

## CITY OF ANNISTON PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, last year one in every four of the 940,872 Alabamians living in poverty experienced legal problems, with the majority of these civil problems being consumer issues (creditor harassment, utility non-payment, bankruptcy issues), health issues (Medicaid, government insurance nursing home), family law issues (divorce, child support/custody, abuse), employment issues (unemployment benefits, pension, lost job), and housing issues (unsatisfactory repairs, foreclosure, eviction, poor living conditions); and

WHEREAS, 20.1% of the citizens in Anniston live in poverty and each year the low-income citizens of Alabama lack access to legal assistance for their legal problems that are often critical to their safety and independence, forcing them to resolve complex legal problems on their own; and

WHEREAS, the need for legal aid in Alabama is dire, since unlike in the criminal defense system, funding for low-income Alabamians who need civil legal assistance has not yet been met, with the consequences being a lack of access to justice which is devastating for the poor and which weakens our democratic society as a whole; and


WHEREAS, there are fewer than 60 paid legal aid lawyers to serve the more than 422,119 low-income households in the State of Alabama; and

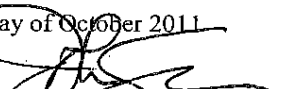
WHEREAS, in addition to the national recession and state budget cuts, the State of Alabama and its residents have suffered substantial property damage and loss of life due to tornadoes striking the state during the month of April; and

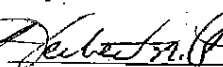
WHEREAS, sponsored by the Alabama State Bar and its Pro Bono Celebration Task Force, with support from local bar associations statewide, Pro Bono Week 2011 will educate the public and the extensive work Alabama lawyers are doing donating their time to improve the lives of vulnerable members of our community, and will encourage more individuals in the legal community to get involved in pro bono work and financially support the legal aid system; and

NOW, THEREFORE, We, the City Council of the City of Anniston, hereby proclaim October 23 – 29, 2011 as "Pro Bono Week" and further urges all Annistonians to recognize the contributions of our legal community helping those most in need.


Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of October 2011

  
Gene D. Robinson  
Mayor

  
John D.R. Spain  
Council Member

  
Herbert N. Palmore  
Council Member

  
Benjamin L. Little  
Council Member

  
M. David Dawson  
Council Member

