

SEPTEMBER 29, 1994  
LEGAL SERVICES FUND  
AT THE WHITE HOUSE

[Audience Rumble]

Lady accompanied by the Attorney General, Roberta Ramo, Doug Eekley and Alexander Forger.

[Applause]

**First Lady Hillary Clinton:**

Thank you. Welcome. Please be seated. Well, this is an unbelievable gathering. I must say looking around this room and seeing so many leaders of the fight for legal services, people who have stood steadfast on behalf of legal advocacy for all Americans. We were just talking before we came in, we are not sure there has ever been a gathering honoring legal services in the White House [Laughter]. And then someone said, well perhaps there was a small one. Sarge Shriver may know this, when the bill was signed. But in any event, this is a long, overdue appreciation for all of you who have been leaders in the fight for legal services for all of these years.

We are delighted to have with us so many distinguished people, I could not begin to introduce all of them. But we will have a chance to say hello personally following this ceremony with a receiving line, which is the unfortunate mode of saying hello in the White House; but at least we'll have a chance to visit, and leading into the reception. I wanted to

just emphasize a few of the points made by the President in your program when he declared this "National Legal Services Week." Because both of us feel so strongly about legal services and have been really working in different ways over the years to bring about the stability of the corporation and support for the many groups and organizations represented here. I can remember very well the long conversations a number of us had back in New Haven when we were at the end of the first wave of law students who were introduced to legal services because of the pioneering work of the Ford Foundation's first grant for the program in New Haven; and many of us were involved with that program. And through the law school, the Chairman of the Board, Doug Eekley was one of those people my husband and I would discuss such matters with. And going on from there through the experience that I was privileged to have both running a legal aid clinic at a law school, running a prison project, working to establish legal services programs once the new legislation was passed of being implemented and then one of the great honors of my life, being appointed to the board of the Legal Services Corporation. And in that capacity, having the opportunity to work with so many of you.

Every day and every year that we maintained our support for legal services and it's underlying promise of equal justice under the law, we knew that it was always a battle and certainly that battle could not have even been waged without the strong support of the organized bar, both at the grass roots level and at the national level. Because some of us are old enough, actually most of us in this room, this is an unlikely crowd these days, to remember the kinds of discussions that we would have about legal services with those who

did not agree with our underlying objectives. Actually, I have found myself in the last twenty months harkening back to those early discussions. It is an eery ring of familiarity about some of the arguments to those I've encountered with respect to health care reform. I showed up in Fayetteville, Arkansas, ready to teach criminal law and ready to run a legal aid clinic and a few hours after having moved to that place, went and attended the welcoming reception for the law school faculty put on by the local county bar. And the president of the Washington County Bar took me around and introduced me with great fanfare as the new lady law professor and introduced me to the Chancellor of the Chancery Court of Washington County, a very distinguished man who looked to be a member of a cast for some civil war drama playing a very straight, decorous, confederate general. And once I was introduced, the judge looked at me and he said, and what are you teaching? I said, well, I'm teaching criminal law, but I'm going to be establishing and running a legal aide clinic. And he said, well, I have no use for lady law professors. And I have no use for that legal aide stuff. And I think many of us who were legal aide lawyers remember those days and know that many of the battles that were fought were fought against a lot of misunderstanding and some basic philosophical disagreements about what the Constitution meant. But if we look at what the President says, the Preamble to the Constitution reminds us that our great nation was founded to establish justice and secure the blessings of liberty. And the very nature of justice demands that it be available to all.

The people on this platform with me as well as all of you have been dedicated to making those words live in the lives of Americans. And we are so lucky to be blessed with

people like our Attorney General, who is devoted to securing the blessings of liberty. I'm delighted that the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Schilelah, who is a fighter for a lot of the rights that are often denied people that legal services lawyers have to then fight for to secure is here with us. And Doug Eekley, our new Chair, and Alex Forger, our new President. And I'm just so pleased that the first woman member or the first woman who's the President of the American Bar Association, has chosen this event to be her first public appearance, Roberta Ramo. So it's my great, great privilege to thank all of you for being part of this celebration and to introduce to you our Attorney General, Janet Reno.

[Applause]

**Janet Reno:**

It's a great honor for me to be hear with so many of my heroes and heroines in the law. I look around this room and it is an extraordinary testament to what lawyers should be about. It's wonderful to join in celebrating a 20th anniversary. And with all such celebrations, it's not just an opportunity to look back at accomplishments, though there are many, it's an opportunity to look to the future and to challenge ourselves to make the law real for all Americans. On the east side of the building of the Department of Justice along Ninth Avenue, is the statement that the common law is the derived from the will of mankind issuing from the people, framed by mutual competence and sanctioned by the light of reason. We have a special responsibility to make sure that all people have access to that law and that they are strong enough and have a voice that will enable them to let their voice be heard. There is

no question about this administration's commitment to the mission of the legal services corporation. I can tell you that on the night of February the 9th at about 9 o'clock at night, I sat in the Oval Office meeting with the President of the United States for the first time a year and a half ago, and one of the first questions he asked me was about legal services. And he began to show something of an interest in me when I mentioned that I had served on the legal services board just shortly after I had come out of law school.

Equal access for all Americans whether rich or poor is one of the fundamentals upon which our democracy rests. The President believes so strongly in that. And if he didn't believe in it that strongly, the First Lady would be right there because she's the first Clinton that I met in my office some now two years ago and that is what we talked about in terms of how we provide access for our children and families to the law.

The program is funded by the Legal Services Corporation combined with the pro bono efforts of attorneys around the country have become one of the most effective means of providing access to the poor. As many of you know, I talk an awful lot about children. And I think it is imperative that we come together and recognize the special responsibility we have. You have been doing it. All of you who represent legal services efforts around the country have been at the forefront. But we have got to make the message heard throughout America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 14 million children in America live in poverty. Two out of every five in this country that live below the poverty line are under 18 years of age. I have just come from a briefing on juvenile violence that is terrifying in terms

of what it means of the correlation between youth violence and poverty in this country. So when we talk about legal services for the poor we're in large part talking about legal services for children. We are in large part talking about doing something about the causes of crime and preventing crime in the first place. In fact, some of the most important cases undertaken by recipients of corporation funds have focused on the rights and needs of children. In addition, whether a particular case involves the eviction of a family from an apartment, or the right of an adult client for certain benefits, the future well being of the child is often at stake. In fact, according to data provided by the Legal Services Corporation, an estimated 78 percent of the cases handled by local Legal Services Program involve or directly affect children.

I salute your past efforts on their behalf; and I encourage you never to forget the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. But I ask you, let us join together in rededicating our efforts to letting America know that unless we invest in children, unless we see that they're represented, unless we see that they have access to the law, we are never going to be able to build enough prisons 15 and 20 years from now. We will not have a work force 15 and 20 years from now. And let us sell legal services on an investment in our future because I think corporate America, business America is finally beginning to understand.

I also want to talk to you about ways in which the Department of Justice can work with you to reach the goals to which we are committed. Last year for the first time in far too long, a senior Department of Justice official testified before Congress in support of the reauthorization for the corporation. It is important that we, as a nation, express our

commitment to legal services by passing reauthorization legislation. I look forward to continuing to work with you in that effort. We must also remain vigilant in protecting the corporation and the legal services programs it funds from partisan battles. President Nixon and the 93rd Congress envisioned the non-partisan corporation dedicated to providing the poor with an equal voice when they assert their rights as Americans. Unfortunately, much effort has been exerted over the years to limit the type of cases legal services providers can undertake. Recently, Senator Graham proposed an amendment to the Appropriations Bill that would have prevented LSC funded legal services providers from providing representation in suits concerning the distribution of federal or state welfare benefits. We were able to defeat that Amendment by working closely with the corporation and our friends on the Hill, but we must remain attened of similar efforts in the future. And we must work together and I want to do so in every way that this department can.

The Department of Justice has undertaken a senior level review of issues relating to access to justice as part of a larger analysis of civil justice reform. As part of that effort, lawyers from the Department have traveled to and met with legal services providers around the country. By working with these organizations we hope to be able to more accurately identify where the greatest needs are and how best to address these needs. One of the many issues we are exploring is the possibility of allowing non-lawyers to play a greater role in providing legal services to the poor. I've also asked that the Department's policy regarding pro bono work by it's attorneys be carefully reviewed and overhauled. It is my hope that we can change our rules so that our attorneys, and we have some absolutely wonderful, great

lawyers, in the Department, will be able to engage in pro bono efforts. If we are able to do so, individuals in communities throughout the country, not just Washington, D.C., will benefit greatly. I would expect that many of our attorneys would participate in programs funded by the Corporation.

We are also providing technical support training, advice and encouragement to a number of native American tribes around the country as they seek to establish or spring from their established, their traditional tribal courts. Some of the poorest and most forgotten Americans are the country's native Americans. In 1992, there were 32 LSC funded components in 25 states dedicated to providing legal services to native Americans. As we work with the tribes to develop these courts, it is clear that the long term success of these programs may rest with the Corporation. And we look forward to joining you in all possible efforts.

Many of these efforts are still far from being finalized. However, I am confident that working with you, we will be able to move closer to the goals of equal access as the years unfold. Given this President, this First Lady, their efforts, their dedication, I believe the future is much brighter than it's been in a very, very long time.

[Applause]

First Lady Hillary Clinton:

It is now my personal pleasure to introduce a friend of mine and someone who has worked very hard on behalf of the organized bar and will continue in her new role as the President of the American Bar Association to espouse the needs of the bar but with a particular eye toward enhancing the role of lawyers in every way that they serve society and continuing the strong support of the bar for legal services and that is Roberta Ramo.

[Applause]

**Roberta Ramo:**

Mrs. Clinton, my dear and honorable friend, and distinguished former Chair of the Legal Services Corporation, General Reno and incredibly distinguished guests. Today we celebrate one important application of the American passion for justice. The creation of the Legal Services Corporation 20 years ago. I stand humbly in this great, American place as the most recent in an unwavering line of 20 Presidents of the American Bar Association from Justice Lewis Powell on forward, who have had the honor of leading, initiating, supporting, and protecting federal funding for civil legal services for the poorest Americans.

In 1965, in fact, the ABA House of Delegates unanimously spoke about the need for federal funding and it used these words "freedom and justice have flourished only where the practice of law as a profession and where legal services are performed by trained and independent lawyers and the American Bar Association reaffirms its deep concern with the problem of providing legal services to all who need them and particularly to indigents and

persons of low income." The lineage of those ideas go back to the beginning of the century when Charles Evan Hughes and Reginald Hebert Smith sought the sponsorship of the American Bar Association to begin the first organized provision of legal services by lawyers out in the community.

I think it's an essential part of the American character that we recognize that those things that make us best in the theory of our democracy are sometimes also those very acts that make us uncomfortable in its practice on occasion. From the earliest arguments about freedom from government interference with our private lives that took place in the pubs and the salons that were, during the Continental Congress to the arguments to the adoption of the Bill of Rights, with its brilliant formulation, recognizing that the differences in this case of religious beliefs and the protection to pursue them would be a strength of our nation and not a rending between us. We have understood as a country that the rights and responsibilities of our citizens as individuals often sandpaper one person's view of right against another's. But we have provided the justice system as our national table which becomes more satinlike with each application of an individual smoothing of a rough spot seen sometimes and felt only by one person. And at other times by larger groups of people in common need of help. President George Washington observed that the administration of justice must be the American government's most solid pillar.

Every day lawyers in their own office in small towns and big cities by themselves and honest and honoree solo practice or in large firms in small towns and in big see people who

have come to the civil justice system to unknot the difficulties in their lives. We know that they bring us problems that are occasionally easy to solve but loom very big in their lives. And sometimes it is enormously complex to even frame the solution to other groups of problems. But as officers of the court with the leadership of local legal services offices, we understand that day by day, client by client, what we are really doing is practicing democracy and not just law.

I remember from my days first as a law student at the University of Chicago Clinic and later on in the south, that I never felt more powerful than when I had the power as a lawyer to help a single person sitting across the desk from me, who had no money, many problems, when I could honestly say, the law can help you.

We lawyers of the American Bar Association know that only a deep belief in the fundamental willingness of the justice system to look at each person's difficulty or aspiration can decide things fairly and impartially, make it possible for us to exist in this exquisitely diverse country. If it took wealth to get into the office of a practitioner of democracy, equal justice for all would be an empty promise. And after a while, even the wealthy wouldn't believe it. It is the genius of the American Legal Services Corporation and the ABA's great contribution to it's culture, I think, that it combines both the need for federally funded access to the justice system for our poorest citizens and at the same time protects the ability of legal services lawyers to represent their clients with the same independence, ethical requirements and view of excellence that is held in the private bar.

Further, it represents the understanding of the ABA that even with 920 formal programs for donated legal services by lawyers across the United States, those dedicated legal services lawyers from the pueblos of New Mexico to the largest cities of our nation, have special expertise and special dedication in solving the problems of the poor. And today among other things, let me take a moment to thank each of them wherever they are who have lived their lives so that each one of those clients who sits across their desk can hear those wonderful words from a lawyer, I can help you.

Mrs. Clinton, we deeply appreciate, I have to say, more than you can imagine, what it means to have you and the Attorney General of the United States, invite us to the White House to talk about the legal needs of the poorer of this country. And we know that everyone in this room is committed to a justice system that will work for everyone. In these times of increasing complexity of every part of our society, we cannot risk a loss of passion or resources in fulfilling the promise of American justice. Lawyers understand that civil justice cannot be an illusion. Justice and the rule of law must be palpable, reliable and fundamentally fair. The lawyers of the Legal Services Corporation and those thousands of lawyers in private practice who give their services to the poor every day make it so. The provision of lawyers for the poor is not an expression of compassion, but the work that ties all America together, solving problems under law and in peace. If people with troubles have no access to the system, they don't believe in justice. And we risk that they will lose their beliefs in other principles of American democracy as well.

Ricks Dillingham was an archaeologist who I knew from New Mexico, who became a wondrous p\_\_\_\_\_. And he made exquisite vessels that every time I saw them always reminded me of America. He first made pieces of porcelain in different colors and different textures and of different sizes with different patterns and somehow he put them all together into single jars that were the most beautiful vessels you had ever seen. Well our country takes wondrous and beautiful people who are different in many ways, but who are bound together by the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the common dedication to American ideals and a justice system that the Legal Services Corporation, the American Bar Association and this administration are working to shape so that all who need it regardless of wealth, have access to the justice dispensed inside. And when they do, each and every American can draw more strength that President Washington's pillar holds the American dream more securely for their children, for their grandchildren, and for the ages.

Thank each of you for your devotion, and thank you Mrs. Clinton and General Reno  
[Inaudible].

[Applause]

**First Lady Hillary Clinton:**

There were a number of members of Congress who had hoped to be here but because of votes, I'm not sure how many, if any, were able to come. Are there any members who did make it? I looked around and I did not recognize any and they were calling up to the var...

[End of Tape, Side #1]

[Start of Tape, Side, #2]

**First Lady Hillary Clinton (continued):**

...who was just up on the Hill dealing with GAAT and other matters, but actually started out negotiating on behalf of people in Florida as a legal services lawyer, which is probably why he is so good in the job he currently has because as a legal services lawyer you have to be very creative. And Mickey has a lot of experience doing that. There are also a number of members of the judiciary who are here. We are very grateful for their steadfast support over the years and their willingness to be part of organized efforts to support legal services. There are also a number of you who are former and present members of the ABA Board of Governors and other positions of leadership within the ABA, as well as state bar associations. We could not be here today without you. During what many of us refer to as the dark ages of legal services in the early 1980's, when there were constant and relentless efforts to abolish the corporation either outright or by starvation, many of you were our only defenders and we are very grateful for that. And there are many who are former and present members of the existing Board of the Legal Services Corporation. And since I think it's

important that we be forward looking and futuristic and not totally drown in nostalgia this afternoon, I would like to introduce those members of the current Legal Services Corporation, who although they have the strong support of the President, are still swimming upstream. It is still a hard, hard case to make in many quarters about the need to support legal services. So please join me in welcoming Alex Forger, whom we have already introduced, Doug Eekley, the Chairman, Nancy Rogers, if you would stand, Nancy, Buckey Askew, who has been a stalwart, La Veeda Battle, La Veeda, John Broderick, who I've saw earlier, John Brooks, Edna Fairbanks Williams, our dear friend, Bill McAlpin, who always seems to be there when legal services has a problem, Maria Louisa McCardo, Tom Sneagle from San Francisco, Ernestine Whattlington.

We are so pleased that we have such a strong Board committed to the future of legal services and now we will take a moment for those of us who will be in the receiving line to go into the Blue Room. For those of you who have not been here before, it goes Red Room, Blue Room, Green Room, it's great, you know, it's just easy to find your way around. And then join us please for a reception in the State Dining Room.

Thank you all very much for being here.

[Applause]

**Interviews:**

**Judge Howard Dana Interview:**

Greenfield: In your experience as a judge, and in private practice, can you describe the outstanding caliber of legal service attorneys?

Judge Howard Dana: Legal service attorneys have historically been some of the best lawyers that have ever appeared in our court and, and or against whom I've advocated. They are, they are terrific. They are, they are just wonderful lawyers.

Greenfield: Can you describe some of the qualities that make them stand out perhaps?

Judge Howard Dana: Well I think, I think their competence is, is uni, is almost uniformly very high. They are, they're committed to what they do. They are, they're helping, helping clients not for any personal reason, but to make sure that our, our nation's promise of justice for all is fulfilled.

Greenfield: Is there any difference, you think, between a legal service as opposed to someone else? What special quality do you think it takes to be a legal service attorney as opposed to any old attorney out there?

Judge Howard Dana: I think it's required, I'm not sure that there is a difference. I think legal services attorneys are good attorneys and uh, and often superb attorneys, and I think that we

have, we are blessed with the same caliber of attorneys in legal services as that we have in outside of legal services.

**Lillian Johnson Interview:**

Greenfield: In your, in your service on the Legal Service Corporation Board in the past, you've seen a lot of history. What have you learned from the past two decades that can stand out?

Lillian Johnson: I've learned that this battle for legal services is ongoing and is only beginning and that there's a huge gap between where we are and where we need to be.

Greenfield: Can you describe a little what that gap would be, what that gap is?

Lillian Johnson: Yes. We are, we are not providing equal justice for all by a long shot in this country. And most people think that we are and that's the problem. Congress doesn't understand. State legislatures don't understand. But millions and millions of Americans cannot get a fair shake in our legal system because they can't get a lawyer.

Greenfield: And why do you think that is?

Lillian Johnson: Because there is not enough money to hire enough lawyers to do the job.

Greenfield: What do you see the future of the Legal Services Corporation? What is your vision?

Lillian Johnson: My vision is an expanded Legal Services Corporation with more and more resources helping, helping the poor, help themselves.

Greenfield: Any one experience or one moment stand out as sort of crystallizes for you what it means to have worked for the Legal Services Corporation?

Lillian Johnson: No. It's been a, a for almost everyone in legal services, whether they're on the front lines or in the backup positions as I've been, it is a, it's a mission that is, that sort of defines the human being and defines the person.

Greenfield: And one final question. What drove you to be part of the Legal Services Corporation? Was there something that you think personally that, that led you to do such a thing?

Lillian Johnson: The President Reagan initially and then President Bush asked me to help in that regard, and I said yes.

[Pause]

Greenfield: Lillian. Can I call you Lillian?

Lillian Johnson: Yes, you may.

Greenfield: How did you first become involved with Legal Services?

Lillian Johnson: Actually, I was a student at the legal serv--at the community, the University of Chicago Law School.

Greenfield: Start over.

Lillian Johnson: Okay.

Greenfield: How did you become involved in legal services?

Lillian Johnson: I first became involved in legal services as a law student at the University of Chicago Law School. And in fact, the law school clinic was in the basement, and it was the best decision in my life to actually go down in the basement and have the opportunity to meet real people and ask them how I could help them. And the best feeling in the world is to be able to say, yes, I can help you and this is what we can do in order to resolve the problem.

Greenfield: [Inaudible]

Lillian Johnson: Well, because I think that in some ways because most people who decide to go into a service profession actually do it because they want to be of service to somebody. Of course, we'd like to have it valued and our society, sometimes that value is monetary. But going into a service profession and actually getting the opportunity to talk with the person who has the problem and to help them join with you in developing a resolution to the problem. And then being able to actually do it. And then seeing the sense of satisfaction for them, the opportunity to make an impact on an individual's life is extremely rewarding.

Greenfield: ...so your answer is leading to my question, what are the perks, what are the personal rewards that you have gained [Inaudible]?

Lillian Johnson: Well, I've had an opportunity to give back to my community. And that was probably the most important thing for me. It was a very simple decision on my part to determine that I was going to go into legal services as a career. I had the opportunity growing up to be helped by a number of people and in each of those, in each of the instance in which I was helped, I always got the sense that they would be delighted if there was someone who could offer something back to the community. And each instance in which I was helped, they would always say, "I'm just glad to do something for someone who can bring something back to our community."

And in fact, my first experience in the law had to do with a lawyer who decided to come to a grade school and talk about the rewards of being in the profession. And one of the things that he said in response to a question that was posed about individuals who had been essentially locked out of their property was that this is a country of laws. And in order to be able to understand it and take advantage of all the opportunities that are here -- and he talked about how many opportunities were here, you really have to understand the laws. And he encouraged all of us to actually think about a career in the law. And it was at that time that I decided that that sounded interesting enough to me.

Then I had the experience where schoolmates had unfortunately been in situations where their family had sold the mineral rights of their property and didn't realize it, and the company, oil companies discovered oil and the family only got the rental for the land that the derrick occupied. And unfortunately, it was very little. So that they were essentially like me, low income family and not having the opportunity to take advantage of some of the opportunities that were available. And I decided then that I wanted to know more about that.

When I got into law school, a lot of the law didn't make much sense, because I couldn't understand or appreciate how it could translate in helping other people. And it was actually the opportunity to go down in the basement into the law school clinic and see real people lined up and then seeing the smiles on their faces, not only on the client's faces, but on the law student's faces, and the law professor's faces when they were able to resolve a problem. And then I know that from my own experience being a part of the solution is

empowering. And so I had an immediate appreciation for how important it is to involve people in resolving their own problems. And I decided I wanted to get that feeling every day of my life if I could. And I tell you that's what I've enjoyed.

Greenfield: So you could have had a lot of money as a lawyer, you chose not to, so obviously money is not what's driving you [Inaudible]?

Lillian Johnson: Is what's driving me to do what I do is my commitment to making a difference and actually seeing that there is, in America, access to justice for all. And I get a lot of pride out of being a part of this whole movement.

Greenfield: You've talked about going down into the basement and discovering this role and how empowering it was. What advice do you have for a young lawyer who's starting out in a career and assuming [Inaudible], what advice would you give him?

Lillian Johnson: Well, I'm not sure that it's necessary for me to give someone right out of law school who's decided that that's what, that they've chosen a profession and that that's what they want to do. I would just challenge them to experience helping someone and being a part of resolving a problem that results in a family being able to remain in shelter or resolving a problem that results in a terminally ill person actually getting the kind of health care that they need to, that they deserve. Or having the opportunity to see the look on a family's face when someone has placed in a position where they don't lose their property because there's been

someone to step in and interpret the law on their own behalf. Or look at the faces of clients that are involved a divorce workshop where they actually get the opportunity to learn how to get a divorce for themselves. Or see the abused spouse and the excitement on their faces when they discover that they don't have to take the abuse anymore, that there are other opportunities available to them. And I challenge them just to see it. And then to remember why we chose this profession in this first place. Then I dare say that they'll make the right decision.

Greenfield: There's a program director [Inaudible]?

Lillian Johnson: Well, I think it's real important to share with as many people as possible about the serious need out there. I know that there's a lot of people who feel as though lawyers create problems for people in terms of lawyers producing more litigation or lawyers being involved in bringing a law suit against a particular individual or an industry. But the real serious problems that people are facing can only be resolved if they have access, I mean actual access to the justice system. And because we are such a large and in my area, there's such a significant increase in the number of people, just in general who have moved to the southwest. And for those individuals, getting to the position where they can gain access to the things that they have a right to, takes some kind of support and assistance. And in terms of understanding our legal system, it takes legal support. In my community in Arizona, the, we've had a 67 percent increase in the poverty population, so that my client community from 1980 to 1992 increased to such an extent that we consider ourselves in depression.

Greenfield: Well, how do you \_\_\_\_\_? We're talking about a large group, what kind of \_\_\_\_\_?

Lillian Johnson: We have a, we set priorities, primarily with the assistance of members of the legal community and the community and the staff around issues that have more to do with life threatening aspects of a person's life. And we limit those things to shelter, access to shelter, access to life in abusive situations. Access to health care, opportunities for access to income and that's primarily the public benefits or in some cases, unemployment compensation and social security benefits. It has to do with whether or not there are other ways in which an individual can gain access to legal assistance and how vital that legal assistance is to their existence. And unfortunately, we have far too many people who go wanting because we have not had the increase in resources available to us to be able to make more lawyers and other advocates available to them to help them resolve their legal problems. We have just not kept pace with the number of people that are moving into our community and have need of legal assistance and don't have the resources to be able to pay for it.

Greenfield: [Inaudible] What are the biggest challenges facing legal services?

Lillian Johnson: The biggest challenges faces the legal services community is providing as rapidly as possible increased access to legal assistance in each and every one of our communities. And, unfortunately, battling what has come to be a problem with people's perception of the role that lawyers play in providing legal assistance for poor people. If all of

the lawyers in our entire community was to take on two cases per year for poor people, we would still be denying 50 percent of the people who are financially eligible for legal assistance in our community. And the legal community simply cannot accomplish this alone. We have to have the assistance from all of society. And I dare say it's a worthy goal. And unless we make justice available for all, justice is not available for any.

Greenfield: [Inaudible] there's a challenge out there. Finally, [Inaudible]?

Lillian Johnson: My program's greatest success is that each year, we have increased the number of people we have been able to serve by at least 10 percent. Our goals subsequently is to be able to say that we have made sure that no stone has been left unturned in order to insure that equal access to justice in Arizona is a reality. That's the biggest challenge we face.

Greenfield: [Inaudible] the greatest success?

Lillian Johnson: Oh, the greatest success is being able to say that each year, we've increased the number of people who've been able to say that they've gained access to our justice system as a direct result of the work that our program is doing in Arizona.

Greenfield: [Inaudible]

Lillian Johnson: Thank you.

**Les Jin Interview:**

Greenfield: Say your name.

Les Jin: My name is Les Jin. J, i, n.

Greenfield: L, e, s?

Les Jin: And it's L, e, s. And I'm General Counsel of the United States Information Agency.

Greenfield: [Inaudible] Okay. Tell us about why you just became [Inaudible]?

Les Jin: I joined legal services right out of law school. And I thought it was an opportunity to practice law and to do something that I thought I would really enjoy.

Greenfield: [Inaudible] more detail than that. What, is there something that sticks in your personal life, was there some kind of moment?

Les Jin: Sure. I started out as just a volunteer with the legal aid program in Chicago. And that was something I really wanted to do because I grew up believing that being a lawyer

could make a difference for people, and certainly found that to be true in my experience as just a volunteer. I was able to then continue working for legal assistance foundation of Chicago a number of years of that. And I thought that it was one of the best experiences of my legal career.

Greenfield: Why is that?

Les Jin: I think I got a chance to work with the smartest, most dedicated, hard working, compassionate lawyers I've ever worked with. It did help basically form the foundation of my legal status.

Greenfield: So you're not working with [Inaudible]?

Les Jin: No. I've been really fortunate in that I've always been able to work with some really good lawyers, but not only have I been able to work with really good lawyers, but I've been able to work, have opposing counsel who are from the most prestigious law firms who are really good lawyers, but I've never met a group of lawyers who are any better than the ones in legal aid.

Greenfield: Give me sort of a short list of some of your most personally rewarding [Inaudible] experience perhaps or [Inaudible]?

Les Jin: I think the greatest reward of being a legal aid lawyer is being able to work with individuals and it may not be a lot of dollars, but you can tell that it makes a big difference in their lives, and to be able to work with people who just appreciate that you're willing to be there and fight for them. That's one of the biggest personal rewards that I can remember.

Greenfield: Any particular instance where that happened with one individual [Inaudible]?

Les Jin: No. I guess not.

Greenfield: Tell me something. How do you think the legal services are viewed from the community as a whole?

Les Jin: I worked for the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago from about 1978 to '83 and then I spent two years with the Legal Service Corporation in the Chicago region. And in that capacity I had a chance to travel all the way, all throughout the midwest and the south, not only in the big cities, but in small towns, towns like Johnson, Tennessee, and North Plat, Nebraska and the thing that always impressed me was that when I met with private lawyers because I talked with them about legal aid, those that, a lot of them when they didn't know much about legal aid, they were somewhat skeptical. Those that really had a chance to work with legal aid lawyers and knew what legal services were about, they all uniformly thought that it had a high respect for the lawyers in the community.

Greenfield: Have you ever been able to transform skepticism into praise or into admiration perhaps?

Les Jin: Hmmm, um...

Greenfield: [Inaudible]

Les Jin: Yeah. It really wasn't kind of my job. So I, it would be kind of hard to...

Greenfield: A question. Some people might have a [Inaudible] bad rap, I mean helping the poor, it's psychological or whatever. What do you say to the skeptics about legal services? What would you say to try to convince me perhaps, if I were a critic, what would you say to try to persuade me that it's a good thing?

Les Jin: I think legal services is the, I think the Legal Services Corporation and the lawyers they find are the most American of all institutions because the fundamental tenet of being an American and the American system is equal justice or access to equal justice. And the Legal Service Corporation tries to provide that.

Greenfield: How?

Les Jin: By trying to provide individuals who could not have otherwise afford a lawyer an

opportunity to have their cases heard before a court.

Greenfield: Anything you would like a statement or you have a chance now for eternity here so to speak, to sort of say your feelings, your attitudes, your reflections on this Corporation, why it's great, why it should keep going. [Inaudible]

Les Jin: I think probably my last answer probably addressed that. Maybe what I would like to say in ending is that the personal experiences I got from working with Legal Services as a lawyer and working with the cases, an opportunity to handle a diverse amount of cases and to work in diverse communities, it's made a big difference in my life since, both as a lawyer and otherwise. I think it's made me a better person; and it's made me a better lawyer.

**La Veeda Morgan Battle: Interview:**

La Veeda Morgan Battle: Are you going to ask me them before you turn it on so I can think about them or are you going?

Greenfield: Well, I just [Inaudible]

La Veeda Morgan Battle: Okay. Right. Okay.

Greenfield: I understand that you were legal services manager, [Inaudible]?

La Veeda Morgan Battle: Well, I first worked in a clinical program \_\_\_\_\_ in a legal services program; and I became involved because I was interested...

Greenfield: Okay, Davis --

La Veeda Morgan Battle: Davis, Okay.

Greenfield: They don't know where Davis is. If you want to say Davis

La Veeda Morgan Battle: All right. University of California, Davis Law School. Okay.

Greenfield: I'm sorry. I won't be interrupting you.

La Veeda Morgan Battle: Yeah. Yeah, but uh, and after working in that clinical program.

Greenfield: Start again.

La Veeda Morgan Battle: Okay. All right.

Greenfield: You were start out, you were a legal services managing attorney. How did you

become involved in the services?

La Veeda Morgan Battle: Well, I first participated in a clinical program...

[End of Tape Side #2]