

PART I

CHAPTER 1

VISION

IT TAKES A VISION TO BUILD AN EQUAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY...
YOUR DESTINATION

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

Somewhere over the rainbow
I can see
There's a land where there's justice
Even for folks like me

Somewhere over the rainbow
Courts are fair
And if I get evicted
Legal Aid would be there

Some day I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where a system I can trust is
Where regardless of my poverty, or race or disability
I'll have access to justice!

Somewhere over the rainbow
If we try
There'll be access to justice
If we can visualize

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

From "The Wizard of Lawz,"
written and produced for VISUALIZE JUSTICE,
Washington State's First Annual Access to Justice Conference, October 1996

***Visualize
Justice***

VISUALIZE JUSTICE

You are on your own journey to a land where justice is available for all. It is a land where people are not denied justice or equality simply because they do not know their rights, cannot afford counsel at critical times in their lives, are members of communities who suffer disparate treatment or experience disproportionate obstacles to the justice system, are socially or politically unpopular, or are perceived as “not deserving” to share in the benefits of a civil society within a democracy.

Like Dorothy searching for Oz (“Where regardless of my poverty, or race or disability, I’ll have access to justice”), you have to articulate your own vision for a just society so that you know what you’re looking for and can begin to determine how you’ll get there.

WHY ENVISION THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE?

- √ Visions are what drove leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (“I have a dream”) and Mohandas Gandhi (“There is no remedy for the many ills of life save that of non-violence”), and inspired the Civil Rights Movement, environmental justice movement, anti-war movement, and countless other justice-based movements throughout the history of this nation and the world.
- √ Visions are an integral aspect of our own justice system: “Equal Justice Under Law” is etched into the parapet of the United States Supreme Court building; “. . .with liberty and justice for all” is part of our Pledge of Allegiance; the first duty of the federal government under our Constitution is to “establish justice”; the promise of justice for all and the duty to oppose unjust laws lies at the heart of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Letter from the Birmingham Jail; the list goes on and on.
- √ Visions motivate us, keep us focused, and unite disparate groups of people around a common ideal.
- √ Envisioning means thinking long-term, thinking broadly, thinking out-of-the box, dreaming of the seemingly impossible.
- √ Visionaries plant the seeds and fertilize the ground. Like Moses, Gandhi, Sitting Bull, Gorbachev, Mandela and so many other visionaries throughout history, visionaries are aware that their visions transcend their individuality. They understand that they may not be around when the vision becomes reality, but are content with the knowledge that the vision is sound and that destiny, continuity of focus and common commitment will ensure that it is realized one day.

***“I have a
Dream”***

**Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr.**

***“...with
liberty
and justice
for all.”***

**Pledge of
Allegiance**

**Visualize an
Equal Justice
"Movement"**



**But first you
need a shared
vision**

**"...we will never
realize our vision of
equal justice until
the day when every
fourth and eighth
grader in our nation
understands the
meaning of those
words..."**

Justice Howard Dana

- √ Visions must be shared. It takes a vision to engage, motivate and empower individuals and institutions. Without a vision, there cannot be a movement. With a vision, even the most unlikely partners can find a common language and work together toward a common objective. Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion were a disparate – even unlikely – group of individuals traveling down the road together, but they were united by their common vision.

WHAT IS AN EQUAL JUSTICE VISION?

Washington State's Equal Justice Vision: Our civil equal justice delivery system must be client-focused and expansive, contemplate lawyering in its broadest sense, and acknowledge that the interests of low income clients can only be served if the delivery system is dedicated to providing full and complete access to the civil justice system in a way that empowers this segment of the population to define, promote and defend its legitimate interests. (*Hallmarks of an Effective Statewide Civil Legal Services Delivery System*, adopted by the Washington State Access to Justice Board, July 1995)

Project for the Future of Equal Justice Discussion Draft: vision for state civil legal assistance systems: The establishment of state civil legal assistance systems to secure equal justice for all will have the capacity to: educate and inform low income persons of their legal rights and responsibilities; inform all low income persons about the options and services available to solve their legal problems, protect their legal rights and promote their legal interests; ensure that all low income persons have meaningful access to a full range of high-quality legal assistance programs when they have chosen options that require legal advice and assistance. (Prepared by Alan W. Houseman, Director of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), and the staff of the Project for the Future of Equal Justice)

Hon. Howard H. Dana, Jr.'s Vision: “. . . We all know that the pledge of allegiance speaks about ‘liberty and justice for all.’ Most Americans understand full well what the liberty promise is about – defense of our borders, and so forth. But what do people understand about the promise of justice for all? Nothing. And we will never realize our vision of equal justice for all unless and until the day when every fourth- and eighth-grader in our nation understands the meaning of those words, and how the notion of justice affects each and every one of us throughout the course of our lives and the lives of those around us.” (Howard Dana is a Justice on the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine)

100% AccessI

WHAT IS YOUR EQUAL JUSTICE VISION?

WE'RE OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD

**We're off in search of justice
Justice for Washington state
We know that access isn't great
But hey, it's never too late**

**For justice to materialize
We're all gonna have to visualize
We'll have to use our courage, hearts and brains
We're just gonna have to cooperate**

**We're off to see the Wizard
The wonderful Wizard of Lawz.**

***From "The Wizard of Lawz," written and produced for
VISUALIZE JUSTICE,
Washington State's First Annual Access to Justice Conference, October 1996***

Like Dorothy searching for Oz, your vision will unfold as you come across your fellow travelers and realize they are in search of very similar things. Although the Tin Man just wanted a heart; the Scare Crow was after a brain; and all the Lion wanted was courage; they all found that "justice" was a common vision and that they could each contribute to making it materialize.

HOW DO YOU SET ABOUT DEVELOPING YOUR OWN VISION?

(1) Identify a few fellow travelers

Like Dorothy searching for Oz, identify a few fellow travelers who believe strongly in the concept of civil equal justice and who see first-hand the consequences of when it's lacking, and who, together, can shape a vision for what equal justice looks like. You just need a committed few to begin the process.

(2) Review your past

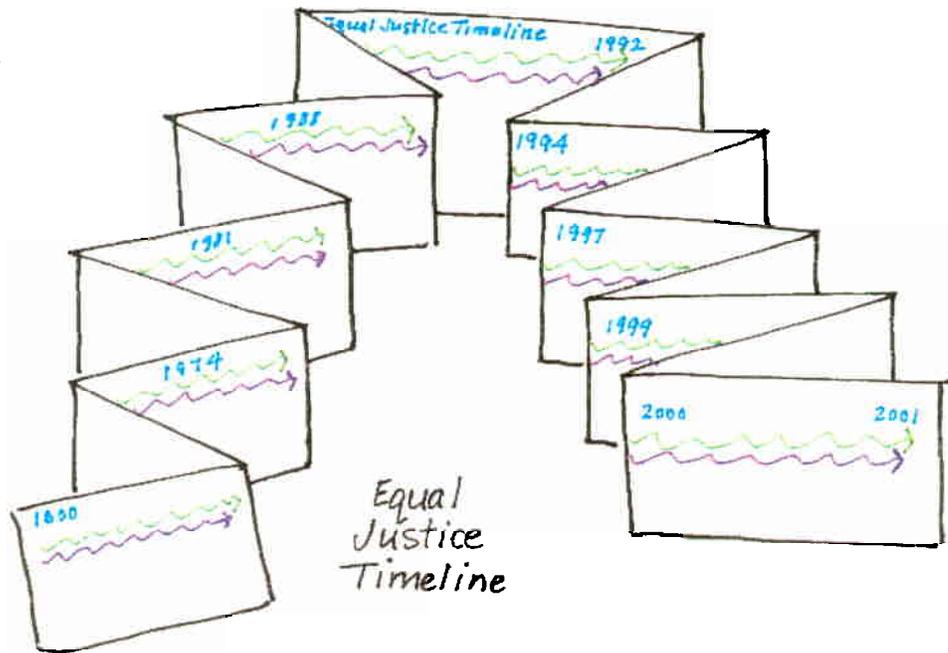
As part of the effort to visualize the future, take the time to review your past. A strong future rests on a clear understanding of your past. Although there are many excellent ways to accomplish this, constructing an Equal Justice Timeline is an effective visual tool to get the attention and buy-in of key stakeholders and partners, and to engage a broader range of people outside of the legal community in your vision quest.

Developing your own equal justice vision:

- 1. Identify a few fellow travelers*
- 2. Review your past*
- 3. Imagine your future*

"The vibrancy of our Democracy depends upon our willingness to ensure that the fullest range of voices and interests is represented and heard. This is what the fight for equal justice is all about."

**Hon. Robert F. Utter,
Retired Justice, Wash-
ington State Supreme Court**



Attach poster paper around the walls of a large room. Arm your supporters with markers and ask them to chronologically list every significant activity, report, organization, task force, etc. in the movement for equal justice in your state. Where it makes sense, include national events, too. A timeline stretched across a room – or across a table – paints a graphic picture of the key events and the role of the key players that have shaped the equal justice landscape in your state or locality. It provides an opportunity not only to educate but to involve. If updated and distributed periodically, it becomes a living history that will find its way onto office walls and bulletin boards.

When gathering information for the timeline, ask the following questions:

- A. Who are the active partners in your current Equal Justice Community? Name the people and the organizations. How did they come to be involved? What is their organizational history? Who were the key players (board, staff, funders, community and justice system leaders and others) in each of the institutions? What significant events, accomplishments, major gaffes shaped your Equal Justice Community, e.g., funding decisions, supreme court involvement, bar association involvement, legislative or executive support or hostility, evolution of PAI (private attorney involvement) initiatives, emergence of the interest on lawyers' trust account program (IOLTA), etc.?
- B. How did you get where you are today? What is the history of your institution and its involvement in the Equal Justice Community? What is your organization's place in the equal justice constellation? Who was involved in establishing it? Are those people around today? Where are the relevant

resolutions, task force reports and recommendations that address long-term commitments to equal justice? Who were your predecessors? Where are they now?

- C. What have you accomplished? Where were the rough spots? Significant cases? Significant legislation? New offices/programs? Office/program closures? Successful fundraising? Increases/decreases in resources? Significant changes in policy?

(3) Imagine the future

What does justice look like? What is your ideal of a civil justice system? What do you want your state's Equal Justice Community to look like? To accomplish? To represent? How can you assure that low income clients will have meaningful access to our justice system? What does "meaningful access" look like? What role for lawyers in this vision? For legal services programs? For the courts? For the public? For clients?

VISUALIZE AN EQUAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY

Equal Justice Community: a group of individuals and organizations united through a common, expressed vision and a shared set of values, who are bound together by a sense of fidelity to the promise of justice and equality, and who are willing to put personal, professional and organizational allegiances aside in pursuit of a common justice ideal.

Like Dorothy searching for Oz, you won't be able to realize your vision by yourself. To get there, you must build an Equal Justice Community. Indeed, a common vision is a necessary first step in building a strong and successful Equal Justice Community. You must define what justice looks like before you can construct a community dedicated to delivering on its promise. You must know where you are going before you can plan how you'll get there. The rest of this handbook will show you the way.

**Visualize an
Equal Justice
"Community"**

Wizard:

"You wanted justice, didn't you? You hoped that you could find a place where ordinary people like yourself could gain access to the courts and get a fair shake. Don't you see — the friends you have right here can help you make that place."

**From
"The Wizard of Lawz"**

EXERCISES

- √ Draw a timeline: write the history of your local, regional or statewide civil Equal Justice Community. Invite others to edit/amend/append. Use the model on the next page to get you started.
- √ Create your own Equal Justice Vision.

REFERENCES TO PART II

- Hallmarks of an Effective Statewide Civil Legal Services Delivery System page 95
- Washington State Equal Justice Timeline page 99

***"...Like the canary
in a mine shaft, a
viable legal services
program is a testa-
ment to the health
of our democratic
institutions; when
the canary dies --
that is, when we
walk away from our
commitment --
democracy is
doomed."***

**John Little,
Washington State
Human Rights
Commission**

EQUAL JUSTICE TIMELINE

