing cool blue shirts.

A SWINGING SUCCESS!

Two "Swings for Scholarships" golf tournaments, sponsored by the Alabama Law Foundation, successfully raised funds for the Kids' Chance Scholarship Fund. Spine & Neurosurgery Center/Comprehensive Rehab was the winning team on April 20 at Limestone Springs in Oneonta, Alabama. The winning team on June 8 at the Legends at Capitol Hill in Prattville was Carr Allison law firm. The golf tournaments combined fun with fund raising for Kids' Chance.

Kids' Chance provides technical school and college scholarships for students who have had a parent killed or permanently and totally disabled in a work related accident. Since 1993 more than 287 students have received scholarships totaling over \$311,000.



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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LATEST KIDS' CHANCE GRADUATES!

- Kelly Miller of Florence, AL | *Education*
- Aubrey Patterson of Sweetwater, AL | *Electrical Engineering*
- Jessica Taylor of Arley, AL | *Education*



PLEASE GIVE

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

- I want to make a donation to Kids' Chance.
- I want to make a donation to the Alabama Law Foundation Fund.

In honor/memory of: _____

Please send acknowledgement to: _____

- Check enclosed
- Please bill my credit card \$ _____ Visa/MasterCard/Amex # _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____



The ALABAMA LAW FOUNDATION

Summer Newsletter

- Keeping A Family Together:
The Good Volunteer Lawyers Do
- IOLTA & Endowment Grants
 - Atticus Finch Society's
Current Membership
- Kids' Chance Golf Tournaments
A Swinging Success

The Alabama Law Foundation, a charitable tax-exempt organization affiliated with the Alabama State Bar, strives to make access to civil justice and education to all Alabama citizens a reality.

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