



PRO BONO At a Glance

July 2013

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MESSAGE FROM EDWARD HEATH, PRO BONO PARTNER

Over the last few months, we have received a marked increase in requests for pro bono assistance from the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center (CVLC). We have handled a steady stream of matters for the CVLC over the last few years, but these recent requests have been coming in at roughly double the usual rate. Although a fair number are housing-related and, thus, specific to Connecticut lawyers, just as many involve benefits issues, which can be handled from any jurisdiction. Pro bono work requires some training; however, it is not extensive and we can easily make arrangements for it. Several of our colleagues have worked on veterans benefits matters. A few of those are ongoing and provide an excellent opportunity for colleagues ready to test the waters. It should come as no surprise that the client is usually a war veteran greatly in need of legal help. Please contact me if you would like more information on contributing to this vital initiative.



KEISHA PALMER ASSISTS HARTFORD HOPE

Robinson & Cole public finance lawyer Keisha S. Palmer, with some assistance from partner J. C. David Hadden, provided legal advice pertaining to the dissolution of Hartford Organizing for Power and Equality (HOPE), a small nonprofit that fostered community empowerment in Hartford. Prior to the final dissolution, Ms. Palmer negotiated settlements of outstanding obligations with the organization's creditors and assisted HOPE in locating additional pro bono resources to complete its filing obligations with the Internal Revenue Service. Because HOPE had exhausted its funding and had waning support, the task of winding down fell upon a few dedicated board members. At the end of the dissolution process, one remaining board member sent the following heartfelt note to Ms. Palmer:

"Now that the dissolution of HOPE has been concluded, I would like to take a few minutes to express my gratefulness to you for your assistance with this process. At the beginning, I was at a total loss as to what to do and how to do it and was greatly distressed over the prospect of failing to properly accomplish this task. I am so grateful I was directed to the offices of the Pro Bono Partnership and even more grateful that you were assigned to assist me. I know that this process seemingly dragged on forever and was painfully slow in its progression to completion. Your patience and persistence, along with your steady support of me during this very stressful and trying time, is so very much appreciated. I'm sure from the perspective of an accomplished attorney it may have seemed routine or unremarkable, but from my perspective you were a highly skilled legal advisor who made the impossible not only probable, but attainable. I cannot thank you sufficiently with a few words for the great service you have provided to me, but I would be greatly pleased if you can understand and appreciate how grateful I really am for your help and support."

According to Ms. Palmer, "It is gratifying to know that you've made a difference in your community. Feedback of this nature only highlights the need for, and the gratification that comes from, undertaking pro bono projects."

Ms. Palmer and Mr. Hadden provided their legal services through the Pro Bono Partnership, Inc.

GIFTS OF LOVE REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION

Robinson & Cole real estate lawyers Garry C. Berman and George W. Watson III assisted Gifts of Love with a loan and purchase and sale of a new property in Avon, Connecticut. Gifts of Love was founded in 1989 and provides basic needs - food, clothing, furniture, household items, and energy assistance - to working families facing short-term crises in the greater Hartford area.

HARTFORD LAWYERS LEND HAND TO HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS SEEKING JOB SKILLS

Robinson & Cole lawyers J. C. David Hadden, Edward J. Heath, and Kathleen E. Dion, along with lawyers from Greater Hartford Legal Aid, co-taught Basic Legal Rights, a class for mostly homeless adults striving to gain job skills and confidence. Presented in four sessions during the first two weeks in May, the class covered the criminal justice system, civil courts, government benefits, and housing law. It was part of a series of free, twice-a-week workshops on a range of subjects, including videography, journalism, creative writing, leadership, and using social media. The *Hartford Courant* article "Hartford Classes Give Skills, Confidence to Those with History of Homelessness" reports on the positive results of this program.

LAWYERS JEFFREY WHITE AND AMANDA GORDON HELP WITH CATAMARAN BUILDING PLANS

Hartford lawyers Jeffrey J. White and Amanda E. Gordon provided legal liability guidance to Oil Drum Art, a Connecticut arts organization that raises awareness about the environment and the energy crisis. The organization is developing building plans to construct catamarans that can be built and used by Third World fishermen. For these people, who come from some of the poorest regions of the world, access to the boats can significantly improve the quality of their lives.

ALAINE DOOLAN RECEIVES CBA AWARD

Alaine C. Doolan received the CBA's Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo Pro Bono Award. This prestigious award reflects Alaine's "demonstrated dedication to the provision of pro bono legal services." In particular, the CBA celebrated her work with the Truancy Intervention Project and Backpacks for Excellence in Education. The award was presented on June 17 during the CBA's Annual Meeting luncheon at the Connecticut Convention Center.

HARTFORD LAWYERS PROVIDE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO BETHSAIDA COMMUNITY, INC.

Theodore J. Tucci and Eric R. Greenberg recently collaborated with Brian DuPerre, chief privacy officer and senior legal counsel at UnitedHealthcare, to provide pro bono legal assistance to Bethsaida Community, Inc. Bethsaida is a nonprofit corporation based in Norwich, Connecticut, that provides housing and supportive services to homeless women, particularly those who have experienced domestic violence.

As part of its mission, Bethsaida required guidance as to what level of involvement the organization could have with regard to the medical care needs of its clients. The scope of the project involved an analysis of Connecticut statutes on issues such as licensure, the good Samaritan laws, and permissible intervention in emergency medical situations. The lawyers involved in the project provided Bethsaida with a risk management analysis that assisted the organization in setting policies and procedures regarding the proper parameters of employee involvement in health care issues for Bethsaida's clients.

R&C ATTORNEYS ON CBA PRO BONO HONOR ROLL

R&C has more lawyers on the CBA's 2012 Pro Bono Honor Roll than any other firm or corporation. The Honor Roll recognizes those professionals who, in 2012, volunteered to take on one or more pro bono matters through any of the 19 agencies/programs that are a part of the Pro Bono Network. The June issue of *Connecticut Lawyer* lists 33 R&C honorees:

Amanda B. Barry	Gregory J. Ligelis
Nicole A. Bernabo	Mimi M. Lines
Brett J. Boskiewicz	Virginia E. McGarrity
John P. Casey	Robert S. Melvin
Britt-Marie K. Cole-Johnson	Dwight H. Merriam
Stephen E. Cooper	Edward V. O'Hanlan
Peter A. Dagostine	Martin A. Onorato
Eric D. Daniels	Keisha S. Palmer
Kathleen E. Dion	David M. Panico
Matthew M. Dolan	Craig A. Raabe
William J. Egan	Jonathan H. Schaefer
Steven L. Elbaum	Scott E. Sebastian
Pamela K. Elkow	Jean E. Tomasco
Eric R. Greenburg	Theodore J. Tucci
Edward J. Heath	Deborah A. Vennos
Jona Kim	Jeffrey J. White
Peter R. Knight	

2013 PRO BONO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kenneth C. Baldwin	Gregory J. Ligelis
Nicole A. Bernabo	Megan R. Naughton
Pamela K. Elkow	Christopher S. Pitt
Edward J. Heath	

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