

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
SUPREME COURT  
P.O. BOX 1688  
MADISON, WISCONSIN  
53701-1688

December 8, 2011

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CHAMBERS OF  
CHIEF JUSTICE SHIRLEY S. ABRAHAMSON

Lonnie Wolf  
President, Wisconsin Clerks of Circuit Court Association  
Outagamie County Circuit Court  
320 S Walnut St.  
Appleton, WI 54911

Dear Mr. Wolf:

I am writing in connection with the court's consideration of the civil "Gideon" petition and at the suggestion of several justices. The civil "Gideon" petition seeks court appointment of counsel at government expense for indigent civil litigants under certain circumstances. For more information about this petition, #10-08, see our website at <http://wicourts.gov/scrules/1008.htm>.

I know, as you know very well, the first stop for a self-represented person is ordinarily the clerk's office. The clerk's office provides services to the self-represented, but clerks do not practice law. The Director of State Courts Office has developed "Legal Advice Guidelines for Court Staff," <http://intranet.wicourts.gov/publications/docs/pslegaladvice.pdf>, which we hope has proven helpful to clerks of court and their staff in assisting self-represented litigants.

I am trying to determine the WCCCA members' experiences working with the self-represented and the court's guidelines, and any suggestions you have for allowing the clerk's office to be more helpful to the self-represented.

You may prefer to respond personally or delegate this matter to another, or you may prefer to meet with me or the court to discuss various ideas. I appreciate any assistance you can give the court and the people of this state in this endeavor.

My thanks for your consideration and best wishes for a happy holiday season and good new year.

Sincerely,



Shirley S. Abrahamson

cc: All justices  
Clerk of Supreme Court  
Julie Rich  
Clerk of Supreme Court - Rules Petition 10-08 file