

Community Legal Aid Attorney recognized for leadership and advocacy



Wayne Sarna receives [Ohio Access to Justice Foundation Denis J. Murphy Award](#)

Attorney Wayne Sarna is the 2023 recipient of the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation Denis J. Murphy Award. The Denis J. Murphy Award is presented annually to recognize outstanding leadership and advocacy within Ohio's legal aids.

For more than four decades, Sarna has helped thousands of Ohioans resolve civil legal challenges.

“Wayne is a true champion of justice,” said Bill Dowling, Foundation board member. “His leadership and advocacy have left an indelible impact on his colleagues, the thousands of clients he has helped, and the legal profession.”

Sarna is a visionary who recognized how bankruptcy could transform the lives of low-income workers trapped in a cycle of debt. In the past 20 years alone, he has helped 3,100 clients discharge \$85 million of debt through bankruptcy. As a true advocate for low-income Ohioans, he discharged debts that prevented individuals from

accessing driver's licenses, jobs, and housing.

During his career, Sarna has significantly impacted multiple areas of consumer law. He played a pivotal role in discovering and investigating consumer fraud schemes by identifying perpetrators and addressing the harm resulting from the scams. Additionally, he has worked to illuminate and address the disparate impact of court debt on low-income Ohioans and people of color.

Sarna's deep and extensive bankruptcy and consumer law knowledge has allowed him to craft innovative and nontraditional lawyering strategies. He leads with unmatched compassion, using the law to transform Ohioans' lives. With his expertise, he has provided education, training, and outreach to individuals and debt counseling providers. He is also a dedicated mentor, guiding new attorneys as they begin their legal careers.

"Wayne doesn't care to be in the spotlight, but I can't think of anyone more deserving of this honor," said Steven McGarrity, Community Legal Aid's executive director. "His dedication, determination, and compassionate spirit is an inspiration, and sets a high standard for us all."

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