

## Legal Services taps D'Souza as first Teitelman Chair

By: Nicholas Phillips September 20, 2018

When Lisa D'Souza started as a staff attorney at the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in August 2014 — just a week after teenager Michael Brown was fatally shot by a policeman in Ferguson — she felt conflicted: she loved her new job, but felt a pull out to the streets.

“I just felt like I wasn't doing the advocacy work I'd always done,” said D'Souza, a native St. Louisan who by then had spent years advocating for migrant farmworkers in Texas and low-income residents of Tennessee. “I wanted to do work close to the community I care about.”

Now she can. D'Souza has been selected as the first Honorable Richard B. Teitelman Chair at Legal Services of Eastern Missouri. According to Dan Glazier, the group's CEO and Chief Legal Counsel, the role of the Teitelman chair is to float among LSEM's practice areas — housing, family law, public benefits, consumer fraud, healthcare and more — and tackle systemic problems in a way that other staff attorneys cannot.

“When in you're in the trenches, you see trends affecting more than one client,” Glazier said, “but it's hard to make the space to pay attention to those trends. Lisa will have that space.”

The chair position is named after Richard B. Teitelman, who led LSEM for 18 years before serving on the Missouri Supreme Court from 2002 until his death in 2016. Teitelman was the first legally-blind and the first Jewish member of the Missouri Supreme Court. After Teitelman's death, an anonymous donor offered a four-to-one match for all donations toward setting up a position in his honor. Soon, LSEM had \$1.25 million and chose as its first hire D'Souza, who went to Harvard Law School and has been practicing for 22 years.

“It's a huge honor to me,” D'Souza said. She plans to use her position to stretch the group's advocacy beyond just the clients that come through the door to other similarly-situated Missourians.

