



PRO BONO At a Glance

Young Woman and Family Granted Restraining Order After a Hotly Contested Hearing in Stamford Family Court

In July 2009, litigation associate Nuala E. Droney received an e-mail from Pro Bono Committee Chair Edward J. Heath asking her to represent a young woman seeking an extension of an ex parte restraining order in Stamford Family Court. Little did Nuala know that what appeared to be a fairly straight forward matter would escalate into a hotly contested evidentiary hearing with opening arguments, direct and cross examination of four witnesses, and emotional closing legal arguments.

Connecticut Legal Services initially assisted the young woman in filing an application for an ex parte restraining order against the respondent, a man who had attacked and attempted to strangle the woman and repeatedly harassed her family. The ex parte order was granted for a limited time, but in order to have the restraining order protections extended Nuala's client must return to court for a potentially contested hearing. It was at that time that Connecticut Legal Services referred the matter to its network of pro bono attorneys for assistance and Nuala answered the call. Nuala met with her client before the hearing to prepare her case and her client's testimony. On the day of the hearing, the respondent appeared represented by counsel and a highly adversarial evidentiary hearing ensued during which the respondent attacked the character and credibility of Nuala's client. At the end of the emotional day, Nuala and her client prevailed, obtaining a six-month restraining order protecting not only her client but also her client's mother and younger brother.



After we won the restraining order, my client told me that court was not scary with me by her side. Representing my client in court as she fought for her safety, was an inspiring personal and professional experience.

NUALA DRONEY

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New Year's Message from Edward J. Heath, Pro Bono Committee Chair



Early last year, as the Chair of the firm's Pro Bono Committee, I highlighted the effect of the unfolding economic crisis on funding for legal services agencies throughout the northeast, and I called upon our firm's lawyers to step up and fill the gap. I am proud to say that our lawyers answered that call. We searched out and forged new relationships with several referral organizations and nonprofits, leading reported pro bono hours to increase by more than 50 percent over 2008's numbers. And our 2009 numbers were remarkable: more than half of Robinson & Cole's lawyers billed at least 20 pro bono hours, contributing a total of about \$4 million worth of time to pro bono work. Nuala Droney's story is just one of the many examples of the vital and rewarding work we did. The community's need for our help will be just as great in 2010, and I have every expectation that we'll meet those needs. Many new projects are already in the

A Look Back on Pro Bono Achievements in 2009

Robinson & Cole Attorneys Named to Regional Council of LFCA

Environmental and Utilities attorneys Kirstin M. Etela and Megan E. Baroni were recently named to the Lawyers for Children America's (LFCA) Regional Council. The mission of LFCA is to protect the rights of children who are victims of abuse, abandonment, and neglect by providing quality pro bono legal representation and by collaborating for systematic change to improve the lives of children. The Regional Council works cooperatively with LFCA management and the board to further the mission and goals of LFCA, including the expansion of its pro bono program for children in need of legal services.

Robinson & Cole Attorney Appointed Cochair of Boston Bar Association's Pro Bono Committee

Real Estate attorney Carla M. Moynihan was appointed cochair of the Pro Bono Committee of the Boston Bar Association's Real Estate Section. The committee provides a means for member real estate attorneys to perform pro bono work for individuals and organizations.

Robinson & Cole's Pro Bono Work Featured Prominently in Connecticut Law Tribune Feature Story

The Connecticut Law Tribune's feature story "More Helping Hands" in the August 17 edition highlighted quotes from Pro Bono Committee Chair Edward J. Heath. In addition, the firm's significant efforts in helping the New London Homeless Hospitality Center was prominent in the article. Timothy D. Bates, partner in New London, described the more than 240 hours he and Hartford associate Joel C. Norwood have logged to assist this client in their zoning and closure issues.

Robinson & Cole Attorney Elected Chair of Connecticut Regional Council for Lawyers for Children America

Environmental and Utilities attorney Joey Lee Miranda was elected chair of the Connecticut Regional Council for Lawyers for Children America (LFCA). LFCA is a child advocacy organization whose mission is to protect the rights of children who are victims of abuse, abandonment, and neglect by providing quality pro bono legal representation and collaborating for systematic change to improve the lives of children. Ms. Miranda will serve a one-year term.

Appreciation for Robinson & Cole's Pro Bono Work Etched in Stone

Robinson & Cole's commitment to delivering pro bono service includes assisting the Pilgrim Bark Park in Provincetown, Massachusetts, with establishing itself as a Massachusetts nonprofit corporation and 501(c)3 tax-exempt

works, and they will be reported on throughout the year.

Pro Bono Celebration Week in November: Focus on PAIR

During Pro Bono celebration week in November, The Political Asylum/Immigration Representation (PAIR) project acknowledged the firm's strong commitment to its project and mission. Several attorneys, including James B. Zuckernik, Samuel Mullin, John E. Tener, J. Michael Wirvin, Alida Bogran-Acosta, Clive D. Martin, Christopher S. Pitt, Timothy C. Twardowski, Amie R. Pelletier, Kate Moran Carter, Amanda S. Eckhoff, and Katherine S. Kayatta at Robinson & Cole underwent a half-day training session to learn how to represent individuals from countries all over the world seeking political asylum in the United States. Our attorneys successfully represented three individuals from Cameroon, Zimbabwe and the Congo and reunited them with their families. The firm is also in the process of representing three other individuals from Togo and Uganda.

2010 Pro Bono Committee Members

Taylor L. Archambault
Kenneth C. Baldwin
Sandra D. Dawson
Pamela K. Elkow
Edward J. Heath
Gregory T. Ligelis
Megan R. Naughton
Christopher S. Pitt

organization. Business Transactions Partner J. Michael Wirvin provided the pro bono work for this project. The park engraved the firm's name into a stone displayed at the entrance of the new pet-friendly community space.

Robinson & Cole Acknowledges Pro Bono Volunteers

Over 100 attorneys and staff gathered in June to recognize Robinson & Cole attorneys for their pro bono service to the community.

Pro Bono Awards

Pro Bono Partner Edward J. Heath presented the Pro Bono Awards to two attorneys for their ongoing work on behalf of worthy organizations:

Edward V. O'Hanlan, a land use partner in Metro New York, was recognized for his work with ABC, a national program that selects gifted high school students living in communities with limited academic opportunity for scholarships to other private or public schools where opportunities are greater. Ted, who also recognized David Burke and Robin Keller for their significant assistance, worked with ABC to negotiate mutually agreeable contract modifications to meet the needs of both the national organization and participating public and private schools.

Meghana D. Shah, a litigation associate in Hartford, was recognized for her work since 2005 on behalf of young Shaneece Jack, a ventilator-dependent quadriplegic for whom she provided successful representation to be able to move from the Hospital for Special Care to her own home. The move requires complicated medical care and continued Medicaid benefits to make this possible. The referral came to Robinson & Cole from Cherish the Children Foundation and partner James A. Wade got Meghana involved when she was a first-year associate.