

## Volunteer of the Month



*Laura A. Banks*

By Cynthia B. Jones

Congratulations to Laura A. Banks, who is the KCBA Volunteer of the Month for December.

Banks is a partner in the firm of Rcnj & Banks, P.S., with a focus on family law. She volunteers in the KCBA's Self Help Plus Program and Family Law Mentoring Program, working primarily with the mentoring project. When asked why, Banks explained that she mentors new attorneys because "I feel like I can leverage my ability to help more people by helping four attorneys at a time help four clients than by my taking just one case at a time."

We engaged Banks in a little Q&A and learned, among other things, her passion for children, volunteering and macaroni and cheese.

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Q. How will your experience with the pro bono clinics help others?

A. Since I have been practicing family law for approximately 30 years, I hope my knowledge and my common sense will help people get what they need for themselves and their children with the least possible conflict.

Q. What did you dream you would do for work when you were little?

A. Initially I wanted to be a doctor and then a teacher. I decided I wanted to obtain justice for people, so I became a lawyer.

Q. How did you get there?

A. My passion is children and I do family law because I hope I am helping people make the transition from being married to being divorced with as little pain as possible, especially for the children.

Q. When did your dream change?

A. I have always been passionate about children — if I had been a doctor, I probably would have been a pediatrician. I may still teach in my next career and have been active in volunteering in the schools for a long time.

Q. What is your favorite food?

A. I love spaghetti with marinara sauce and have since I can remember.

Q. What is your favorite comfort food?

A. Amy's macaroni and cheese with edamame and corn.

Q. What type of pet do you have?

A. My daughter and I had a beagle named Ashka who died a couple of years ago. She is still missed and hasn't been replaced yet.

Q. How do you gain perspective regarding a difficult situation?

A. I take a step back or I quit thinking about it for awhile and come back to it or I consult with colleagues and friends whose opinions I trust.

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Spend time with my family (I have four grown children and a two-year-old granddaughter). I love to play bridge (and I am a newbie having only played for three to four years). I sing in a small group and I love to harmonize. I volunteer with Food Lifeline repacking food at their Shoreline facility because I believe everyone should have good quality food as a basic human right. I love to walk and ride my bike.

Q. What is your favorite quote?

A. "Don't go to sleep with your music still in you." Benjamin Disraeli.

Q. What is your best skill?

A. I am good at seeing both sides and I like to think in win-win modality rather than win-lose.

Q. Name one thing you would like to do over?

A. Spend even more time with my family and friends.

Q. What is your favorite song?

A. "'Tis a Gift to Be Simple."

Q. If you were a superhero, which superhero would you be and why?

A. I'm pretty happy being who I am, so if I were a superhero, I would want to be one that could create more time.

Q. How often do you volunteer?

A. I hope it is fair to say, every time I am asked.

Q. What's your favorite area of law?

A. Family law.

Q. Favorite Supreme Court Justice?

A. William O. Douglas.

Q. Must-have office supply?

A. White-out tape.

Q. Area of law you'd be practicing in if you could no longer practice family law?

A. As I get older, I think I would like to help elderly people.

Q. What inspires you to volunteer?

A. It may sound corny but I want to, and believe I can, make the world a better place.

Q. What keeps you motivated to volunteer?

A. Hope for the world being a better place.

Q. If you were not a lawyer, what profession would you choose and why?

A. Teacher because I love the perspective of young people.

Q. What is the last book you read?

A. Born to Run by Christopher McDougall.

Q. Where in the world would you visit if money were no object?

A. Turkey because two of my dear friends are living there and I would love to have them show me around.

Q. What do you love most about being a lawyer?

A. The satisfaction of helping people.

Q. Do you have any words of advice for fellow volunteers, especially those among us who are relatively new?

A. Just volunteer, it is good for the soul!

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*Cynthia B. Jones is an attorney with Jones Legal Group, LLC in Seattle. Jones practices in the area of appellate advocacy.*