

# JUSTICE IN ACTION

## VOLUME II, NO. 6

### Order of Contents

[From Our Executive Director](#)

[Appellate Advocacy](#)

[20 for 20](#)

[Training Highlight](#)

[Meet Our Scholars](#)

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Reader,

Last week, a woman told me that when a judge denied her the relief she sought for the protection of her children from her and their abuser, she felt as if she had been vigorously climbing the Eiffel Tower to protect her children (and even nearing its top) when the judge's ruling knocked her back down to the ground. This powerful visual image has stuck in my mind. Though one woman articulated this feeling and image to me, I imagine that so many survivors of intimate partner violence feel this way when they are denied legal protections in court. It is a great honor to be an advocate who can help survivors begin to climb those steps to safety again.

This month, we'll share with you the specifics of one case that exemplifies how we are helping survivors through our appellate advocacy. You'll hear about how our Training and Professional Development Program is teaching truths about intimate partner violence to so many folks, including judges, police, and lawyers who can aid or hamper survivors along their climb to safety. You'll hear more about our ongoing 20th Anniversary Celebration and about how our programs bring hope and safety to survivors. You'll think how wonderful it is that a future dentist knows about intimate partner violence as you meet one of our prior Assumption Scholars.

Happy reading,





**MBP**  
**APPELLATE ADVOCACY**  
*Changing the Law*

One day late last spring, as the pandemic altered how and where we worked, how we accessed court records, and how we met with clients, we received a referral from an attorney on behalf of her client who had secured an order of protection against the man who had attempted to brutally sexually assault her. His claim on appeal was that a technical reading of the statute prevented the client from receiving a protection order because she had escaped the sexual assault before it was completed. The court that issued the protection order had rejected his claim. He appealed, and her attorney was appropriately concerned that she needed specialized representation on appeal. Enter the Mary Byron Project. We represented her on appeal. We argued she should not receive less protection under the law because (fortunately) she was able to fend off her attacker before he completed his assault of her. The law was designed to protect those who were victimized by sexual assault. Even an incomplete attempt at sexual assault is traumatizing and terrorizing for the intended victim. A victim of attempted sexual assault would likely live in constant fear that her assailant would return to complete the sexual assault. Fortunately, the Court of Appeals agreed with us that the client was entitled to protection. On January 8, 2021, the Court of Appeals issued a published opinion—making it binding on all courts in the state of Kentucky—finding that denying a protection order because the victim eluded the completed sexual assault “would defy both common sense and the intent of the legislature” and “would surely be absurd.”

Less than one month after that opinion was issued in favor of our client, the General Assembly chimed in. HB 310, sponsored by S. Heavrin, J. Decker, K. King, and C. Massey, changed the specific language of the statute to leave no room to question that victims of attempted sexual assault are equally eligible for orders of protection as are victims of completed sexual assault. The revised law took effect April 1, 2021--about 10 months after we were first contacted about the case. This case exemplifies why at MBP we have turned our attention to appellate advocacy. It's how we protect individual survivors and improve the law to protect survivors everywhere.

20 *for* 20 

## SURVIVORS SPEAK

*Testimonials from MBP Clients*

“ It means so much that we have people in our corner when we’ve felt on an island this whole time.  
Thank you so much!  
I am so glad we made contact and that you’ve been so willing to give your time to us. ”

**-J.D.**

# TRAINING *Highlight*

Our training team has been busy this year! We've been training judges, attorneys, police officers, VINE administrators, our social media followers and more! So far, we've already reached nearly 700 more people than we did during all of last year.

[Click here](#) to get updates about our future training opportunities.

## *Meet Our Scholars*

KATHLEEN CONNELLY

This month, we'd like to highlight one of our past Assumption Scholars!

**Name:** Kathleen Connelly '17

**College Major and/or Occupation:** Biology, attending UofL School of Dentistry in 2021

**During what years were you a Mary Byron Scholar?** 2014-2017



**What inspired your passion with the cause of ending dating violence?**

Freshman year at Assumption, I was an active member of Green Dot and learned about domestic violence and how important it is to advocate for prevention and survivors. In addition to this, I grew up knowing Mary's story because my aunt's were close friends with her growing up. These two factors inspired me to want to do more to help prevent domestic violence and advocate for victims and their families suffering abuse.

**How did being a part of the Scholars program impact you both at the time, and in the future (i.e. your college major, career choices, volunteer efforts, etc.)?**

The Mary Byron Program impacted me heavily in terms of involvement in high school because it was a cause I was passionate about and was able to share in common with the other scholars. The skills I developed as a part of this program not only contributed to my high school experience, but also my career choice. The compassion, leadership, empathy, and philanthropy involved in the Mary Byron Program are transferrable skills to my future as a dentist. They have already helped me succeed as an undergraduate student through volunteering at free dental clinics in Louisville and other cities that don't have access to dental care.

**What is your favorite memory of the Scholars program?**

My favorite memory of the Scholars program was Mission Week. During Mission Week, the Mary Byron Scholars prepare and present to AHS students and Mary's parents, Pat and John, come and share her story. Maggie, my fellow class of 2017 scholar, wrote a play that we worked hard to develop and show to the students during Mission Week for many years. I thought it was great that her play, and the Q&A component that followed, were still shown even after we graduated!

[Click Here to Donate](#)



---

*Copyright © 2021 The Mary Byron Project, All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:**

The Mary Byron Project  
9901 Linn Station Rd  
Louisville, KY 40223-3808

