

## Legal Community Preps For '4All' Blowout

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In a month, the Tennessee Bar Association will launch what promises to be the state's largest pro bono effort.

The "4 All" statewide service day is April 4, the 41st anniversary of the assassination of civil rights leader Dr. [Martin Luther King Jr.](#) in Memphis.

To mark the anniversary, the TBA, along with the Memphis Bar Association and Memphis Area Legal Services, has come up with a schedule of legal clinics that address several areas of law. At press time, new events were being organized that may be added to a schedule posted on the TBA Web site, [www.tba.org](http://www.tba.org).

"Right now there are 27 different events ... all across the state," TBA President Buck Lewis of Memphis told The Daily News. "It almost certainly will be the largest number of lawyers in a day to do pro bono work in the history of the state of Tennessee."

The events will serve as a "rallying point" to continue pro bono efforts, Lewis said.

### Justice for all

The need has become more acute as national economic conditions have worsened.

"In Tennessee now, legal services programs are turning away about 40 to 50 percent of the eligible clients, which is unprecedented," Lewis said, pointing to a need for such legal services in rural counties as well as the state's major cities. "There hasn't been an increase in legal services funding for 29 years. You can imagine with the economy what's happening. ... We're seeing a lot more working people come in who have had their hours cut back and they can't make their mortgage payment anymore. The influx of people has been incredible."

The Memphis events begin April 3. The Memphis Young Lawyers division will hold a pro bono phone-a-thon that afternoon on News Channel 3.

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— **Buck Lewis**  
President, Tennessee Bar Association

On April 4, the [Benjamin L. Hooks](#) Central Library at 3030 Poplar Ave will be a base of sorts for several efforts.

### Menu of options

#### 4All EVENTS

April 3: Memphis Young Lawyers phone-a-thon on News Channel 3.

April 4: 8 a.m. registration, 10 a.m. start: Cecil C. Humphries School of Law's 5K race. Proceeds benefit Memphis Area Legal Services and the Mason YWCA.

9 a.m.-noon: Memphis Bar Association and Memphis Area Legal Services pro bono clinic at Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library, 3030 Poplar Ave.

9:15 a.m.: TBA Young Lawyers Wills For Heroes program, Central Library. Advanced Directives Initiatives Lawyers will visit the following nursing homes across the county to help with living wills and related needs:

Signature Healthcare  
1150 Dovecrest Road

Saint Francis Nursing Home  
5959 Park Ave.

King's Daughters and Sons  
1467 E. McLemore Ave.

Cordova Estates  
1535 Appling Care Lane

Germantown Plantation  
9293 Poplar Ave.

1 p.m.-4 p.m.: Community Legal Center and National Institute of Law and Equity Juvenile Court clinic at Binghampton United Methodist Church, 258 N. Merton St.

Source: [www.tba.org](http://www.tba.org)

The MBA and MALS will host a pro bono clinic from 9 a.m. to noon. The clinic has become a regular weekend event at the library in the past year.

The TBA's Young Lawyers Division will host a "Wills For Heroes" program to write wills for emergency personnel or first responders.

Other attorneys will visit five local nursing homes as part of "advanced directives" initiatives to help the elderly draft wills and legal directives for their future medical care and finances.

The Community Legal Center and National Institute of Law and Equity are also holding a Juvenile Court seminar and clinic at Binghampton United Methodist Church that afternoon.

In long-range efforts, the TBA is backing legislation in Nashville that would remove the state's current prohibition barring lawyers employed by the state from working pro bono.

"There are some places in more rural counties where there won't be an event. But we have a 'meet the need' challenge," Lewis said. "We hope by April 4 we will have as many pro bono legal services agencies as possible that have no unclaimed cases."

For now the legal services agencies in Jackson, Tenn., have no unclaimed cases.

"We have just hardly ever had anybody tell us no," Lewis said of the statewide effort. "If somebody had told me three months ago we'd have 27 separate events from Bristol to Memphis, I'd have told them they were crazy."