



Monthly E-Newsletter

July 2021



An Invitation to Donate

We Need Your Help

July marks the beginning of a sustained effort to attract contributions from a range of sources.

During the past year, we have attracted a growing number of individuals to volunteer their time and talents to help Spectrum Institute operate its research, educational, and advocacy activities. The number of interns, legal advisors, mental health advisors, and other volunteers has grown from 12 to 50 since last July. The organization has benefitted considerably from their services and advice. But an organization cannot function on volunteerism alone. It needs money to pay its operating expenses.

This month we are convening a Development Team. We have assembled a small group of individuals to work on this project. We are also reaching out to graduate programs at several universities for interns whose studies involve fundraising, grant writing, and development for nonprofit organizations. It may take months, perhaps even a year, for the work of the Development Team to begin to pay off.

In the meantime, Spectrum Institute has bills to pay. We need to raise \$5,000 to cover our annual operating expenses – website hosting and security, liability insurance, legal research services, marketing platforms and applications, etc. We are reaching out to our closest supporters and allies to help us reach this goal.

Please show your support for the important work we do – conservatorship reform, disability rights, and access to mental health services – by making a tax-deductible donation during the month of July. You can send us a check in the postal mail or make a credit card donation online. Please be as generous as your budget permits. Your donation is most appreciated. For information on how to donate, [click here](#).

With warm regards and much appreciation,

Handwritten signatures of Tina Baldwin and Thomas F. Coleman in blue ink.

Tina Baldwin
Chairperson

Thomas F. Coleman
Executive Director



Independence Day Wishes

for People with Developmental Disabilities

May You:

- Experience the **liberty** the Constitution guarantees.
- Receive the **accommodations** the ADA promises.
- Be **free** of unwanted guardianships/ conservatorships.
- Have **equal access** to medical and mental health care.
- Receive services based on **person-centered planning**.

Please consider making a financial contribution to support our work if you endorse our wish list. Your donation will help us turn these goals into realities. Our programs promote conservatorship and guardianship reform, judicial compliance with the ADA, prompt and equal access to mental health services, and access to justice in legal proceedings.



Spectrum Institute is a nonprofit organization with tax exempt status under federal law.

To make a donation or for more information, go to: <https://spectruminstitute.org/>

The Freedom Files:

New Podcast Launches on July 1st



The Freedom Files is a Pursuit of Justice Podcast focusing on a wide range of issues involving liberty, justice, and equal rights, with a special emphasis on people with disabilities whether they are young adults, seniors, or any age in-between. Episodes will address freedom of choice in matters such as health care, finances, living arrangements, sexual relationships, marital status, social interactions, and recreational activities. Some episodes will reminisce about past advocacy activities for other causes and issues. The tactics used and lessons learned while advocating on those issues -- police oppression, LGBT+ rights, hate crimes, family diversity, singles' rights, and trafficking of abused teens -- can be adapted to develop winning advocacy strategies for today's activities which are directed towards conservatorship and guardianship reform as well as mental health rights for people with developmental disabilities.

Attorney Thomas F. Coleman, the producer and host of the podcast, has 47 years of experience in civil rights education and advocacy on issues such as personal privacy, sexual civil liberties, family diversity, freedom from violence and abuse, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and marital status. For the past decade, his activities have focused on conservatorship and guardianship reform and protecting the rights of people with cognitive disabilities in these proceedings under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Coleman is the founding executive director and the current legal director of Spectrum Institute. He is the author of many policy reports and legal commentaries on the rights of people with disabilities.

To access the website for the podcast, [click here](#). A video version of the podcast will be available on YouTube. An audio-only version can be accessed on Podbean. Links to both formats are available on the podcast website.

New Social Media Segment: "Meet the Team"



Spectrum Institute @Spectrum_1987 · Jun 9



Spectrum Institute has a new bi-weekly segment called, "Meet our Team." Our first member to share her story is Sheri Kellogg, one of our Board Members. To learn more about Sheri & Spectrum Institute's members use the link in our bio and select "Our Team" from our menu.



Spectrum Institute's social media intern, Sarah Barlow, began a new segment on our social media platforms, called "Meet the Team." In this segment, she is interviewing board members, advisors, interns, and volunteers about their experiences working with Spectrum Institute. The stories are presented on all of our platforms for the public to learn more about the people who are advancing the mission of Spectrum Institute. To access our Facebook page, [click here](#). For our Instagram page, [click here](#). For our Twitter account, [click here](#).

More Advisors Join Spectrum Institute



Dan R. Young
Legal Advisor

Konstantine Anthony
Local Government
Advisor

Camille Minogue
Legal Advisor

Dan R. Young has been practicing law since 1978. He is the owner of Law Offices of Dan R. Young, a two-person general practice firm engaged primarily in civil litigation in Seattle, Washington. The firm is committed to helping people who are oppressed or exploited by those in positions of power. He graduated from Stanford University and received a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley.

Camille Minogue is a lawyer in the State of Washington. After a 25-career year as an actuary, Camille undertook legal studies and became a lawyer in 2020. She has worked in the Law Offices of Dan R. Young since 2015 fighting for truth and justice alongside Dan. Camille also holds a Ph.D. in Mathematics from Washington State University and is a fourth-generation Washingtonian.

Konstantine Anthony is a member of the Burbank City Council and serves as a member of the Burbank Advisory Council on Disabilities. Konstantine says that his advocacy for disability rights stems from his autism diagnosis and witnessing the discrimination his fellow disabled Americans experience every day. He is currently a candidate for the position of chair of the Disabilities Caucus of the California Democratic Party. Konstantine lists conservatorship reform as one of his political priorities.



Welcoming Our New Development Associate

Bri Berrios (CGU) is a student in the teacher education program at Claremont Graduate University. They received their Bachelor's of Arts in English from Pomona College and will receive a Master's of Arts in Teaching in July 2021. Bri is a proud non-binary and autistic educator, writer, advocate for social justice who is specifically most interested in anti-racism, the Neurodiversity Movement, and environmental justice. They believe narratives are an agent for accessing deeper learning and creating positive social change. As an autistic adult, Bri hopes to bring visibility to the diverse spectrum of skills and abilities that autistic people possess. Outside of teaching, advocacy, and writing, Bri enjoys hiking and camping, stop motion animation, and spending time with their dog. Working as a volunteer, Bri will collaborate with board members and other development associates to raise funds to support the work of the organization. Grant writing will be one method of fundraising.



Update on ADA Judicial Compliance Project

The *ADA Judicial Compliance Project* was busy in May. The project is staffed by legal intern María Reyes Olmedo (photo). Emails were sent to officials in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and all 58 superior courts reminding them of their ADA obligations. This resulted in many email exchanges. We discovered that most courts are not in compliance with the ADA because they lack a grievance procedure as required by federal law.

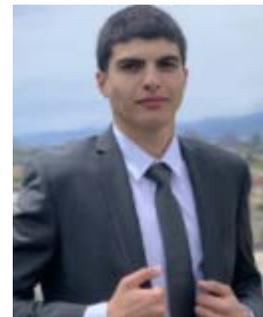
Many superior courts promised to correct this omission by adopting such procedures and posting them on their court's website. The Supreme Court and all six districts of the Court of Appeal acted with unprecedented speed to adopt an ADA grievance procedure in order to bring California's appellate courts into compliance with federal law. The new policy and procedure are posted on the website of the judicial branch. To view that webpage, [click here](#).

Court personnel expressed an interest in an ADA webinar for judges and staff produced by Spectrum Institute for superior court judges and their staff. For information about the webinar, [click here](#).

For information about the *ADA Judicial Compliance Project*, [click here](#). Thomas F. Coleman directs the Project. Attorney Evan Nelson is a consultant.

Research Continues for Funding and Fees Review Project

The *Funding and Fees Review Project* is examining how public and private funds are being used to pay for legal services in probate conservatorship proceedings. Public funds are provided by each county to pay for legal services for indigents provided by public defender departments, private law firms acting as "contract public defenders," or lawyers from panels of attorneys managed by the courts themselves. When proposed conservatees are not indigent, their own assets are taken by judges to pay not only for the court-appointed attorneys who represent them, but also for the fees of the attorneys for opposing parties.



The first phase of the project is reviewing how public funds are being used. We have identified which counties use public defenders or contract public defenders and are looking into the policies and practices of each of these systems. In our preliminary review, we have found unreasonably heavy caseloads, with some lawyers representing as many as 350 to 400 proposed conservatees. We have also found a lack of performance standards and quality assurance controls in any of the

counties. A report on phase one of the research will be issued in the fall.

Research into the use of private assets to pay for attorney fees will begin later this year with a report expected for release in the spring of 2022.

For more information about the project, [click here](#). The project is staffed by legal intern Ben Dishchyan (photo) in consultation with attorney John DiPietro. Thomas F. Coleman directs the project.



Britney Spears Testimony Underscores the Need for SB 724

Testimony from Britney Spears in court on June 23 pointed toward a massive denial of the right to effective assistance of counsel. It also disclosed major violations of her constitutional rights.

As to the latter, she complained of invasions of: her right to medical privacy; her right to procreate; her First Amendment freedoms of speech and association; and her right to privacy in her own home, having innumerable strangers there all the time without her consent. As a virtual captive, she has been living in involuntary servitude.

As to the former, an alarm bell should have sounded when she testified that she did not know she had a right to petition the court to terminate the

conservatorship. Her court-appointed lawyer had a duty to advise her of her rights. If she was not so advised, then her court-appointed attorney was derelict in his duty to advise her and to advocate for her stated wishes. As for her stated wishes, another major newspaper reported that in 2016 and again in 2019, Britney told the court investigator she wanted to end the conservatorship. Her lawyer should have followed up on that by filing a petition to terminate. But no such petition was ever filed. At the get go of this case some 13 years ago, her right to a privately-retained attorney of her choice was violated. She could certainly afford one. Instead, the court imposed an unwanted attorney on her -- one with loyalties to the court. It appears that her appointed attorney has not been advocating for her stated wishes as is required by law.

SB 724 by Senator Ben Allen protects the right to an attorney of one's choice. It also emphasizes that an appointed attorney should be an advocate for a conservatee as specified in the Business & Professions Code and the Rules of Professional Conduct. That code and those rules would not permit an attorney to ignore the wishes of the client and fail to petition to terminate a conservatorship when that is what the client wants to happen. SB 724 cannot be enacted soon enough. Spectrum Institute provided Senator Allen with legal research and suggested language for the bill and has been consulted by his office as the bill has moved through the legislative process.

To read a news story in which Spectrum Institute's Legal Director, Thomas F. Coleman, discusses legal remedies that Britney Spears could use to challenge the alleged malpractice by her court-appointed attorney, [click here](#).

Please show your support for our work by making a donation. Since we are an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) charitable private foundation, donations to Spectrum Institute are tax-deductible as allowed by federal law.

[Click Here to Donate](#)

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