

The Legal Intelligence Introducing the... **ALM**
DELAWARE BUSINESS COURT INSIDER
 News and analysis on the most important developments in the Delaware Business Courts

An **ALM** Web site

THE NATIONAL
LAW JOURNAL
 with D.C. news from LegalTimes

This Site | Law.com Network | Legal Web

Search the Legal Web [Go >>](#)

30 Day Free Trial

National News

Washington News



Home

Legal Business

Law Schools

Columns

Verdicts

Opinion

Video Center

Blog

[NLJ Home](#) > [News](#) > [Not quite ready to quit](#)

Font Size: [+](#) [-](#)

Not quite ready to quit

'Postretirement' lawyers finding greater satisfaction with nonprofits.

Matthew Huisman [Contact](#) [All Articles](#)

The National Law Journal | October 24, 2011

[Print](#) [Share](#) [Email](#) [Reprints & Permissions](#) [Post a Comment](#)



Children's Law Center special counsel Allen Snyder
 Photo: Diego M. Radzinski / NLJ

After his 30-year career as a litigator at Hogan & Hartson ended in 2001, Allen Snyder was ready for an unusual retirement.

Snyder and his wife served as emergency foster care parents for more than 15 children in Montgomery County, Md., going so far as to adopt one of the children in 2005.

But the itch to practice law never fully left him. This time, though, he wanted to put his legal skills to use to help people, especially children — without the nonstop pressure of billable hours and finding new clients.

So earlier this year, when he was approached by the Children's Law Center, the largest pro bono legal services provider in Washington, he jumped at the chance. At the law center, he's been working a reduced-hour schedule on appellate cases regarding adoptions and neglect allegations.

"There is great unmet need in the community for pro bono service," Snyder said. "For a retiring lawyer, it is an

opportunity to carve out a niche of the law that you care about. You can focus on the legal issues without focusing on economic factors."

There are many attorneys like Snyder in Washington — big-firm grinders who for decades worked 60- and 70-hour weeks, but who retired with fundamental needs unfulfilled. Nonprofits, with challenging cases and a desperate need for quality legal help, are filling the void.

Some legal public service advocates are trying to create more Allen Snyders by planting seeds among senior firm lawyers that pro bono work has numerous rewards — and that they can continue on that path after they retire by starting new careers with nonprofits.

Does Your Law Dept Use Matter-Management Software
 Click Here for Full Story
LTN LAW TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Advertisement



Find similar content

Firms mentioned

Companies, agencies mentioned

Key categories

Most viewed stories

Professor's plea: Say no to 'law school porn'

High court will decide fate of health care law

Database blues

O'Donnell headed to trial after judge rebuffs government on plea deal

Opportunities diminishing for women at large law firms, study finds

LAW.COM District of Columbia Access to Justice Commission and the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program created a program to better engage firms with pro bono work called SAILS — Senior Attorneys Initiative for Legal Services. The program included 11 founding D.C.-based law offices.

"The point of SAILS was to institutionalize pro bono work among partner and senior lawyers," said Marc Fleischaker, Arent Fox partner and chair of the SAILS working group.

Maureen Syracuse, outgoing executive director of the D.C. Bar's Pro Bono Program, also is working to have senior attorneys spend their last several years as devoted to pro bono work as possible. "We are trying to tap all the resources of the firms," Syracuse said. Funding for legal service providers has always been scant, and the prolonged harsh economic times have compounded the issue. It has also made some lawyers more leery of hanging up their hat, even as more approach retirement age.

But she argues that, in their last years at their firms, some senior attorneys have an increasing desire to give back. "These are the people that went to law school to change the world," Syracuse said. "When they hit the last stage of their career, there will be a sizable number that want to do something more. We think we will find a number of lawyers with that mindset."

Robert Bruskin and James Springer, drawn to a second life in public service work after leaving the law completely, fit that bill.

In 1973, Bruskin, now 65, joined Howrey, Simon, Baker & Murchison [subsequently called Howrey] and spent 31 years mostly working on corporate deals involving the transfer of large sums of money between organizations. For the past seven years, he's served as the senior counsel of the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights.

Under his guidance, the organization has brought cases against large developers of multifamily housing, including apartment complexes, for violations of the Americans With Disabilities Act. "That has been a major initiative that has resulted in many settlements," Bruskin said.

Bruskin has also been involved in housing discrimination cases in Washington and neighboring Montgomery County. In both jurisdictions, it is illegal to discriminate against people who pay for housing using a federal subsidy payment, alimony or other voucher. As a result, thousands of apartment units are now available to those who were previously illegally denied housing.

"In many cases you're making an enormous difference in their life," Bruskin said. "Bringing the cases and settling them has had an enormous impact."

In 2004, Springer, 77, left Dickstein Shapiro as one of its top antitrust lawyers. The next year, he was hired part-time as an attorney with the D.C. Legal Aid Society. Springer mainly does intake interviews with clients and also handles a lot of benefits claims related to Social Security, Medicaid and food stamps. For him, the adjustment has been smooth — but not without its own challenges.

"Social Security law is as complicated as any subject matter I've dealt with," Springer said. "What I didn't expect is how frustrating it is and how long it takes to get things done. We are dealing with bureaucrats who have impossible workloads."

Ultimately, Springer said it's about helping his clients who often times survive on meager benefits.

"I deal with real people," Springer said. "I've never been hugged by a client until I came to work for Legal Aid. I do this for myself as much as I do this for other people."

Matthew Huisman can be reached at mhuisman@alm.com.

Advertisement

Sign Out



lawjobs.com

TOP JOBS

Legal or Architects & Engineers Malpractice Litigator
P.G. Prager Search Associates, LTD.
Long Island, New York

Antitrust Associate---Large DC Law Firm
Amato Legal Search, Inc.
District of Columbia, District of Columbia

MORE JOBS
POST A JOB

Advertisement

A dark grey rectangular advertisement with the text "The Legal Intelligence" in white, "ALM" in white, and "Introducing the..." in yellow. Below that, "DELAWARE BUSINESS COURT INSIDER" is written in large white letters. At the bottom, "Click Here for More Information." is in yellow, and "News and analysis on the most important developments in the Delaware Business Courts" is in white on a blue background.

From the Law.com Network

THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL



In Fiscal 2011, EEOC Won Record-Breaking \$365 Million for Discrimination Victims

Dueling motions in Kung Fu Panda copyright case

LTN LAW TECHNOLOGY NEWS



Best Practices for Social and Mobile Media as Privacy Laws Evolve

KPMG Case Fuels Preservation Debate

THE RECORDER



Rambus Gets Nothing in Suit Against Rivals

High Court Lets Stand Ruling Widening Doorway in Discrimination Cases

dbi DAILY BUSINESS REVIEW.COM



Former Rothstein Partner Russell Adler Says Trustee Violated Agreement

Judge: Inspector general can't investigate police

New Jersey Law



New Jersey Order Refund Taxes Paid Madoff Victims or 'Phantom Income'

Lawyer Who Did He Was Fired Car for Work Done or

[terms & conditions](#) | [privacy](#) | [advertise](#) | [about NLJ.com](#) | [contact us](#) | [subscribe](#)

the LAW.COM network

LAW.COM

Newswire
Special Reports
International News
Lists, Surveys & Rankings
Legal Blogs
Site Map

ALM NATIONAL

The American Lawyer
The Am Law Litigation Daily
Corporate Counsel
Law Technology News
The National Law Journal

ALM REGIONAL

Connecticut Law Tribune
Daily Business Review (FL)
Delaware Law Weekly
Daily Report (GA)
The Legal Intelligence (PA)
New Jersey Law Journal
New York Law Journal
GC New York
The Recorder (CA)
Texas Lawyer

DIRECTORIES

ALM Experts
LegalTech® Directory
In-House Law Departments at the Top 500 Companies
New York's Women Leaders in the Law
Corporate Counsel: Best Lawyers® Annual Guides
The American Lawyer: Best Lawyers® Annual Guides
The National Law Journal Leadership Profiles
National Directory of Minority Attorneys

BOOKS & NEWSLETTERS

Best-Selling Books
Publication E-Alerts
Law Journal Newsletters
LawCatalog Store
Law Journal Press Online

RESEARCH

ALM Legal Intelligence
Court Reporters
MA 3000
Verdict Search
ALM Experts
Legal Dictionary
Smart Litigator

EVENTS & CONFERENCES

ALM Events
LegalTech®
Virtual LegalTech®
Virtual Events
Webinars & Online Events
Insight Information

REPRINTS

Reprints

ONLINE CLE

CLE Center

CAREER

Lawjobs