



## PINE TREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.

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### RESOLUTION IN HONOR OF NAN HEALD

The Board of Directors of Pine Tree Legal Assistance adopts this Resolution in honor of Nan Heald, its Executive Director from 1990 until her passing in January, 2022. The Board recognizes, honors, and thanks Nan for her lifelong devotion to civil legal aid in America, and in the State of Maine.

Nan served with skill, dedication, creativity, and compassion. She built Pine Tree into the national hallmark of excellence that it is today.

Nan spent her career making justice more accessible for people — particularly Mainers. She grew up in Oquossoc. She earned a bachelors at Smith College in 1977 and law degree at George Washington University Law School in 1980. After five years of government and private practice work, Nan returned to Maine and began what became a 37-year-long career at Pine Tree. In 1985 she entered as a staff attorney in the Native American Unit. Her primary responsibility in that position was to redress the exclusion of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs from the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, which eventually was achieved through passage of federal legislation. Then Nan served as Pine Tree’s Executive Director from 1990 until her passing.

In a 2012 letter to Maine’s Governor about state funding for legal aid, Nan reflected on growing up in the western mountains of Maine and the neighbors in her community who dealt with domestic violence, disability, and child abuse. She wrote that they were “silenced by their families, by the community, by the school” and that “working at Pine Tree . . . is about making sure that laws are enforced for my former classmates and neighbors and that they get someone to help tell their story, especially when they can’t do it on their own. . . Most of the folks [Pine Tree] see[s] are in crisis; we patch them up and send them on their way, but we do as much preventive work as possible to also keep them safe and able to live independently going forward.”

Under Nan’s leadership, Pine Tree secured dramatically more funding and used it in creative ways to serve a more diverse population base in new areas of law. Pine Tree began a legal assistance project that addressed foreclosure and housing discrimination, started a clinic for low-income taxpayers, formed Maine’s first and only children’s law project, and expanded support to self-represented family law litigants and victims of domestic violence or sexual assault.

Veterans and military families across the country have benefitted from Nan’s leadership. In 2009, Pine Tree secured funding, in part from Legal Services Corporation (“LSC”), to build and maintain the nation’s first website focused on the legal needs of veterans and military families — Statesidelegal.org — which contains self-help resources and is used widely by veterans today. Simultaneously, Pine Tree began a program to serve low-income veterans by developing a Medical Legal Partnership with Maine’s Veterans

Affairs hospital. Nan served on LSC's Veterans Task Force (2020-2021) and the ABA Veterans Legal Services Commission.

Nan championed innovative uses of technology to expand access to legal information and self-help tools. In 1996, Pine Tree staffing dropped to a historic low because of federal funding cuts. Determined that low-income Mainers would have access to basic legal information while Pine Tree had a lower capacity to serve clients, Nan and her team developed the nation's first legal aid website that contained easy-to-understand self-help materials written at an eighth-grade reading level. It remains one of the most visited legal aid sites in the country. In 2000, Pine Tree used federal grant funds to install technology at domestic violence shelters and the courts. This allowed victims of domestic violence to seek emergency protection orders without leaving the safety of the shelter and gave Pine Tree the ability to serve more clients by cutting travel time.

Nan leveraged Pine Tree's relationships throughout Maine to ensure the judiciary, elected officials, the private bar, prosecutors and law enforcement, school administrators and teachers, librarians and others kept legal aid at the forefront of their minds. She served on the Maine Judicial Branch's Advisory Committee on Fees and on the Advisory Committee of Providers to Maine's Justice Action Group. The Maine Veterans Coordinating Committee, the Maine Judicial Branch, and the Maine Civil Liberties Union have each honored Nan for her work.

Nan's energy, intellect, and work ethic were widely noticed, admired, and tapped. Nan served on LSC's Pro Bono Task Force (2011-2012), and LSC often called upon her to testify about the importance of civil legal aid in various settings. Nan was recognized as one of the inaugural Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers in America (2005) and was named a White House Champion of Change (2011). She won the American Bar Association's Grassroots Advocacy Award (2015) and served as an American Bar Association Fellow (2018).

The Nan Heald Fund was created to honor Nan's legacy and to serve Maine families with low incomes in Western Maine where Nan grew up. Nan's love for Oquossoc was ever present and she returned to vacation there every summer of her adult life, where the perfect day started with a lake swim, included blueberry picking, a moose or bald eagle sighting, and ended with a s'more or other "touch of sweet." Pine Tree Legal Assistance established the Nan Heald Fund to honor Nan's roots and her legacy by creating a fund that will expand access to legal aid for vulnerable Mainers in Western Maine where Nan grew up.

For her commitment to and leadership in providing legal services to people living in poverty and for her many contributions to access to justice in America and in Maine, the Board honors Nan Heald and resolves to carry on her legacy.