



Volunteer Attorney: Sr. Ellen Sinclair

Please describe your education leading up to law school.

I graduated from the State University of New York at Buffalo with a BA in Political Science, and then immediately entered law school. Post law school, I earned an MA in Theology from Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Franklin, Wis.

Why did you decide to go to law school and become an attorney?

I always had an interest in helping people to be treated fairly, particularly the underdog. Becoming an attorney felt like the perfect fit with my aptitude for attention to detail and problem solving.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Presently, volunteering at the MVLC and with the Eviction Defense Project are two of my favorite “spare time” activities. I also enjoying reading, spending time with friends and walking.

How does your faith inform your service? Why do you volunteer at the MVLC?

My faith in the goodness and kindness of our Savior informs all that I do. In Matthew’s Gospel we hear, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” I try to see Jesus in each of my clients.

I volunteer at the MVLC because it gives me an opportunity to use my God-given gifts to make a difference by helping others. Working directly with clients balances my primary ministry as a Sister of the Divine Savior. Serving on the leadership team for our women religious community, I have responsibilities as general counsel and treasurer. I also serve as liaison for social justice, finance and human resources.

Why do you think pro bono work is important?

For clients, pro bono work is important because those who can least afford professional legal advice, pay the greatest price for not being represented when they are unable to advocate for their rights. The gap between those who need help navigating the legal system and those who can afford to pay an attorney continues to grow.

For lawyers and law students, pro bono work is important because it offers opportunities to use their expertise to make a difference in people’s lives. Relating one-one-one with a client in need, can put a human face on many issues.