

# News Release

## Superior Court of Fulton County

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### Free Family Law Clinic Launches in Fulton County

*The Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia Hispanic Bar Association and John Marshall Law School team up to provide free legal services to self-represented individuals in Fulton County.*

**August 27, 2014 Atlanta** – The Superior Court of Fulton County Family Division in partnership with Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School (AJMLS) and the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association (GHBA) is pleased to announce a new pilot project beginning this September designed to address the growing need for legal assistance for the self-represented individuals in family court. The Fulton County Family Law Clinic (FLC) will provide legal services to low income persons, including non-English speaking litigants, involved in family matters. Under the direction of professor, attorney and GHBA member, Bernadette Olmos, third-year law students at AJMLS will be actively engaged throughout the year in interviewing clients, completing child support worksheets, assisting unrepresented litigants with paperwork for simple divorces, name changes and legitimization, and representing clients at status conferences, mediations, uncontested hearings and TPO hearings. Attorney Olmos stated, “The externs in the FLC are able to gain valuable insights into the operation of Fulton County’s Family Division while dealing with actual client matters. They also are able to develop a better understanding of the legal and socioeconomic problems common in the practice of law.” These services will extend the current assistance offered by the Family Law Information Center allowing for litigants to receive additional support.

“The dearth of attorneys available for low to middle income families has created a civil representation gap that continues to grow. Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School is honored to be a small part of the solution filling that gap while providing a rich and exciting educational experience for our students. The Family Law Intensive Externship Clinic is a win/win for the school, the court, and the citizens of Fulton County,” says Renata Turner, Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School Assistant Dean of Pro Bono and Experiential Learning. “The GHBA is honored to partner with the Fulton County Superior Court Family Division and AJMLS in such a worthwhile endeavor. This is an undertaking that will directly address a need in underrepresented communities while providing the law students, many of whom are minorities, with a priceless opportunity to develop legal skills and experience first-hand the value of community service. The project falls squarely within GHBA’s mission and we hope to continue this partnership for years to come,” says Ana Maria Martinez, President of the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association.

According to Yolanda L. Lewis, District Court Administrator, “The addition of a new, innovative clinic further reinforces the Superior Court’s commitment to community engagement. This project is a natural extension of our pledge to promote public awareness to the mechanisms available to those truly in need.” The Superior Court of Fulton County is

Yolanda L. Lewis, District Court Administrator

dedicated to the administration of justice within the Atlanta Circuit, 5th Judicial Administrative District. Coupled with that dedication, we are also committed to operational transparency and forming stronger bonds within the community we serve. “Through such partnerships, the Superior Court has the opportunity to demonstrate to the law students the value of using one’s legal skills to meaningfully assist people within their community. In addition, being able to practice in a court setting is an invaluable learning opportunity that helps prepare students for future practice,” stated Deputy Chief Judge Wendy Shoob. Beginning Tuesday, September 2, 2014, the clinic will be held each Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Family Law Information Center located in the Justice Center Tower, Suite T-704 at 185 Central Avenue, SW, Atlanta, Georgia.



ATLANTA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

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Yolanda L. Lewis, District Court Administrator