For our inaugural issue, Pro Bono Board member Austin Smith sat down with Columbia attorney Cliff Moore to discuss life, law, pro bono work, and of course, the importance of fishing in a legal career. Mr. Moore is a shareholder of Ellis, Lawhorne & Sims, P.A., and focuses his practice on real estate, finance, and corporate fiduciary matters. Mr. Moore is a dedicated volunteer for Home Works of America, Inc., and also chairs the organization’s Board of Directors. Home Works is a non-profit that brings together youths and adults to provide free home repair work to senior citizens and other people living in dilapidated conditions. For more information on Home Works, visit www.homeworksofamerica.org.

Regarding early involvement in volunteer work, and his motivations: I was very involved in the Key Club in high school, a service organization sponsored by Kiwanis International. Key Club and my Mom focused my life on service to others.

Interesting jobs before becoming a lawyer: I worked summers for Charleston County Mosquito Control counting mosquitoes.

Parker came home from his Home Works trips and said, “You need to build for people who really need it.” I decided to go on the weeklong Home Works trip to John’s Island the next year, and I was hooked. I finished my sixth trip to John’s Island in August, just before I left for a two week Home Works trip to Zorritos, Peru.

When they find out you’re a lawyer, and what it means to you: It is funny, when you tell homeowners that you’re a lawyer, they are surprised. They think it is out of character to see a lawyer swinging a hammer, climbing a ladder, or doing a roof.

Working with Home Works has given me an appreciation for the challenges of poverty and an opportunity to do something significant to help those in need address those challenges.

On getting young law grads, and the legal community as a whole, involved in pro bono efforts: You have to find something that you like to do; start out with a desire to serve others and then find something you’re happy doing. Too often, people look at public service as a chore. It’s not penance. It is remarkable how rewarding it is to really enjoy the work you are doing and satisfy a need in the community. Not everyone is

Cliff Moore

Getting involved in Home Works: My son Parker went on a week long trip to John’s Island sponsored by Home Works trips. At the time, I was chairman of our church building committee.
I've never had a client cry for two hours because of the work I did as an attorney... at least not tears of joy.

Cliff Moore, far left, at a job site with other Home Works volunteers

For the Good of The Order will highlight the activities of inspirational attorneys performing outstanding pro bono service in South Carolina.

Know someone who fits the bill? Email us at wdillard3@yahoo.com.

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going to make a great social change through their job—but Home Works gives me the unique opportunity to enjoy myself and help others—that lends itself to a lot of personal satisfaction. We did a house last Saturday. The homeowner was in dialysis all morning. When she returned, she cried for the last two hours we were working. I've never had a client cry for two hours because of the work I did as an attorney... at least not tears of joy.

On getting others involved with Home Works: Once people work on a Home Works project, they really understand how rewarding it can be. You can effect change immediately and see that change, in the homes and the volunteers. One of the more personally rewarding experiences for me is the way my law firm has embraced Home Works. Our lawyers volunteer their legal services and our staff and attorneys work together repairing homes and supporting volunteers by cooking meals and otherwise supporting the organization.

Other lawyers in the family? I'm the only lawyer in my family—at least, I will be until my niece Rachel Hutchens graduates from Carolina.

Why law: I like to think it is a profession dedicated to helping people. I enjoy helping people resolve their problems.

In his spare time: I enjoy fishing. I grew up on James Island Creek, and I've always enjoyed being out on the water. I'm a member of Trout Unlimited; I particularly enjoy fly-fishing in the mountains and fishing out of my kayak along the coast of South Carolina.

About Home Works of America, Inc: I'm first and foremost a Home Works volunteer, but I also serve on the Board and help in some other capacities. Home Works is a faith-based charity that assists those in need, provides an opportunity for youth and adults to volunteer, and generally strengthens communities. To me, the most important aspect or our work is engaging youth to work to help those in need. The work we do on people's homes can deteriorate over time, but the impact on our youth will last a lifetime.

About Kiwanis Club: I've been involved with Kiwanis since 1972. It is a service organization that focuses on supporting youth in our communities and encouraging them in areas of service to those in need.

One of the more personally rewarding experiences for me is the way my law firm has embraced Home Works.