



MARYLAND
LEGAL AID

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Stuart O. Simms Joins Maryland Legal Aid as New Chief Counsel

Simms joins firm as top attorney to direct the provision of civil legal services and programs

BALTIMORE, Md., (August 24, 2020) - Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Stuart "Stu" Simms to the position of chief counsel. In this executive leadership role, Mr. Simms will direct MLA's substantive legal work and provision of client services and programs consistent with MLA's Human Rights framework. Having begun his legal career in 1973 as a staff attorney with MLA, Mr. Simms brings to MLA his extensive and varied experiences as a lawyer and a community leader.

"MLA's clients and staff are the beneficiaries of Mr. Simms' well-rounded and solid legal experience, his excellent management skills, and his commitment to supporting MLA's mission," noted MLA's Executive Director, Wilhelm H. Joseph, Jr. "Mr. Simms' appointment as chief counsel will help ensure that MLA continues to be responsive to the civil legal needs of current and prospective clients, especially as they navigate the convergence presented by the triple threat engulfing the country—the COVID-19 health crisis, the disrupted economy, and the racial reckoning."

Mr. Simms comes to MLA from Brown Goldstein and Levy—a renowned civil rights law firm—where he has been a partner since 2003. He has also served as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice. His previous experience includes serving as Baltimore City State's Attorney—the City's top prosecutor—as an Assistant U.S. Attorney with the United States Justice Department, as Staff Counsel to U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes (ret.), and as an associate with the law firm of Semmes, Bowen & Semmes.

Mr. Simms' current and former affiliations include the Maryland State Bar Association; Maryland State's Attorney's Association; Bar Association for Baltimore City; Monumental City Bar Association; American Bar Association; and the National Bar Association. He has served on a number of boards including the Baltimore Museum of Art; Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; Citizens Planning and Housing Association; the Gilman School; United Way of Central Maryland; and the Baltimore Community Foundation. His notable published articles include "Integration of the Bar and Bench and Civil Rights Legislation" (Maryland Law Review, Vol. 50, No. 1, 1993). Mr. Simms received his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College and his law degree from Harvard Law School.

The appointment of Mr. Simms as chief counsel rounds out MLA's senior management team, currently led by Executive Director Wilhelm Joseph, and includes the Chief Operating Officer and two Deputy Chief Counsels. One of the nation's largest legal services organizations, MLA has been at the forefront of innovative service delivery programs made possible, in large part, through enhanced funding opportunities.

Simms shared, "I have great respect for Maryland Legal Aid, its mission as well as its top-notch staff and visionary leadership. It has certainly come a long way in terms of advocacy, resources, and facilities since my first time there as a new lawyer. I look forward to contributing to the continued growth of the organization and to its provision of stellar legal services to those most in need."

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About Maryland Legal Aid

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is a private, non-profit law firm that provides free, civil legal services to people who are in Baltimore City and Maryland's 23 counties from 12 offices. As Maryland's 3rd largest law firm, MLA handles cases involving a wide range of issues, including family, housing, government benefits, healthcare, education, employment, and consumer law. MLA also represents children in CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) proceedings in 14 jurisdictions. Other vulnerable populations, such as homeowners facing foreclosure, migrant and seasonal farm workers, people with developmental and mental health disabilities, nursing home and assisted living residents, and veterans seeking benefits and assistance with related legal issues also receive representation through special projects. MLA's Community Lawyering Initiative, which includes its *Lawyer in the Library* program, assists with expunging criminal records to remove barriers to obtaining housing, employment, and child custody through clinics held in libraries, community centers, non-profit organizations, places of worship, schools, medical facilities, and other gathering places.

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