

Long-time attorney Whitney retires

Whitney tells others, “Do not grow weary of doing good”

Community Legal Aid is saying goodbye to long-time attorney Richard Whiney, who retired at the end of last month after 28 years of serving low-income clients.

Whitney, a New London resident, has been with the non-profit law firm since 1989. He has assisted clients with a broad range of issues, from housing, to family issues, to financial and debt troubles. Most recently, he served as Legal Aid’s HelpLine attorney, taking high-priority and urgent cases and working virtually with clients over the phone who needed issues addressed immediately.

“Richard’s calm temperament and ‘get-it-done’ attitude has always served our clients and our community well,” Executive Director Steven McGarrity said. “He has a real passion for helping people in crisis, and that was always clear to our clients, who loved working with him. He will be sorely missed.”

John Petit, managing attorney for Legal Aid, agreed. Petit has supervised Whitney for the last several years and has seen him help clients with urgent matters such as evictions and being locked out of their homes.

“It’s not easy to build trust with clients you can’t meet face-to-face,” he said. “But Richard brings such a high level of professionalism to his work that he was able to instill confidence in his clients. I think this is really what resonated with them and made him such a successful attorney.”

Whitney said he has enjoyed the level of professionalism he’s experienced in working at Legal Aid. He said that professionalism makes all the difference to clients.

“I have enjoyed working with the most knowledgeable poverty law attorneys in the state with access to the best computer systems,” he said. “Knowledge brings power and greatly reduces stress to our clients, who are usually at a breaking point when they seek us out.”

As for retirement, Whitney is looking forward to getting to projects long put off.

“I have stacks of books that have been ignored for too many years,” he said. “There is much work in my church to do. I have numerous designed stained glass windows that need constructed.”

He offered a final piece of advice to his legal colleagues and others working with low-income populations:

“Keep the faith. Do not grow weary of doing good.”

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