

# **BILL BEARDALL**

Equal Justice Center  
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**CURRENT POSITION:  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
EQUAL JUSTICE CENTER, Austin Texas  
June 2001 - present**

- Founder and first executive director of a private non-profit public interest law center, dedicated to legal advocacy which promotes systemic reforms that benefit and empower disenfranchised low-income communities.
- Leading EJC in building a new employment rights program to support and empower immigrant and non-immigrant low-wage working people in non-urban regions of the Southern U.S., especially vulnerable workers laboring in the poultry industry and similar food processing work.
- Helping lead the drive to fully implement new reforms in Texas procedures designed to provide fair defense counsel for poor people accused of crimes. In 1999-2001, played a key role in the grass roots campaign to enact these historic reforms.

**PREVIOUS POSITION:  
LEGAL DIRECTOR  
TEXAS APPLESEED, Austin Texas  
January 2000 - June 2001**

- Chief legal official for a non-profit public interest law center, advocating for reforms that improve public justice for low-income individuals, families and communities.
- Directed a team of three attorneys engaged in legal representation and support work to empower transnational migrant workers with greater access to the U.S. system of employment protections and with increased ability to utilize that system to secure their rights and dignity in the workplace.
- Organized and led the Texas Fair Defense Project, a statewide grass roots public justice reform coalition that challenged Texas' notoriously unjust procedures for providing legal counsel to poor people accused of crimes. The two year project resulted in enactment of the Texas Fair Defense Act, a landmark reform bill which experts have called "the most significant piece of indigent defense reform legislation passed by any state in the last twenty years."

**PREVIOUS POSITION:  
MIGRANT LITIGATION DIRECTOR  
TEXAS RURAL LEGAL AID, INC. (TRLA), Weslaco, Texas  
1984 - 2000**

- Chief legal, executive, and administrative official managing the TRLA Migrant Worker Division operating on a division budget of \$1.3 million and responsible for providing employment rights representation to approximately 250,000 migrant and seasonal agricultural and food processing workers and dependents who reside or work in the state of Texas.

- Supervised a legal staff of 11 attorneys and 10 paralegal organizers specializing in migrant employment cases in five separate offices (over 2,500 total cases handled annually).
- Engaged in, supervised, and coordinate extensive labor litigation on behalf of low wage workers, primarily in federal court, from initial case analysis through appeal.
- Organized and conducted professional training for both new and experienced attorneys and paralegals.
- Served as consultant on substantive law and legal practice issues for TRLA staff, migrant labor organizations, advocacy groups for the working poor, and public and private attorneys throughout Texas and the U.S.
- Senior managing official for the overall TRLA program serving low income clients throughout the border region of South and West Texas (\$4 million total budget, 10 offices).

**PRIOR EXPERIENCE:**

- MANAGING ATTORNEY and STAFF ATTORNEY  
TEXAS RURAL LEGAL AID, INC. (TRLA), Hereford, Texas  
1978 - 1984
- LAW STUDENT COUNSEL for low-income clients  
HARVARD LEGAL AID BUREAU, Cambridge, MA  
1976 - 1978
- PARALEGAL and COMMUNITY EDUCATION DIRECTOR  
MEMPHIS AND SHELBY COUNTY LEGAL SERVICES, Memphis, Tennessee  
1973 - 1975

**HONORS:**

- **2000 recipient of the John Minor Wisdom Award** presented by **the American Bar Association Litigation Section** in recognition of career accomplishments as one of the nation's leading advocates for low-wage workers
- **1997 recipient of Harvard Law School Wasserstein Fellowship** recognizing outstanding contributions to the field of public interest law.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:**

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS  
J.D., 1978  
GRADUATED *CUM LAUDE*

RHODES COLLEGE  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE  
B.A., PHILOSOPHY 1975  
PHI BETA KAPPA

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE:**

- **Admitted to practice law in the State of Texas (1978); U.S. District and Appellate Courts**, including: N.D. Texas (1978), S.D. Texas (1979), W.D. Texas (1982); M.D. Illinois (1991); M.D. Kentucky (1997); Fifth Circuit (1983); Tenth Circuit (1993)
- Recognized as a **leading national expert in employment law affecting migrant workers, immigrants and the working poor.**
- Broad familiarity and **experience with labor protections for low wage workers generally**, especially under wage and hour laws and work-related changes in welfare laws.
- **Extensive experience with complex federal litigation**, class actions, discovery in federal actions, and long arm jurisdiction.
- Have **practiced migrant labor law, wage-hour law and civil rights law since 1978**, handling more than 130 actions in federal district courts and courts of appeals.
- Have frequently served on **faculty for state, regional, and national professional education seminars** on employment laws affecting the working poor, agricultural laborers, and immigrant workers, and on indigent defense reform. **Author of numerous professional educational materials** on these subjects.
- **Guest lecturer on low-income labor practice, New York University Law School**, Root-Tilden Fellowship program, annually 1988-2002.
- **Broad familiarity with low wage labor conditions and markets** throughout the U.S., based on direct representation of migrant workers in claims arising from work performed in nearly every state and based on regular consultations with practitioners in other states.
- **Recognized national expert on public benefits law affecting immigrant families and workers**, including regular presentations for both professional education conferences and community based organizations.
- **Recognized national expert on delivery of legal services to the poor**, including the legislation and regulations governing such legal services.
- **Substantial experience with legislative advocacy** in the U.S. Congress and Texas Legislature, including legislative analysis, drafting, testimony, and management of legislative initiatives. Similarly broad experience with advocacy before federal and state administrative agencies.
- **Founding board member of ProTex: the Network for Progressive Texas**, an organization of public interest activists which promotes pro-active collaboration and coalition building among progressive groups in Texas.
- **Founding board member of Texas Appleseed**, a public interest law organizations providing a voice to under-represented communities.
- **Speak and read Spanish** and familiar with **U.S.-Mexico border issues**, including **immigrant labor issues**, NAFTA, and labor conditions in agricultural and non-agricultural employment.