



★★★ GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL) PRO BONO PROGRAM

STATEWIDE APPEALS DATA FISCAL YEAR 2020–21

Appellate Cases

176 appeals filed
44 appeals represented by GAL Program
17 appeals represented by Attorney Advocates
88 appeals represented by GAL Pro Bono Attorneys

Appellate Attorneys

1 Appellate Counsel
1 Staff Attorney
6 Contract Attorneys
132 Pro Bono Appellate Attorneys

PRO BONO ATTORNEY TESTIMONIALS

“Children are our future, and they need adults to help give them a voice at such a vulnerable time in their lives.” — **Nancy Litwak, Rosenwood, Rose & Litwak, PLLC**

“I think it’s very important to give back to my community, and this is one way that I am able to do so. It is the cornerstone of the court system. I feel that the impact I can make through this appellate work is great.”
— **Mary Cavanagh, Ward and Smith, PA**

I do Guardian Ad Litem appeals because I love doing work that matters. This is one of the ways to get consistent pro bono work and I would not have as many pro bono hours as I do without this program.”
— **Quintin Byrd, Q Byrd Law**

“I believe in giving back. I have a very busy practice but its rewarding to know that I’m also helping those who really need it.”
— **Jessica Gorczynski, Womble Bond Dickinson, LLP**

“I believe it is important for all attorneys to be involved in some sort of pro bono work, and this program is a great way to perform a meaningful role for children who need a voice. I take the responsibility seriously, knowing that I am representing some of the most vulnerable and unwilling participants in the judicial system. And as a parent myself, it is an area of the law that I am particularly interested in.”
— **Kip Nelson, Fox Rothchild, LLP**



The North Carolina Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program Pro Bono Program plays a critical role in providing appellate representation for children in every child welfare appeal filed. The GAL Program equips community volunteers to serve abused and neglected child by advocating for their best interests in court. At the trial level, GAL volunteers and attorney advocates, along with program staff, provide team representation for the child. When orders in child welfare cases are appealed, the GAL Program continues to provide advocacy for the children’s best interests through a combination of staff, contract, and pro bono attorneys. GAL Pro Bono Program attorneys are supported and trained by the GAL Appellate Counsel, Associate Counsel, and Staff Attorney.

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.

In order to represent all of North Carolina’s abused and neglected children on appeal, the GAL Program relies on the in-kind contributions of pro bono attorneys. In fact, GAL Pro Bono Program attorneys represent the children in half of the child welfare appeals. The GAL Pro Bono program also provides attorneys with a unique opportunity to develop and sharpen appellate advocacy skills in a program flexible enough to accommodate 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.

2022