

# Alumni News & Events

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## Mike Freed

May 16, 2017



### Freed Runs — and Runs and Runs — to Support Legal Aid

*Former DC Associate Mike Freed to Complete Six Marathons in Six Days to Raise Money and Awareness*

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Less than a year ago, **Mike Freed** ('93/DC/Energy), a partner at the Florida law firm Gunster, Yoakley & Stewart, took up running. Beginning May 28, he will run six marathons in six days to raise awareness of the justice gap — the inaccessibility of legal representation for low-income parties in civil matters — and money for Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA). Mike will begin his quest at the Florida Supreme Court, in Tallahassee, and continue east for more than 150 miles, stopping at courthouses every 26 miles or so until he arrives at the Duval County Circuit Court, in Jacksonville.

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We recently spoke to Mike about the impetus for this fundraiser and why he's confident he'll be able to run back-to-back-to-back-to-back-to-back-to-back marathons.

#### What led you to decide to run six marathons in six days?

I've been a big supporter of *pro bono* service since my days as an associate at Skadden, where I worked on several memorable projects, including one in which we helped Asian merchants who'd been targeted in a series of armed robberies pursue

criminal charges and seek compensation. Those experiences impressed upon me the impact a lawyer can make by giving back. In recent years, Legal Aid funding has gone down substantially, while the need for legal services for the indigent has continued to grow. I felt like I wasn't doing enough and that, in some respects, our legal community also could do more. I wanted to find a way to raise money and encourage others to contribute, and it seems that the crazier the idea and the more important the cause, the deeper people are willing to dig into their pockets.

The fundraising aspect has been pretty successful already. We've raised more than \$37,000 toward our goal of \$50,000, and the marathons are still a couple weeks away. All of the funds will go directly to [JALA](#). They once employed about 50 lawyers, and now they're down to around 20. If I can raise \$50,000, that'd be about enough to employ one attorney for a year.

#### Why six marathons instead of, say, five or seven?

From the start, the idea was to run from the Florida Supreme Court, in Tallahassee, to where I live, in Jacksonville, on the eastern coast. I looked at a map and saw that the two cities are 157 miles apart, which just happens to be exactly six marathons. I also noticed that there's a courthouse every 26 to 28 miles or so. My decision was pretty much made up for me: I'll run from courthouse to courthouse, meeting each morning with the judges and lawyers there, bringing awareness and encouraging lawyers to contribute time or money to fill the justice gap.

Several folks I don't know are running part, or even all, of a marathon with me. There's even a group of young lawyers who are planning to join me for the final five kilometers — we'll finish with a big celebration of *pro bono* and giving at the courthouse in Duval County.

#### Have you ever runs six marathons in a row?

Not even close. In the year since I've started running, I've done two marathons and three ultra-marathons, of 30 to 52 miles. My recovery time has been pretty good, I've been focusing on diet, I'm stretching, doing yoga and the things I need to avoid hurting myself. If I can manage not to get injured and pace myself reasonably, I think I can do it. Though they might not be the six fastest marathons ever, I'm confident I'll make it to the Duval County courthouse on June 2, even if I have to walk or crawl. Hundreds of folks have joined in to run with me or donate their hard-earned money, so there's no looking back now.

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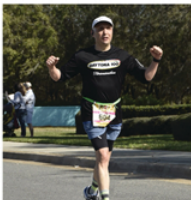
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### Mike Freed

**Mike Freed** ('93/DC/Energy) runs six marathons in six days to support Jacksonville Area Legal Aid.

### Joel Cohen

**Joel Cohen** ('08/M&A/NY) answers questions about his company, TalksOnLaw, an internet library of CLE-accredited discussions with top attorneys, judges and professors.



### Amelia Boone

**Amelia Boone** (Chicago/Restructuring/'10) discusses her work at Apple and how she became the 'World's Toughest Mudder.'



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