Quick facts on Carrie:

- J.D., U.S.C. School of Law
- B.A., Winthrop University
- Attorney for the S.C. Department of Revenue

Carrie’s Pro Bono and Volunteer Work

Carrie is a certified prosecutor with the Attorney General’s office’s “S.T.O.P.” program. “S.T.O.P.” training certifies attorneys to prosecute domestic violence cases on a pro bono basis. Part of the reason for this certification is because domestic violence is such a pressing issue in South Carolina.

Carrie also serves as the sub-chair for the Young Lawyers Division’s Voices Against Violence Committee which hosted a free CLE for Domestic Violence in Sumter County on January 8th entitled “Domestic Violence: What Every Attorney Should Know.” This program offered attorneys 6.75 hours of MCLE credit (.75 ethics) if they attended and committed to representing two pro bono clients in Order of Protection actions.

Carrie also attends wills clinics and reads to local school children through Young Lawyer’s Division projects. She also continues to participate in Juvenile Arbitration in Lexington, a program I started my work with while in law school. This program offers restorative justice for first-time non-violent juvenile offenders. As an arbitrator, I conduct their hearings, may assign some sanctions if needed, and monitor their progress.

We asked Carrie, what do attorneys miss, in terms of quality of life and career, without consistent service for the public good?

“Perspective. Without performing pro bono service, many attorneys get caught up in the minutiae of daily practice and lose sight of the bigger picture, how empowering it is to be in our position as attorneys.”
How do you think your pro-bono service has changed the way you practice daily as an attorney?

At the Department of Revenue, my client is the state. Pro bono experience has offered me a different look into the law because in my pro bono work, I represent an individual client. Through my pro bono work, I have learned to communicate and break issues down for the client more effectively.

In your career, have you seen an overlap between your volunteer work and your sense of your own place in the community and the legal profession?

There is an overlap because working for the government involves public service.

How would you rate the current level of pro-bono service and dedication in the South Carolina bar?

I don’t think there is a broad enough cross-section of people involved. However, I have been very pleased with the Young Lawyers’ Division. It is really encouraging people to get involved in pro bono work through its “Done in a Day” projects.

Carrie’s Advice for New Graduates and Practitioners of Law

New lawyers should start by getting active and giving of their time as they can. Although it may be easier to get involved in a governmental role such as mine, there is something for everyone.

Doing pro bono while in law school gets you in the habit, reminds you why you are learning all of the theory you are taught, and shows you how very privileged you are to be a lawyer in terms of more than just money. We have a duty to give back.

When asked what she views as the most vital or glaring issues in need of our pro bono service as attorneys, Carrie answered that “access to justice is the most vital issue, especially in the current economic climate, because there is a portion of society that is too wealthy for the help of legal services and too poor to actually afford the help of an attorney.”

*Note: Carrie is now in private practice with Howser, Newman, & Besley, LLC, where she hopes to hone her litigation skills and continue her pro bono work.

For more information on the Pro Bono Program and the For the Good of the Order newsletters go to www.law.sc.edu/pro_bono.