

Lending a Legal Hand



IN THE ATERMATH of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, we all are coming to terms with how our lives have changed and will change in the future. As the United States brings military might and intelligence to bear, we recognize that there are tremendous challenges to our legal system.

We are told this is a war, and it will involve not just guns, cruise missiles and bombs, but search warrants, unprecedented regulations and civil lawsuits. At this time, we as a profession have at least three ways to help respond:

1. Arizona lawyers, members of their staffs and the legal community can contribute through the State Bar of Arizona to the Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

Shortly after September 11, 2001, I wrote to advise members that the State Bar was coordinating donations to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. I am proud to report that our members and their staffs have contributed tens of thousands of dollars.

Donations still can be sent by check payable to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund in care of the State Bar of Arizona, Red Cross Donation, 111 W. Monroe, Suite 1800, Phoenix, AZ 85003. The Red Cross will mail you a receipt confirming your donation.

2. As community leaders, you can support statewide efforts to promote understanding of the importance of the rule of law, tolerance, pluralism and understanding—avoiding a climate that

enhances the danger of hate crimes.

Within days after the attacks, Arizona made international headlines when one of our citizens was murdered, apparently by a man seeking to injure Muslims but targeting Sikhs and others. Other attacks have occurred.

Attorney General Janet Napolitano called a summit of community and religious leaders and law enforcement representatives. Your State Bar was there. We committed to help through our members' speakers bureau. Many of our members are especially skilled at sharing the message of the importance of the rule of law and the tremendous value of the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity in Arizona. As leaders in our society, Arizona lawyers can speak out against intolerance.

We can counsel reason. We also can advise the public of the consequences of violating hate crime laws and reassure potential victims about how to seek protection. Lawyers have opportunities to speak before civic, community and neighborhood groups, in the schools, and to business and labor organizations. More information about these matters, including materials you can share, is available on our Web site.

3. You can participate in the State Bar's organized pro bono effort to assist military personnel with legal matters or offer pro bono legal assistance on your own.

We are preparing a list of individuals who are willing to offer pro bono services to prepare wills, powers of attorney and other documents needed by those in service.

And our colleagues in New York promptly organized groups of pro bono attorneys working in shifts to deal with the legal needs of those reporting missing family members and having other disaster-related legal needs. Bar associations in New York trained hundreds of volunteer attorneys in preparing various affidavits and other documents and set up makeshift "offices." More

lawyers volunteered than could be accommodated.

As one lawyer said while helping, "They won't let me use a crowbar. I'm not qualified to do that, but I'm qualified to do this." Another observed that he was supposed to be at the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11 but happened to be running a half-hour late. One of the lucky ones, he was actively volunteering in the somber effort to help the survivors.

Other legal groups are responding, as well. For example, the Association of Trial Lawyers of America has established a pro bono effort to represent victims and their families who are seeking compensation pursuant to the newly established Victims' Compensation Fund. ATLA also has urged a moratorium on civil lawsuits that might arise out of these events and created the 911 Heroes Fund to assist trial lawyers in helping the families of the firefighters, police and emergency medical workers who died.

We will keep current links on the Bar's home page that provide information on how lawyers can respond to the crises, such as:

- www.abanet.org/legalservices/lamp.html: LAMP—Legal Assistance for Military Personnel, an ABA standing committee
- www.abanet.org/legalservices/disaster.html: Responding to Disaster: Legal Help and Volunteer Opportunities
- www.abanet.org/barserv/disaster/practiceresources.html: Disaster relief resources

Please feel free to share your thoughts by writing me in care of the State Bar or by e-mailing me at wallwork@azbar.org. ▀

SPEAK OUT ON UPL

The unauthorized practice of law is the subject of the State Bar's Consumer Protection Committee's draft report, which it is circulating for comment. Read the report, a history of UPL and proposed Supreme Court rule changes on the Bar's Web site—www.azbar.org. And then contact the Bar with your input and suggestions.