

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Free Online Legal Advice Clinic Celebrates 10,000 Question Milestone and Becomes National Model

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(Memphis, TN / October 23, 2015) OnlineTnJustice.org, a website that allows low income Tennesseans to seek free help with their civil legal problems, is celebrating 10,000 questions posted to the website and the 475+ Tennessee volunteer lawyers registered to answer those questions. The innovative service – a joint project of the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services and the Tennessee Bar Association – is designed to make it easier for people in need to access legal help, and it provides a flexible opportunity for lawyers to do pro bono work anytime, anywhere there is internet service. The platform runs on software created and donated by the IT Department of Baker Donelson. Based on the success of OnlineTnJustice.org, the American Bar Association's Pro Bono and Public Service Committee recently voted to establish a national online legal advice platform using the Tennessee model.

"This is a joyful day for the wonderful team of dedicated people who created this resource," said George T. "Buck" Lewis, immediate past chair of the Tennessee Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission and a shareholder in Baker Donelson's Memphis office. "We look forward to another joyful day when we launch nationwide next year."

Over 60 million people in the United States, roughly 16% of the population live in poverty. When people living in poverty face civil legal problems relating to basic human needs – protection from fraud and abuse, safe housing conditions, access to benefits needed to sustain a family – they can be driven even further into poverty. Now more than ever, technology is an effective way to connect people who can't afford to hire a lawyer with free legal help through online service delivery. A Pugh Research study indicates that, as of 2013, 64% of households with incomes between \$20,000 and \$30,000 had internet accessibility, and 54% percent of households with incomes between \$10,000 and \$20,000 had internet access. The Pugh study revealed a dramatic increase in smart phone ownership between the two-year period 2011-2013, making mobile responsive websites a more effective tool for expanding access to legal help.

"We have decided to make the Tennessee model our national online platform so that all vulnerable people in our country can have access to online legal help," said Mary Ryan, chair of the American Bar Association's Pro Bono and Public Awareness Committee.

For media interested in further information, Buck Lewis is available for interviews and can be reached at 901.834.0066.