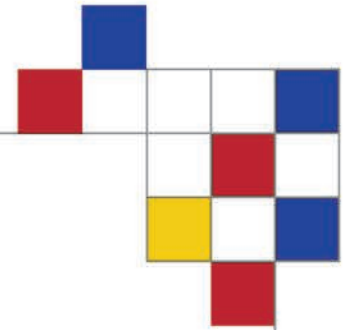


# VOLUNTEER ATTORNEY PROFILE



**JONAH ORLOFSKY**





**F**or the past 35 years, Chicago attorney Jonah Orlofsky's practice was entirely litigation—"Π vs Δ," and he generally represented "Πs." His commercial litigation practice consisted mostly of individual and class actions against companies—everything from securities fraud and insurance disputes to personal injury and antitrust. Then in 2014, Orlofsky decided it was time for a change, and he began to focus his practice on mediation and arbitration.

Orlofsky, a 1980 graduate of Northwestern School of Law, clerked for the Honorable Milton I. Shadur in the U.S. District Court in Chicago. He practiced for many years in a small class action boutique, Plotkin, Jacobs & Orlofsky. In 2000, Orlofsky formed his own firm, handling complex civil cases around the country. Orlofsky has litigated cases and argued dozens of appeals in federal and state courts across the country. In an area of legal practice more noted for motion practice and settlement than trial work, Orlofsky's trial practice is impressively lengthy.

Orlofsky's move into a mediation practice was born of a desire to apply the skills he honed as a trial lawyer to help parties resolve their disputes out of court. "Over the years, I've seen some extremely able mediators, and the best ones reject the old yarn that a successful mediation is one in which both parties walk away equally disgruntled." said Orlofsky. "To me, the job of the mediator is not to fashion a settlement the parties hate; it's to fashion one they regard as fair and in their best interests."

Orlofsky's involvement with Lawyers for the Creative Arts was a natural fit. He is an avid jazz pianist who frequently performs with Second City Jazz, the Fore and Afters, and the Highland Park Pops big band, among

others. When LCA Executive Director Jan Feldman, an old law school friend, called to invite him to volunteer to handle matters for LCA clients, he was only too glad to help.

Orlofsky's first few volunteer matters were typical for LCA. He represented a sculptor in a claim against an insurance company, eventually securing a payout for a damaged sculpture of over \$50,000. He advised a dancer on struggling with an overly broad

assistance of an entertainment lawyer to assist with the more technical intellectual property issues.

LCA reached out to its past board president Jerry Glover, who agreed to work with Orlofsky to prepare an agreement on the various issues separating the parties—a result that was elusive through several meetings. Orlofsky felt one more session could achieve success, and he convened a final mediation

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non-competition agreement, and he helped a video producer in a dispute over rights to certain video content.

Aware of Orlofsky's mediation practice, Feldman contacted him with a dispute between a Chicago filmmaker and a local activist who were producing a film on the topic of police violence. Personal differences had arisen between them that had escalated to cause the project's funder to suspend financial support.

The parties agreed to mediate through LCA's Patricia Felch Arts Mediation Service, with Orlofsky as the mediator. As Orlofsky noted, the funder needed to have a written agreement clearly defining the principals' respective roles in the project as well as their intellectual property rights. Orlofsky went back to LCA and requested the

session involving him, Glover and all the parties. At that lengthy session the parties resolved their issues and signed a contract specifying artistic control, intellectual property ownership and financial control—all points of dispute before the meeting.

With a signed contract in hand, there was a palpable change in the relationship between the filmmaker and the activist. The parties have since been able to resume their working relationship and are working towards a final completion of the project in early 2017. Feldman noted, "The issues separating these parties were both commercial and personal. It was gratifying to see how the partnership between Jonah Orlofsky and Jerry Glover, two of our most committed volunteers, resolved these deep differences and revived a great working relationship between the parties."