

2013 John Adams and John Quincy Adams
Pro Bono Publico Awards

Short Introduction

Gandhi once said, "The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems." We are here today to honor those who have worked tirelessly to make our system of justice accessible to the most vulnerable among us, who have by their example demonstrated what can be accomplished by those who do what they are capable of doing.

Ben Jones

It is quite possible that Ben Jones did more pro bono work in law school than most attorneys do in their entire legal career. A graduate this past spring of New England School of Law, Ben tirelessly devoted himself in law school to serve those in need, and the breadth and depth of his efforts is simply amazing.

In his first year of law school, Ben volunteered at Shelter Legal Services, performing legal intake and working on veterans' benefits issues. That same year,

Ben also researched an inmate's wrongful conviction claim as a volunteer for the New England Innocence Project.

As a 2L, Ben joined Greater Boston Legal Services' Elder, Health and Disability Unit as a clinical intern where he represented a mentally and physically disabled client in a dispute over Social Security Disability benefits. Though the Social Security Administration alleged his client had been overpaid, Ben's zealous advocacy helped convince the judge to waive the \$70,000 balance still in dispute, and Ben also helped get his client's SSDI benefits restored *and* develop a plan to avoid future legal issues.

But Ben was just getting warmed up. As the Student Manager of the Center for Law and Social Responsibility's CORI Initiative, Ben supervised a program in which over 60 students helped approximately 63 clients in 28 different courts across Massachusetts navigate the process of sealing their criminal records. And not surprisingly, when many of the students in the

Initiative dropped their cases in order to study for finals, Ben selflessly picked them up, working vigorously to ensure every client received the assistance he or she needed. In so doing, Ben helped dozens of individuals better position themselves to find employment and move on with their lives (and apparently prepared well enough for his own exams to graduate himself).

Ben has also conducted empirical research on the CORI Initiative's clients and co-authored public comments on proposed CORI regulations in which he identified problems indigent defendants face when attempting to seal their records.

Ben's efforts on behalf of underserved and forgotten populations, including ex-convicts and the homeless, disabled and incarcerated, are a testament to his commitment to make the legal system work for all. Ben, you have demonstrated by your example how all law students in the Commonwealth, even before they

graduate, can make an important difference in the lives of so many.