



Irene Gomez-Bethke Papers.

## **Copyright Notice:**

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit [www.mnhs.org/copyright](http://www.mnhs.org/copyright).

# Legal Rights Center, Inc.

606 E. Franklin Avenue Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404

(612) 571-1881

## Legal Rights Center Inc.

### Annual Report

1977

The Legal Rights Center is a non-profit corporation founded in 1970 by representatives of the Black and Indian communities of Hennepin County to provide quality legal defense and coordinated social services to poor persons charged with crimes.

# Legal Rights Center, Inc.

808 E. Franklin Avenue Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404  
(612) 871-4886

DATE: March 31, 1978  
TO: Friends of the Legal Rights Center  
FROM: Douglas Hall, Executive Director  
RE: Calendar Year 1977

1977 was a challenging year for the Center. Once again, we opened approximately 650 criminal files and our legal staff tried 10% of all the felony jury trials in Hennepin County. In addition to representation of clients, Center attorneys were also involved in task forces and projects studying the criminal justice system. Willie Mae Dixon, one of our community workers, and I served on the Urban Coalition project studying sentencing.

Unfortunately, the Center also faced some temporary financial problems. These led to the lay off of two attorneys in October, 1977, and to a voluntary paycut of 20% by the staff. After these issues were written up in the local papers, supporters of the Center came to our aid. The individuals on layoff were rehired and the board, early in 1978, eliminated the paycuts.

To help us cope with financial planning the Center received a foundation grant to hire an administrator/fundraiser. The administrator/fundraiser's principal objectives are to achieve long range financial planning and to maximize delivery of services.

As this letter is being written a group of 200 Minneapolis attorneys are about to launch our first annual lawyer's fund drive. The fund drive hopes to reach every lawyer in downtown Minneapolis who has not previously supported the Center. Our administrator/fundraiser is coordinating the fund drive.

In a further effort to insure that our clients receive the finest legal representation and social services our resources permit, we have recently secured a legal assistant with CETA funds. Our CETA person, is a graduate lawyer and has an undergraduate background in business administration and accounting. He is working closely with our accountants to help us develop a clear picture of the Center's financial health and to project our future funding needs. He is also

Attorneys  
Douglas Hall  
Executive Director  
James C. Boone  
Michael J. Davis  
Linda Gallant  
James J. Krieger  
Jerod H. Peterson

Community Workers  
Frank Dickenson  
Willie Mae Dixon  
Jerry S. Patterson  
Mary Jane Wilson  
Administrator  
Joanne Levin

Directors  
Antonio Arellano  
Ed Bearhart  
Pat Bellanger  
Clyde Bellecourt  
David Bennett  
Anita Bethke  
Irene Bethke  
Vincent Beyl  
Rev. Merle Carlson  
Earl Craig  
Syl Davis  
Felino de la Pena  
Frances Fairbanks  
Sidney Feinberg  
Jose Gaitan  
Sylvia Gonzales  
Peter Heegaard  
Harry Moss  
David Murrin  
David Nasby  
Norman Newhall  
Morris Sherman  
Ralph Ware  
Izear Watkins  
Irving Weiser


developing statistical measures of recidivism and rehabilitation among our clients.

1978 promises to be our most exciting year. Plans are being laid to expand services to the Chicano-Latino community of Hennepin County. As our first step, six representatives of this community have been placed on our Board of Directors. We welcome them and look forward to their contributions to the Board. They are helping us develop a Spanish language brochure describing the Center and its services. The brochure will be distributed in the Spanish speaking community. If our contacts with the community result in a significant number of Spanish-speaking clients, we would hope to eventually add a bilingual-bicultural attorney and community worker to our staff.

We also look forward to increasing the delivery of legal and social services to juveniles. We believe that juvenile justice is one of the most vexing problems facing the legal system. Jim Krieger, one of our staff attorneys has appeared on public service television programs on delinquency and we hope to draw on Jim's expertise. We might add that new funding sources are being explored to insure that the increase in services to the Chicano-Latino communities and to juveniles will not adversely affect existing programs.

With your help, the Center can continue to deliver fine legal representation and coordinated social service to poor persons of Hennepin County.

Best regards,

  
Douglas Hall  
Attorney at Law

## 1977 SUPPORTERS

### Foundations/Corporations

American Linen & Supply  
Andreas Foundation  
Apache Foundation  
Bemis Co.  
Cargill  
Dayton-Hudson Foundation  
H.B. Fuller  
General Mills Foundation  
Hennepin County Bar Foundation  
Joint Urban Mission Program  
McKnight Foundation  
Sumner T. McKnight Foundation  
Medtronic  
Minneapolis Foundation  
Minneapolis Star & Tribune  
Minnesota State Bar Foundation  
Northern States Power  
Northwestern Bell Telephone Company  
Northwestern National Bank  
Pacific Foundation  
Phillips Foundation  
Pillsbury Foundation  
Piper, Jaffrey, Hopwood  
Sears, Roebuck  
Skogmo Foundation  
Super Valu  
Snyod, Lakes & Prairies  
Archie, Bertha Walker Foundation  
Wns. Steel & Hardware

### OTHER

Antone, Karen  
Barczak, Ronald, Mary & Therese  
Barnum, Anne R.  
Bourdaghs, Ronald  
Carr, Madreen  
Carlson, Merle  
Cesario, Richard L.  
Cheatham, Donald W.  
Chisholm, Ray  
Carraher, Vincent  
Crocker, Tom D.

### Other

Davis, David  
Gatton, Helen Chisholm  
Gorman, Peter & Diane Dabe  
Goldberg, Bud  
Golden, Barbara L.  
Gray, Dr. Jerome S.  
Greenwald, Stephen & Barbara  
Harkness, Grace U.  
Hooten, Carol A.  
Hurd, Jill S.  
Jenkins, Donald B.  
Kahn, Howard  
Knoll, Margot J.  
Kosiak, Dr. William  
Lindborg, Sherrie L.  
London, Dr. Nathaniel J.  
& Edith  
Ludcke, George O., III  
Mayer, Jewel H.  
Naftalin, Arthur & Frances  
Nasby, David  
Nelson, K.E.  
Osman, Nancy Ann  
Peterson, Dr. Douglas B.  
Salem, Richard A.  
Schwarz, Edward  
Scott, Evon P.  
Socialist Workers Party  
Sorenson, Roger E.  
Sutcliffe, Joel  
Thorbeck, JoAnne  
Triplett, Thomas J. &  
Janet  
Weissman, Gary A.  
Young Women's Christian  
Association of Mpls.



1977 SUPPORTERS

Bar

Abramson, J. David  
 Albrecht, Hon. H. Peter  
 Amdahl, Hon. Douglas K.  
 Anderson, Edward C.  
 Andrews, Woodbury H.  
 Arlandson, John R.  
 Ayres, Lane & Marion  
 Bailey, Carlton  
 Barnett, Ratelle, Hennessy,  
     Vander Vort, Slasel & Herzog  
 Bellois, Patricia L.  
 Bennett, Gene F.  
 Bix, John  
 Bohnhorst, Mark  
 Britt, Barbara  
 Brynestad, Lorens Q.  
 Burris, Hon. Donald  
 Byron, David J.  
 Chestnut, Brooks & Burkard  
 Christensen, Hon. William B.  
 Clark, Andrew R.  
 Clarke, Roger & Sandra  
 Connolly, John S.  
 Cooper, Peter L.  
 Cooper, Stephen W.  
 Cowl, Bradley  
 Davenport, David J.  
 Davison, Laurie N.  
 DeParcq, Anderson, Perl & Hunegs  
 Doherty, Rumble & Butler  
 Dorsey, Windhorst, Hannaford,  
     Whitney & Halladay  
 Doyle, Stephen  
 Drake, William E.  
 Dresselhuis, Ellen  
 Duffy, Walter J., Jr.  
 Edwards, William B.  
 Egan, Mary Lane  
 Eisenstadt, Deborah  
 Enga, Richard A.  
 Faegre & Benson  
 Fitzgerald, Hon. Patrick W.  
 Flaten, John P.  
 Fraser, Hon. Donald M.  
 Fredrickson, Byron, Colborn,  
     Bisbee & Hansen  
 Gatton, William  
 George, William J.  
 Gill, Hon. Kenneth J.  
 Goldsmith, Scott K.

Graham, Kathleen M.  
 Granquist, Luther A.  
 Gray, Susan A.  
 Gross, David  
 Hanley, Bruce H.  
 Hannah, James B.  
 Harstad, C. Blaine  
 Hart, Hon. Daniel  
 Hempel, William J.  
 Henson & Efron  
 Hvass, Sheryl Ramstad  
 Hvass, Weisman & King  
 Ingber, Marvin C.  
 Janus, Eric S.  
 Jevne, Franz P., III  
 Johnson, George R.A.  
 Kane, John Eugene  
 Kane, Hon. Stanley D.  
 Kantorowicz, Hon. Richard J.  
 Kennedy, William R.  
 Kurzman, Marc G.  
 Lapp, Lazar, Laurie & Smith  
 Lebedoff, Hon. Jonathan G.  
 Lefler, Herbert P.  
 Leonard, Street & Deinard  
 Leslie, Hon. David R.  
 Levine, John D.  
 Lindquist & Venum  
 Lynn, Robert H.  
 Mackall, Henry C.  
 Maslon, Kaplan, Edelman,  
     Borman, Brand & McNulty  
 Mauzy, William J.  
 McFarlane, Patricia J.  
 Miller, Lenore  
 Minenko, Hon. Eugene  
 Moersfelder, Karel Lee Moij  
 Moore, Clay R.  
 Moore, Yvonne B.  
 Morrow, Jane & James  
 Mullin, Weinberg & Daly  
 Murphy, Hon. Diana E.  
 Murrin, David  
 Nasby, Karen Lee  
 Nelson, Floyd E.  
 Nemer, Bruce A.  
 Norton, Ann  
 Nygaard, Richard J.  
 O'Brien, Timothy M.  
 O'Connor & Hannan

1977 Bar Supporters continued

Okney, Bruce  
 Okney, Phillip A.  
 Oleisky, Hon. Allen  
 Olson, Lynn C.  
 Oppenheimer, Wolff, Foster,  
     Shepard & Donnelly  
 Parker, Elizabeth M.  
 Peterson, Hon. C. Donald  
 Peterson, Stephen D.  
 Pierce, Hon. Delila F.  
 Posten, Hon. William S.  
 Pulles, Gregory J.  
 Rex, Edgar H., Jr.  
 Rider, Stuart W., Jr.  
 Riley, Hon. Neil A.  
 Robins, Davis & Lyons  
 Sands, Robert P.  
 Savelkoul, Donald C.  
 Schmid, Connor F.  
 Sheran, Hon. Robert J.  
 Simon, Stephen M.  
 Singer, Michael G.  
 Smith, Juster & Feikema  
 Soby, Dayton E.  
 Stageberg, Roger V.  
 Strahan, Thomas W.  
 Swanson, Margaret  
 Sykora, Hon. C. William  
 Unthank, John C.  
 Uphoff, Daryle L.  
 Van Valkenburg, Comaford, Moss,  
     Fassett, Flaherty & Clarkson  
 Vasaly, Thomas  
 Vogel, Howard  
 Wahl, Hon. Rosalie E.  
 Wahlstrand, Mary M.  
 Wernick, Mark  
 Westby, Ragnhild Anne  
 Widseth, E. George  
 Wilson, Edward S.

# BUDGET FOR 1977

## PERSONNEL

<u>Salaries</u>		
Attorneys (5)	111,454.20	
Community Workers (4)	61,599.20	
Law Clerks	17,754.48	
Secretary	12,059.84	
Receptionist	6,966.00	
Janitor	2,400.00	
Administrator/ Fundraiser	1,125.00	
Total Salaries	213,358.72	
<u>Health Benefits</u>	2,880.00	
<u>Social Security</u>	7,050.00	
<u>Unemployment Compensation</u>	1,310.00	
<u>Worker's Compensation</u>	920.00	
<u>Mileage</u>	16,325.00	
Total Personnel	241,843.72	
<u>Overhead</u>		
Office Supplies	1,970.00	
Telephone	5,280.00	
Telephone Ans. Service	1,010.00	
Postage	270.00	
Rent	5,430.00	
Water	160.00	
Building Supplies	550.00	
Library	465.00	
Office Equipment	440.00	
Insurance	4,450.00	
Accounting	1,200.00	
Transcripts	1,175.00	
Miscellaneous	1,650.00	
Total Overhead	24,050.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES	265,953.72	
<u>INCOME</u>		
Law Firms	58,570.00	
Miscellaneous Bar	4,262.00	
Corporations/Foundations	113,197.00	
State of Minnesota	50,000.00	
Hennepin County	48,333.33	
	274,362.33	

A complete audited financial statement for the Legal Rights Center may be examined at our offices.

# LEGAL RIGHTS CENTER, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS - OFFICERS AND STAFF

## 1977 Board Members

David Nasby - Chairman  
Syl Davis - Vice-Chairman  
Ralph Ware - Secretary-Treasurer  
William Hibbs  
Sidney Feinberg  
David Murrin  
Norman Newhall  
Morris Sherman  
William Mullin  
Izear Watkins  
Raymond Johnson  
Earl D. Craig, Jr.  
Harry Moss  
Clyde Bellecourt  
Patricia Bellanger  
Vincent Beyl  
Frances Fairbanks  
Ed Bearheart  
Rev. Merle Carlson  
Peter Heegaard  
Ms. Susan Star

## 1977 Staff Members

Douglas Hall - Executive Director  
James Krieger - Attorney  
Jerod Peterson - Attorney  
J. Craig Boone - Attorney  
Michael Davis - Attorney  
Mary Jane Wilson - Community Worker  
Frank Dickenson - Community Worker  
Willie Mae Dixon - Community Worker  
Jerry Patterson - Community Worker  
Linda Gallant - Law Clerk  
Joanne Levin - Administrator  
Carole Ten Bear - Secretary  
Al Thighman - Receptionist

This one time I got called to the Hennepin County Jail by a Minneapolis police detective who knew me. An old Native American man had gotten into a scuffle with two young guys. Police from a passing squad car spoke only to the young guys who said that the old man had propositioned them to commit sodomy with him. Anyway, this detectives experience told him there was something wrong about how eager this old man was to sign a confession. Talking to him, I discovered that the old man only knew a little bit of English. Questioning him in Obijive, I found out that he didn't know what the word "sodomy" meant and thought that it was a white man's word for pan-handling. He thought he was signing some kind of a complaint against the young guys and he said they'd come up to him and were pestering him for money. After alot of careful and slow questions this police detective got convinced that the old man was telling the truth. It turned out that because no one could understand this old man very good, he was in the Mental Health Unit at General Hospital and they were going to send him to St. Peter. Anyway, after they believed him they let him go.

#### Community Worker

I got a call about a fifteen year old girl who had to appear in court on a truancy charge. She was half Black and had a real identity problem. She had several operations and missed a lot of school and was put back a grade. The kids she identified with went to Central High School while she was still in Junior High at Bryant. We went to court to try to work out some special program to fit her needs. Talking with the girl I found out that she had a lot of admiration and respect for her older sister. She wanted to stay with her sister and she thought that her sister would be more supportive than what she was getting at home. But it turned out that the sister was unable to financially handle such an arrangement. What we had to do was go to the AFDC worker and work out a situation where part of the mother's grant to be turned over to the older sister. We went up to Pilot City Health Center. They have a young group of black girls in a group that's called Black Genesis. They do Black cultural kinds of things to give the girls a sense of identity and self worth. Then we worked out a situation where this young girl would go to school and be active with the Black Genesis group and go to school in the summer. If she shows significant progress, then next year they will skip her up to Central in a special learning program.

Last I heard, she was doing fine and was quite pleased with the way things were going. She was living with her sister and still active in the Genesis program and felt that she was making progress in school.

#### Community Worker

I had a case involving a young Native American woman who was charged with aggravated assault against this white man she had been living with for several years. During that period, this man beat her brutally from time to time. He'd knocked some of her teeth out, scarred her face and he'd beaten her so badly that he caused severe internal injuries, that left an enormous scar on her stomach and required surgery to repair.

She had been trying to get away from him for some time and one evening when she was with her brother and cousin they decided to go over and teach him a lesson. During the course of it he was knifed by some one and beaten up pretty badly.

While she was up in the jail for the several months before the case was called for trial, she had absolutely refused any therapy or treatment, saying that she'd just rather go to Shakopee and serve her time.

When the case was finally called for trial the Native American community worker who was assigned to the case got involved in talking with the prosecutor and the judge. She assured them that she would work with our client and get her into a chemical dependency program and into a job or job training or whatever was needed to help her straighten out.

It was clear to me that her presence was probably the most significant thing in turing the prosecutor around to the point where we got the case continued for one year, to be dismissed at the time if she were not involved in any further incidents.

To me, perhaps the most dramatic thing was that during the whole process our client was always very quiet-solemn, so to speak, and showed little, if any emotion. When we were in the courtroom and the Judge explained that he was going to continue the case, she just sort of put her head on our community worker's shoulder and broke-down. It was one of the most human and touching things that I've ever seen, the way this woman, who didn't know if she was going to go to Shakopee, or what, and who had all these pent-up emotions, could just let go and feel that she had a confidant and a friend in our community worker.

Incidentlly, I got a thank you note from her that I still have. It reads:

"I just want to thank you for all you done for me. I really do appreciate everything. I sure didn't think things would turn this well and I'm gonna really try hard to cooperate with Mary Jane and follow through with all thats required of me. I can express myself better in writing than I can verbally. Just want you to know. I'm really not an easy person to communicate with, I realize and I can image that didn't make matters easy for you but still you helped me. Anyone else probably would of given up on me, so again thanks."

#### Staff Attorney

A case was brought to our attention by a woman who told us that her husband was being held in the Hennepin County Jail on some outstanding traffic warrants and that the bail was so high that they could not afford to get him out. The woman came to our office, along with their daughter who was age fifteen. She mentioned that the daughter had attempted suicide a few days prior to coming into our office. We had a long discussion, approximately two to three hours, and they both stated that they needed the father, because they were afraid the family was gonna break-up. I said I'd see what we can do in getting her husband released.

The husband had a long histroy of chemical abuse, and the woman suggested that we should get him into some kind of program because they needed him at home very badly. When we got him released from jail, we sat down and discussed many things that were happening to the family. The daughter was the one that expressed most concern for her father, for her father was never home, he was always out drinking and never having the responsibility of facing up to the fact that he was her father. The family stated that they needed to be joined together and be united as a family. The husband stated that he was ready to go into some kind of alcoholism treatment or community program.

I felt there was no cause for us to refer him to an in-patient treatment program. My first evaluation was that the best program would be to have him referred as an out-patient to the American Indian Services program, which is a half-way house for chemically dependent persons. I felt if he could go home and be with his family it would strengthen the family since he could go to the out-patient by day and also go home at night to be with his family once again.

The day that he was to go to trial I had typed up a written evaluation report to be submitted to the Department of Court Services. My recommendations and evaluations of the case were rejected. The court sided with the recommendations of Court Services that he be admitted to the Hennepin County Adult Corrections at Parkers Lake, which is usually referred to as the work house, that he stay out there with time to serve and then be referred to a half-way house for chemically dependent persons as an in-patient.

I didn't like the idea because I thought that the family was more important and not reuniting the family and putting them close together would be a very disastrous thing at this point. I contacted the Department of Court Services and told them, "we are killing a family", and that if this man comes back to this in-patient program in a matter of days he would leave. He was at the workhouse for approximately twenty-six days and was referred back to that in-patient program. He left approximately three days later, and he had ended that program. He went to the State of Wisconsin and he is still there. As of this date the family has no father at home.

#### Community Worker

There's this case of a young guy who I've known for quite a long time, and I knew his older brother. His older brother was caught up in drugs and eventually died of an overdose. It wasn't till after that situation, that I began to notice that the younger brother was involved in drugs - heroin. I knew this because I live and play in the same places he does, so I began to notice. As a result of his drug problems, he began to come to court on burglary charges. I think there was a purse snatching situation and I think there was even a check charge. So he was progressively getting worse.

When he came to us I recommended that he take a look at his drug problem and begin to deal with that. There was not a doubt that he was guilty of the charges, so he plead guilty to one of the charges, I believe the others were dismissed and he was put on probations, providing that he goes through a drug treatment center, Eden House. I keep in touch with the guy and upon talking to the people at Eden House within the last month of this case (probably about eight months old at this point), he is doing real fine at the program and I guess he is breezing right through.

#### Community Worker

One of my clients was 34 year old Indian man named Ray who was charged with the burglary of a meat market where he worked part time. Ray's defense was unusual. He claimed that at the time he was caught inside the meat market in the early morning hours, he was there not to commit a crime, bu to rescue his brother, Eddie. Ray told me Eddie had gone to the meat market to commit a burglary in an intoxicated state and had passed out inside. Ray's defense was doubly complicated by a brain injury he had recently sustained which damaged not only his ability to read, write and remember, but also his ability to speak.

Psychological testing at our request revealed that Ray was of normal intelligence, but could only express himself at the upper limits of retardation. The Center staff was able to persuade the court to delay Ray's trial pending retraining and additional testing. Our community workers were able to find people in the Indian community who undertook to teach Ray to read, write and speak again. Ray was able to regain comprehension and speaking ability to allow schedueling his trial.

Extensive pre-trial preparation with Ray for his trial was necessary. It was necessary to review courtroom procedures and his testimony countless times before trial. Finally, we went to trial. Ray was able to testify sufficiently well to convince his jury that he was not guilty of burglary. After two days of deliberations, Ray's jury returned a verdict of trespassing, a 90 day misdemeanor.

#### Staff Attorney



Legal Rights Center, Inc.  
808 East Franklin Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
PERMIT NO. 2204