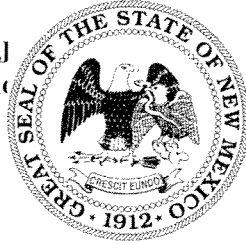


CHAMBERS OF
EUGENIO S. MATHIS
DISTRICT JUDGE
DIVISION I

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
(SAN MICHAEL'S COUNTY)



P.O. Box 1540
LAS VEGAS, NM 87701
P: (505) 425-7131
F: (505) 454-6307

Dear Member of the Fourth Judicial District :

On behalf of the Fourth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date concerning upcoming pro bono events in our District. Over the past two years, our Pro Bono Committee and other committees throughout the State have been developing and implementing projects to help New Mexicans who can't afford to pay attorneys to represent their interests.

The Supreme Court and Access to Justice Commission want to recognize the efforts of our committee members and the volunteer attorneys who have provided assistance to low income litigants by participating in a national initiative called "Celebrate Pro Bono Week" during the week of October 25 – 31. Governor Richardson and the justices of the New Mexico Supreme Court have proclaimed this week as *New Mexico Pro Bono Week*.

This week will involve recognition events, media coverage of pro bono activities, a continuing legal education presentation, as well as other activities. Goals for the week include recognizing the pro bono efforts of our attorneys, recruiting more pro bono volunteers, mobilizing community support for pro bono activities, as well as community presentations addressing topics such as the Basics of Self Representation, Consumer Issues, Wills and Probate.

On Wednesday October 28 at 11:00 at K-Bobs, Sarah Singleton, Co-chair of the Access to Justice Commission, will make a presentation on pro bono and professionalism issues. This presentation has already received MCLE approval for one hour of professionalism credit, and as it's being sponsored by the State Bar of New Mexico and will cost \$1 per attendee.

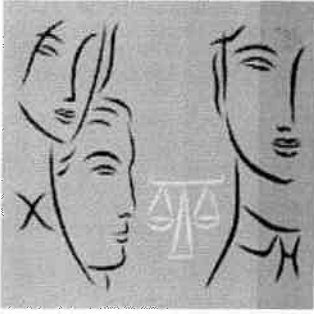
After the CLE presentation, Chief Justice Edward L. Chavez will join us for a luncheon.

On behalf of the committee, I hope you will join us in supporting these activities. If you would like to attend this important event, please RSVP to Nancy Gallegos, my TCAA by October 23, 2009 or respond to me via e-mail at lvedesm@nmcourts.gov.

Sincerely,

Eugenio S. Mathis

Hon. Eugenio S. Mathis, Chair
Fourth Judicial District Pro Bono Committee



THE LAW AND YOU

HOW TO ADDRESS LEGAL MATTERS ON YOUR OWN

*Offered by the District Judges of the
Fourth Judicial District Court*

In celebration of

National Pro Bono Week October 26 – 30

The public is invited to attend presentations that will be held all week

- October 26:** **The Basics of Self-Representation in Court**
Time: 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Location: Fourth Judicial District Court, 496 West National
- October 27:** **Dealing with Debt**
Time: 10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Location: Senior Citizens' Center, 500 Sabino
- October 28:** **Mortgage Foreclosure**
Time: 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Location: Fourth Judicial District, 496 West National
- October 29:** **Wills, Trusts & Probate**
Time: 10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Location: Senior Citizens' Center, 500 Sabino
- October 30:** **Raising a Child for the Second Time – Grandparent
Visitation & Kinship Guardianship**
Time: 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Location: Fourth Judicial District Court, 496 West National

For more information, call Judge Mathis at 425-7131

CHAMBERS OF EUGENIO S. MATHIS
Fourth Judicial District Court
(San Miguel, Guadalupe & Mora)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 8, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Eugenio S. Mathis, District Judge, 425-7131, ext. 15

LOCAL COURTS ROLL OUT PLAN TO CONNECT LOW-INCOME LITIGANTS, FREE LAWYERS

Thanks to the efforts of a consortium of judges and lawyers, low-income people who use the courts in the Fourth Judicial District will now have greater access to advice and assistance with their legal problems.

The project, according to the Hon. Eugenio Mathis of the Fourth Judicial District Court, will help low-income residents of San Miguel, Mora, and Guadalupe Counties in two ways. The Court Clinic program, until now offered monthly, has expanded to provide assistance twice per month to people who have family law questions or who are representing themselves in family court proceedings. There may be opportunities to add clinics that address other legal problems as well, said Mathis. In addition, about a third of all of the lawyers in the district have offered to provide legal advice and, in some cases, representation to low-income persons in a variety of non-criminal matters.

The project is the local response to a call by the New Mexico Supreme Court two years ago to expand and coordinate pro bono, or free, legal services to the state's large low-income population. In the Fourth Judicial District, Judge Mathis assembled other judges, private and public-sector lawyers, and New Mexico Legal Aid to study the problem in the three-county area and propose a realistic and workable approach to expand services that rely on a very small lawyer population in a large rural area.

"Our district has too few attorneys to serve too many low-income people who have legal needs," explained Mathis. "We have tried to develop a program that allows the most individuals to be served with few legal providers." Because of the high number of persons living near or below the poverty level in the district, the planning committee determined that

free individual advice and assistance would be limited to those whose incomes were at 125 per cent or less of the federal poverty guideline income levels, he added. Court-sponsored informational clinic sessions, in contrast, will be available to all community members.

Before establishing the project, the district surveyed legal needs of the poor. It determined that, because of scarce resources, it would focus its efforts on the most pressing of those needs. The planners found that those needs included protection from domestic violence, obtaining child support, accessing affordable housing and tenant rights, accessing health care, consumer rights, civil rights, and employment problems. The district then surveyed local lawyers to learn which of them could advise clients in these areas of law.

For low-income people who need individual advice or representation, the project will work with New Mexico Legal Aid, which will screen and refer eligible individuals to lawyers who can offer some level of assistance. That assistance can range from specific advice to help in drafting documents, appearances in court, and full representation. "With a small number of lawyers, we want to use their services in ways that help the largest number of people," Mathis observed. "The lawyers in this district understand the enormity of the need and are stepping forward to address it in a coordinated manner."

The Committee has scheduled a number of events for the week of October 26 through October 30, 2009 to commemorate New Mexico Pro Bono Week. Events include small seminars on the Basics of Self-Representation, Dealing With Debt, Mortgage Foreclosure, Wills, Trust & Probate and "Raising A Child For the Second Time"-Grandparent Visitation and Kinship Guardianship.

"Low income citizens and others often have unmet legal needs and frequently have questions about their legal rights. We are hopeful that we can answer those questions in these seminars," said Mathis.

Chief Justice Edward Chavez of the New Mexico Supreme Court will deliver the keynote address at a luncheon at K-Bob's on October 28.

Specific information on dates and times for each seminar will be available shortly.

For more information, please contact Judge Mathis at 425-7131 or Judge Matthew J. Sandoval at 425-9352.

PRO-BONO WEEK OCTOBER 25TH -31ST 2009
BY THE MAYOR OF LAS VEGAS NEW MEXICO
A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, access to justice is a fundamental and essential right in a democratic society; and

WHEREAS, many people cannot afford the high cost of legal representation and cannot proceed on their own without an attorney; and

WHEREAS, legal services agencies, the State Bar of New Mexico, and local bar associations throughout New Mexico have enlisted the services of volunteer attorneys to provide valuable legal services to those in need; and

WHEREAS, in New Mexico, volunteer attorneys donate thousands of pro bono hours each year; and

WHEREAS, the innumerable contributions of volunteer attorneys enable many people to obtain legal assistance they could not otherwise obtain; and

WHEREAS, during October 25 - 31, 2009, businesses, government agencies and community organizations will be celebrating "New Mexico Pro Bono Week"; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of New Mexico has declared the week of October 26th to be Pro Bono Week and has recognized the importance of volunteer lawyers in providing legal services to low income people; and

WHEREAS, the City of Las Vegas encourages the lawyers employed in the City of Las Vegas to engage in pro bono activities;

NOW, THEREFORE I, Tony E. Marquez Jr., Mayor of the City of Las Vegas, do hereby proclaim October 25 - 31, 2009 as

"Celebrate Pro Bono Week"

and encourage all members of our community to recognize the contributions of our legal community to help those most in need.

Tony E. Marquez Jr.

Hon. Tony E. Marquez Jr., Mayor
City of Las Vegas

