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Paoli & Geerhart: Two Decades of Pro Bono with the Justice & Diversity Center

The Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) is pleased to recognize our Volunteers of the Month, Chuck Geerhart and Tom Paoli, attorneys at JDC's Legal Advice & Referral Clinic (LARC). Geerhart and Paoli share a private practice specializing in plaintiffs' personal injury, Paoli & Geerhart, and provide expert legal advice at LARC in that area.

The two have volunteered for over two decades at LARC, which does not require long-term commitments to cases. Both appreciate that LARC provides a way to give back. Paoli feels "privileged to be qualified to help people," and says pro bono work sometimes leaves him "feeling better about lawyering than I did



CHUCK GEERHART



THOMAS PAOLI

when I've gotten million dollar verdicts." Geerhart says, "It always feels great to get outside of your own ego when serving others." Both also appreciate the opportunity to advise clients to head off potentially costly legal consequences.

In addition, Paoli and Geerhart find that volunteering helps fulfill professional goals.


Paoli aims to "connect with people and be of service. Volunteering allows for that in a way my other work sometimes does not." Geerhart's pro bono settlement conference work with the Court is also helping him expand his personal injury practice into mediation and arbitration.

As longtime LARC volunteers, Geerhart and Paoli have learned to handle

some of the challenges presented by a free legal clinic. Geerhart observes that some LARC clients suffer from mental health issues, creating legal problems and making it hard to communicate with a lawyer who is trying to help. Fortunately, JDC's holistic approach means there are social service volunteers at LARC to assist. Paoli's biggest challenge with pro bono work is spending too much time doing it!

Outside of volunteering, Geerhart is a diehard Giants fan and Deadhead. Paoli enjoys swimming in the bay with the South End Rowing Club and supporting his wife's nonprofit, Advokids, which assists foster children.

Many thanks to Thomas and Chuck for all their hard work at LARC!

 For more information about volunteering with LARC, email probono@sfbar.org.