

2016 Pro Bono Publico Award

Recipient: John O. Goss

John O. Goss, a legal aid lawyer some 40 years ago, responded to a nationwide call to help some 1,500 Social Security disability recipients in rural Appalachian high-poverty counties in eastern Kentucky and West Virginia. The recipients were in danger of losing benefits after an inspector general report found there was reasonable grounds to believe that the benefits were obtained fraudulently — in cases all handled by the same lawyer. Even though his office was in southeastern Virginia about 530 miles away from some of the clients, Goss took on 54 individual low-income clients. “You can take the lawyer out of legal aid, but you can never take legal aid out of the lawyer,” he said upon learning of the award.

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