

Cooley Law School Auburn Hills Campus Pro Bono Month Events

Foreclosure Seminar

On Saturday October 31, 2009, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the New Mount Moriah International Church at 313 E. Walton Blvd. in Pontiac, Michigan, Cooley Law School Professor Florise Neville-Ewell, along with Cooley Professor Dustin Foster and political representatives from Oakland County, will be assisted by Cooley Law School students in presenting on ways to protect your home from foreclosure. Attorneys will also be present to provide information on such legal issues such as drafting wills or helping with estate planning for seniors on a pro bono basis. In particular, the speakers will emphasize Michigan's new foreclosure law that requires lenders to "work out" or attempt to work out their differences before foreclosing. Borrowers need to know about the law and the strict limitations placed on when they must respond in order to benefit from the new law. The mission of this group is to educate people so that they will be more financially and legally literate regarding these transactions and to get the word out about the new law.

Throughout the metropolitan Detroit area, Cooley Professor Florise Neville-Ewell helps two large categories of participants in the real estate process—homeowners, including new homeowners, empty nesters, and foreclosure victims, and non-profit developers who primarily build affordable housing within their respective communities. Through her pro bono program, Professor Neville-Ewell provides people or organizations with basic information and fundamental tools and legal protocols regarding real estate and the real estate process so they can avoid scams and foreclosure (for homeowners) or be made aware of mandatory steps to successfully complete their housing developments (for non-profit developers). She employs the "ten commandments of real estate" to isolate the most important items for each group, but emphasizes that each group needs a team of professionals to ultimately help them accomplish their real estate goals. Professor Neville-Ewell has worked directly with individuals (through Corinthian Baptist Church in Detroit, for example), with multiple churches and individuals through symposia sponsored by banks (Fifth Third), the Detroit Branch of the NAACP, THAW (The Heat and Warmth Fund), and Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, and with non-profits through their leaders. She is also regularly interviewed on Saturday morning radio programs sponsored by the Detroit Area on Aging. Professor Neville-Ewell can be reached at (248) 751-7800.

Thomas Cooley Law School embraces its responsibility to the students and communities it serves. In 2008, Cooley programs provided 169,134 hours of free legal service to the people and institutions surrounding its campuses and around the world through its legal clinics and 18 pro bono programs. At an average cost of \$150 per hour for legal help, this legal assistance is worth over \$25 million. Of those hours, 69,651 were provided to those who cannot afford to pay for the services, reflecting a pro bono value to the indigent of over \$10 million.

Pontiac Senior Center

On Thursday October 22, 2009, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. at the Ruth Peterson Senior Center at 990 Joslyn Ave. in Pontiac, Michigan, faculty attorneys and law students from

the Auburn Hills campus of the Thomas M. Cooley Law School will be offering pro bono services to senior citizens. Attorneys from the Thomas M. Cooley Law School will be on hand to provide free legal advice or referrals to seniors who have any legal issues to discuss. This effort is the kick-off event in what is planned as a long-term partnership between Lakeshore Legal Aid and Cooley Law School. On September 28, 2009, Lakeshore Legal Aid staff attorneys trained nine Cooley-Auburn Hills faculty members in how to assess client competency, how to screen for elder abuse and exploitation, and how to assess client needs.

It is planned that these faculty members will visit participating senior centers in Oakland County on a monthly basis to substantially increase access to legal services by seniors who cannot otherwise afford a lawyer. The faculty members will be joined by volunteer students who will assist them in interviewing and assessing the legal needs of Oakland County seniors.

Seniors who need wills and powers of attorney will be referred to Cooley Law School's Estate Planning Clinic at the Auburn Hills campus. Those who need family law assistance will be referred to the Family Law Assistance Project, another Cooley-Lakeshore partnership that is also located at the Auburn Hills campus. Seniors with other legal needs will be referred to Lakeshore Legal Aid.

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