



GUARDIAN AD LITEM PRO BONO PROGRAM

STATEWIDE APPEALS DATA FISCAL YEAR 2018–2019

Appellate Cases

207 appeals filed
33 appeals represented by GAL Program
20 appeals represented by Attorney Advocates
112 appeals represented by GAL pro bono attorneys

Appellate Attorneys

1 Appellate Counsel
1 Associate Counsel
1 Staff Attorney
152 Pro Bono Appellate Attorneys

PRO BONO ATTORNEY TESTIMONIALS

“It is incredibly rewarding to allow a child to be adopted out of a neglected or abused situation and into a better opportunity for love. Representing the GAL is representing the best interest of the child. I believe there is no greater use of a law degree than helping these innocent children. The work of the GAL and pro bono GAL attorney hopefully will benefit each child for the rest of his or her life. Every child deserves to be loved, safe, and supported. I think we should all do our part to make this a reality.” — **Ashley Edwards, Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein, LLP**

“I volunteer because I feel I’m helping the children whose interests the guardians represent. I also enjoy appellate work and the opportunity to work with the rest of the team on these cases.” — **Neil A. Reimann, Penry / Reimann, PLLC**

“I work on GAL appeals because I can think of few people more deserving of protection than children. By ensuring their best interests are put first and foremost on appeal, I hope to help secure a future that is healthier, safer, and brighter for each child the GAL represents.” — **Dan Melo, International House**

“It would be very difficult to read the stories of these children and not want to help in some way that is impactful and significant. That a lawyer can apply the skills we hone on a daily basis (research, analysis, and writing) and actually shape the course of lives is remarkable, and I feel very fortunate to have gifts of value to offer these children who often have been denied so much.” — **Lenor Marquis-Segal, Ellis & Winters LLP**



The North Carolina General Assembly established the Guardian ad Litem Program (GAL) in 1983 to advocate for the best interests of children in abuse and neglect cases. At the trial level, GAL volunteers and attorney advocates, along with program staff, provide team representation for the child. When orders entered in juvenile cases are appealed, the GAL program continues to provide advocacy for the child’s best interests through staff, contract, and pro bono attorneys. Contract and pro bono attorneys are supported and trained by GAL Appellate Counsel and Associate Counsel.

GAL Pro Bono Attorneys

- Help abused and neglected children achieve permanence and safety by representing their best interests in North Carolina’s appellate courts.
- Write and file appellee briefs, and other documents, on behalf of the child, and appear for oral argument when appropriate.
- Review transcripts and court files to settle the record on appeal, and conduct legal research.

Juvenile Appellate Procedure at a Glance

- Appeals in juvenile cases are expedited by Rule 3.1 of the Rules of Appellate Procedure and heard by both the North Carolina Court of Appeals and Supreme Court of North Carolina. Rule 3.1 mandates shorter deadlines for transcripts and records and disfavors extensions of time.
- GAL appellate briefs are typically due about 165 days from the filing of the notice of appeal. The due date is predictable because of the expedited timeline.
- Expedited appeals are typically resolved within 12 months. Most are resolved without an oral argument, based on the record and the written briefs.

To represent all of North Carolina’s abuse and neglected children on appeal, the GAL Program relies on the contributions of pro bono attorneys. Our pro bono program provides attorneys with a unique opportunity to develop and sharpen appellate advocacy skills in a flexible program that accommodates their daily responsibilities. Take a case with our pro bono program today, and use your legal skills to help a child in need achieve permanence and stability.