



Volunteer Attorney: Marshall Gratz

Marshall Gratz is a native Milwaukeean and a graduate of Rufus King High School and UW-Milwaukee. After attending Harvard Law School, Marshall spent his career as a State of Wisconsin staff attorney and team leader mediating, arbitrating, and adjudicating labor relations disputes. In 2011, Marshall retired and now spends Tuesday afternoons as an MVLC intake volunteer at the House of Peace.

Marshall learned of the MVLC's valuable work several years ago through other attorneys involved with the clinics. While completing trainings and CLE classes offered by the MVLC, he discovered opportunities for volunteers. Crediting his wife's encouragement, Marshall pursued the intake volunteer position. He was grateful for the opportunity to be of service without having to work directly as an attorney, as he is most familiar with labor relations law. He continues to enjoy being part of a dedicated team of Clinic leaders, volunteer attorneys, and law students and appreciates being part of the great good that he sees the Capuchin Community Services people doing at the House of Peace throughout the year.

Marshall remarks of his experience, "As intake volunteers we try to make clients feel welcome, safe, and respected, and we try to manage their concerns and expectations about how, when, and in what order they will be served. Sometimes as clients are leaving after being advised, they will wave and smile, making me think that perhaps they are feeling a little more confident about how to deal with something of importance to them in their lives." He believes there is real value in what the clinics do, both for members of the community who are served as clients and for law students. Volunteers can feel fulfilled by contributing to those social goods. He states that, "It is a commitment, but there is a great deal of reward in being able to help those folks who are in a jam to avoid pursuing the wrong direction and get some help in pursuing the right one."

Asked what advice he can offer law students about volunteering, Marshall believes that one strength of a Marquette education is that it offers students clinical activities like the MVLC where students can gain first-hand experience working with real-life legal issues, real-life clients presenting the issues, and professionals who work through them alongside the student. "Law students are well advised to find opportunities where they can get exposure to a variety of types of law and experiences related in some way to the legal profession, even if they aren't well-paying opportunities or areas of the law they will pursue in their careers." Marshall believes such experiences provide a great addition to what casebooks and traditional classes can offer. Marshall himself volunteered with the Legal Aid Society between his first and second years of law school and found the experiences to be of great value.

When Marshall retired, he realized he had greater opportunities to pay attention to his wife's directions. Now, when he's not volunteering at the House of Peace, Marshall keeps busy volunteering with his wife at the Shorewood Senior Center by serving meals at the Center's monthly luncheon program. Marshall and his wife are also blessed to have their first grandchild and love spending time with the family both where they live in Chicago and here in Milwaukee.