

## Inspirational Quotes on Access to Justice, Volunteerism and Pro Bono Service

**NOTE:** Judicial Officers may find it helpful to incorporate one or more of these inspirational quotes when speaking to groups of attorneys about the importance of pro bono work. You can find more information and a sample PowerPoint presentation in the online Pro Bono Toolkit at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/partners/56.htm>.

- “*Pro bono publico* - ‘for the public good’ - not just in the sense of professional work undertaken voluntarily and without payment, but in the sense of a public service to those who are unable to afford the services of skilled professionals. It is a noble and necessary calling for all attorneys.” – *Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye (October 2014)*
- [Referencing a statistic that there is less than one legal services attorney for every 10,000 indigent people.] “That means if you filled Qualcomm Stadium to its capacity, you’d have seven lawyers to serve all of them....And if they gave each client just 30 minutes, it would take them seven months to meet with everybody, and that’s working around the clock, 24/7, without breaks. It’s no wonder the majority of low-income people in our country don’t bother to seek a lawyer, even when they have a very serious problem. To lower these barriers to justice, we all have to do our share and then some.” – *California Supreme Court Associate Justice Goodwin Liu (October 2014)*
- There is one branch of government devoted to “Fairness” – the Judicial Branch – and it’s the number one goal of the Judicial Council of California. Our justice system relies on public trust and confidence to support the rule of law. Lawyers, as officers of the court, should strive to conduct themselves at all times with dignity, courtesy, and integrity – and also to do what they can to enable our courts to be accessible and fair. – *Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye (October 2014)*
- “Lawyers have a license to practice law, a monopoly on certain services. But for that privilege and status, lawyers have an obligation to provide legal services to those without the wherewithal to pay, to respond to needs outside themselves, to help repair tears in their communities.” – *U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (March 2014)*
- “Our society has major unmet legal needs that adversely affect low and middle income families. It’s a situation that threatens the well-being of our democracy. According to California’s Business and Professions Code, lawyers should ‘Never to reject, for any consideration personal to himself or herself, the cause of the defenseless or the oppressed.’ The entire legal professional has an opportunity to address this crisis.” – *Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye (October 2014)*
- “We educated, privileged lawyers have a professional and moral duty to represent the underrepresented in our society, to ensure that justice exists for all, both legal and economic justice.” – *Associate U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor (November 2002)*

## Inspirational Quotes on Access to Justice, Volunteerism and Pro Bono Service

- “The title of professional requires that in daily practice, an attorney strive to transcend the demands of the moment to consider the greater good. Lawyers are not simply representatives or employees of their clients – they are officers of the court. That denomination reminds us that a lawyer’s obligations flow not only to the client but to the courts and to the system of justice of which they are an integral part.” – *Former Chief Justice Ronald M. George (October 2001)*
- “Certainly, life as a lawyer is a bit more complex today than it was a century ago. The ever-increasing pressures of the legal marketplace, the need to bill hours, to market to clients, and to attend to the bottom line, have made fulfilling the responsibilities of community service quite difficult. But public service marks the difference between a business and a profession. While a business can afford to focus solely on profits, a profession cannot. It must devote itself first to the community it is responsible to serve. I can imagine no greater duty than fulfilling this obligation. And I can imagine no greater pleasure.” – *Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, 78 Or. L. Rev. 385, 391 (1999)*
- “Equal justice under law is not merely a caption on the facade of the Supreme Court building; it is perhaps the most inspiring ideal of our society. It is one of the ends for which our entire legal system exists . . . it is fundamental that justice should be the same, in substance and availability, without regard to economic status.” – *Justice Lewis F. Powell, Jr., U.S. Supreme Court Justice (Ret.), during his tenure as president of the American Bar Association (August 1976)*
- "There can be no equal justice where the kind of trial a man gets depends on the amount of money he has." – *U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black (1964)*
- “Except for the few that legal services lawyers can represent, poor people have access to American courts in the same sense that the Christians had access to the lions when they were dragged, unarmed, into a Roman arena.” – *Justice Earl Johnson, Jr., quoted in Becker and Gibberman, On Trial! (1987)*
- “Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.” – *Nelson Mandela, speaking at the launch of Britain’s Make Poverty History campaign. (February 2005)*
- “True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.” – *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1955)*
- “Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob, and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.” – *Frederick Douglass (April 1886)*