

Legal Aid **SERVICES**

Oklahoma City Legal Aid Office Has New Managing Attorney

By **Gayla Machell and Teresa Rendon**

Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc. (LASO) welcomed Robert McCarthy as its new Managing Attorney in the Oklahoma City Law Office. In his first few weeks on the job, Robert has joined the Oklahoma County Bar Association and attended meetings of its Legal Aid Committee and Family Law Section. Most of his time has been spent, however, actively managing the 15-attorney Oklahoma City Law Office. As Managing Attorney, Robert is responsible for supervising the day-to-day operations of the office which includes compliance with LASO policies, regulations of the Legal Service Corporation (LSC), and the requirements of other funding agencies. McCarthy has also met with private attorneys, service agencies, and community organizations in the local service area of Oklahoma and Canadian Counties.

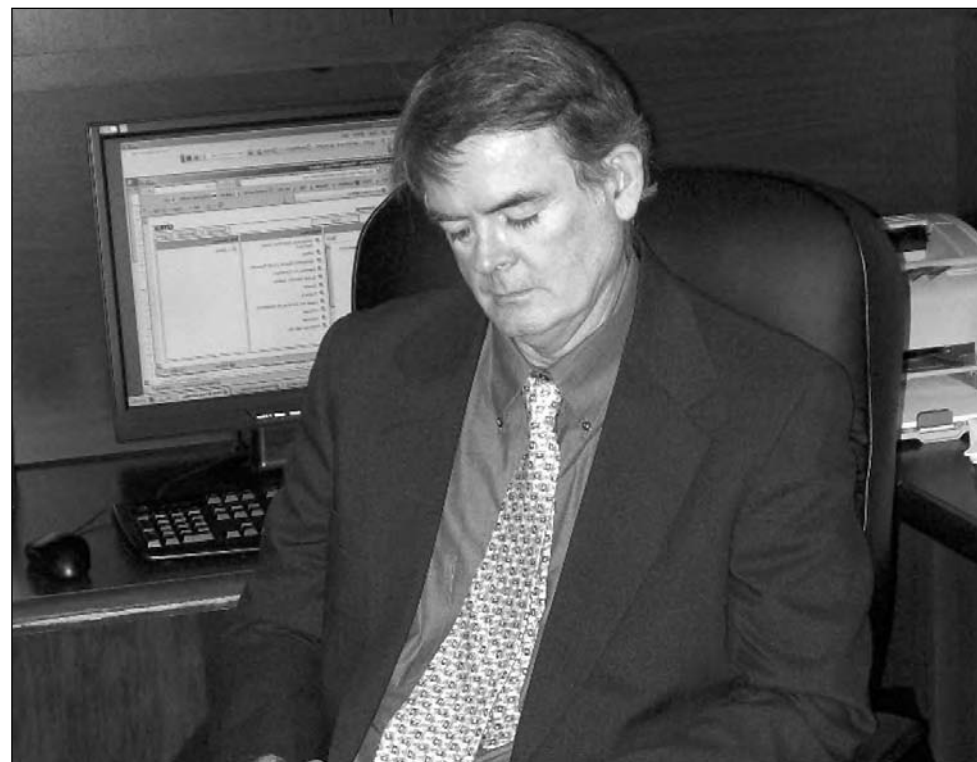
Fortunately, Mr. McCarthy is guided by LASO Executive Director Gary Taylor and Litigation Director Michael Miller who oversee more than a dozen local offices across the state. Additionally, he is assisted locally by a capable and experienced group of attorneys and support staff, including pro bono coordinator Cindy Goble and Litigation Supervisor Thomas "Neil" Lynn II, who temporarily co-managed the office before Robert came on board. In fact, LASO held the position vacant for an extended period to allow Robert to wrap up his work

in California before returning to Oklahoma at the beginning of March.

Robert, a graduate of the University of Montana School of Law and holder of law licenses in Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Oklahoma, is no stranger to legal aid or to the state of Oklahoma. He has managed legal aid offices in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington and directed clinical legal education programs at the University of Washington and the University of Idaho. More recently, he served as Field Solicitor for the U.S. Department of the Interior in both Oklahoma and California.

McCarthy has written numerous scholarly articles, including most recently a comprehensive history and analysis of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, published in 2004 by the Brigham Young University Public Law Journal. He testified recently in the multi-billion dollar *Cobell v. Kempthorne* class action that seeks an accounting of Indian trust funds held by the government. An opinion subsequently issued by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia echoed his testimony that the government breached its trust obligation to Indian landowners by using something like an "honor system" to collect monies owed to Indians and is now incapable of providing an accurate accounting.

Robert's wife Salome is a native of Kenya and a psychologist who previously



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practiced in Tulsa. Currently, she is winding up her work at Desert Regional Hospital in Palm Springs and putting their home on the market so that she can join Robert in Oklahoma. Meanwhile, Robert has found numerous diversions in his spare time, including bicycle rides on the Oklahoma River, a peace vigil and an art appreciation

class at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art. He and Salome hope to visit her native Kenya in the near future.

"It's a privilege to be able to return to the legal services community and to resume a more active role in helping to expand access to justice to the poor," Robert says of joining LASO.