

September 2013

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Los Angeles – Century City Attorneys Obtain Restraining Order for Holocaust Survivor



Together with [Bet Tzedek](#) Legal Services, Litigation associates **Jessica Mickelsen** and **Nicholas Gross**, under the supervision of California Pro Bono Chair **Kristin Holland**, helped protect a Holocaust survivor from an anti-Semitic, abusive homeowners association (HOA) president. The survivor, afflicted with stage four terminal leukemia, endured multiple encounters where the HOA president called her names such as “Jewish cockroach” and “Jewish white trash.” He also abused his powers to harass her by entering her home under false pretenses, denying her access to common areas and refusing to use HOA funds to make common repairs to her unit. After an all-day Elder Abuse Restraining Order hearing, the respondent finally capitulated and agreed, on the record and under oath, to stay away from the survivor and cease all direct contact with her—the exact relief sought by Katten and the client. Early reports are positive and the survivor is excited to be able to live out her twilight years unmolested by her former aggressor.

Katten Assists Illinois Chapters of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)



Commencing this summer and continuing this year, Katten is assisting the Illinois affiliate of the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) and a number of its Illinois chapters in revising the chapters’ governance documents. NAMI is a nationwide, grassroots nonprofit dedicated to advocacy, research, support and education to improve the lives of people with mental illness. The national office of NAMI is requiring all chapters to re-charter and re-affiliate with the national office. The national office has developed sample bylaws. However, legal counsel is needed to assure that the chapters’ governance documents are in compliance with the Illinois Not for Profit Business Corporation Act and comply with best practices for federal and state conflict of interest policies as well. Under the supervision of Public Finance partner **Janet Goelz Hoffman**, summer associate **Timothy Kerkland** prepared a detailed analysis of their existing bylaws as well as creating amended and restated bylaws for **NAMI Barrington Area, Inc.**, **Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Greater Chicago**, **NAMI Metro-Suburban Inc.**, **NAMI Stephenson County, Illinois**, and **NAMI Will County**. Janet also supervised Timothy and summer associate **Andrew Herrington-Gilmore** in the preparation of a detailed analysis of the existing bylaws and created amended and restated bylaws for **NAMI Cook County North Suburban**. Janet is continuing to work with these chapters as they review and adopt their new bylaws. Timothy additionally prepared model bylaws for **NAMI Illinois** to provide to other chapters that wish to adopt the new form of bylaws or for newly formed chapters to adopt in the future.

Katten Texas Offices Join Pro Bono Effort

Mark Farley, managing partner for Katten’s new Texas offices in Austin and Houston, has pledged that these new offices will do their part in fulfilling Katten’s “long-term commitment to helping the poor, the powerless and the disenfranchised obtain first-rate representation without charge.” Mark has named Austin Litigation partner **Whit Swift** as Pro Bono Chair for the Texas offices, and Houston Litigation associate **Jon Reidy** will be assisting Whit. Mark and Jon have already taken on their first pro bono case.

Pro Bono Asylum Work by Thomas Maas Profiled in *Chicago Lawyer*

Chicago Intellectual Property associate **Thomas Maas** was featured on the August cover of *Chicago Lawyer* for an article on pro bono work for asylum seekers. “[The Terrorism Bar](#)” discusses how an overly broad definition of “terrorist” adopted in the 2001 Patriot Act means thousands of otherwise eligible asylum applicants who have fled persecution in their homelands are now being denied safety in the United States. As a result, immigrants who were coerced into military service are often denied asylum for providing “material support” to terrorist organizations even if participation was their only hope for survival. Thomas is highlighted for his work representing a pro bono client in a case that illuminates the problems caused by a definition of “terrorist activity” that includes nonviolent behavior.

14th Annual Pro Bono Service Awards

Katten honored eleven attorneys this year for their exceptional dedication to pro bono services through the firm’s 14th Annual Pro Bono Service Awards. The July ceremonies honored recipients for their consistent dedication to pro bono work over time and the deep impact they have made in ensuring those they are helping are properly represented. The awards also include a \$1,000 honorarium, which recipients donate to charities of their choice.

Chicago

The Honorable Thomas M. Durkin, Judge of the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, presented awards to Real Estate associate **Jason Gorczynski** and Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Patrick Smith**. Jason was honored for his work with Lawyers in the Classroom and numerous other pro bono activities, and Patrick was honored for his longstanding work on behalf of refugees with the National Immigrant Justice Center. Jason donated his honorarium to The National Association for Urban Debate Leagues and Patrick donated his honorarium to Connections for Abused Women and Their Children.



California

The Honorable Alex Kozinski, Chief Judge of the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, presented awards to Real Estate partner **Allan Abshez**, Real Estate special counsel **Elizabeth Camacho** and Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Alan Croll**. Allan and Elizabeth were both honored for their work on a significant piece of litigation for the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing, and donated their honoraria to LA Voice and Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission, respectively. Alan was honored for a wide range of pro bono service, including his work on behalf of an impaired adult with civil claims whose house had been taken by his trustee (Alan helped restore the house and other relief for the client). Alan generously agreed to match his honorarium, and donated the funds to Interval House.



Litigation and Dispute Resolution associates **Christopher Carter** and **Jarin Jackson** also received awards. Christopher was honored for helping a client fight retaliatory eviction and donated his honorarium to Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Jarin was honored for his work with the California Habeas Project and donated his honorarium to Interval House.

New York

Ed Davey, Director of the Corporate Work Study Program at Cristo Rey Brooklyn High school, presented awards to Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Bonnie Lynn Chmil** and Trusts and Estates associate **David Goldstein**. Bonnie was recognized for her assistance to a Guatemalan girl seeking asylum in the United States; she donated her honorarium to the Guatemala Human Rights Commission. David was honored for his work on a number of pro bono matters including helping End to Cyber Bullying, Inc. obtain tax-exempt status. He donated his honorarium to City Harvest.

Washington, DC

Vanessa Allyn, Managing Attorney of the Refugee Protection program at Human Rights First, presented awards to Litigation and Dispute Resolution associates **Joseph Fiorill** and **Daniel Spurlock**. Joseph and Daniel were honored for their joint successful efforts on behalf of a client from Rwanda seeking asylum; both donated their honorariums to Human Rights First.

Inspiring Words

In accepting her Pro Bono Service Award, **Elizabeth Camacho** explained her dedication to the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing over the past year despite the need to work over the Christmas and New Year holidays:

Thank you, Katten, both for this recognition today and for the opportunity to work on a significant pro bono litigation matter with so much support from the firm. . . .

For me, pro bono work is very personal. I am well aware that the many opportunities and successes I have had throughout my life are due not only to my own hard work and talents, but also to the dedication, courage, advocacy and sacrifice of many people who came before me. It is truly my honor to be able to pay some of that forward and help improve the situations of those who are struggling or suffering in one way or another. Pro bono work gives me a wonderful opportunity to make this contribution, and it is one of the things that makes me most proud to be a lawyer.

Read Elizabeth's entire speech [here](#).

Alan Croll also shared a number of notable pro bono cases in his remarks, and summed up his motivation by stating:

I want to address, very briefly, some remarks to my grandchildren [Curtis and Cali were sitting in the front of the crowd; they are nine and seven years old]. Curtis and Cali, you are children of great good fortune and privilege. Your grandfather is enormously blessed and so are you, and along with that goes the obligation to help others less fortunate and to give and give back. That is tonight's message to you. Your parents, your grandparents, your aunts and uncles, and my law firm, Curtis and Cali, all give and give back, and I hope you do that all of your life. Please pay attention and remember this. You must always give and give back. . . .

In providing pro bono services, we benefit our clients, our law firm, and our community. But it is very important to recognize that we who do pro bono work are the real beneficiaries, because we come to know and recognize that pro bono legal work is: enlightening, enriching and ennobling.

Read Alan's entire speech [here](#).

Susan Grode Lauded for Work with PBS

Leaders of the Emmy-nominated PBS series [Craft in America](#) recently praised Entertainment and Media partner **Susan Grode** for her nearly 15 years of pro bono legal service to the nationally televised program that chronicles the origins, artists and techniques of American craft. Carol Sauvion, executive director of the series, reached out to Katten Chairman Vince Sergi to extol the dedication Susan has shown since the series' inception in 1999. "Susan's immediate reaction was so positive and her offer of pro bono help so sincere that I had the courage to enter a new field, raise the significant budget and begin production." Susan oversaw the initial fundraising, approval by PBS, research, filming, postproduction and promotion of *Craft in America*, which has won a Peabody Award and become a regular offering on PBS. She continues to work with the series today, and Sauvion extended her praise and gratitude to Katten: "Katten Muchin Rosenman made this essential pro bono work possible. We are grateful for this invaluable assistance."



Washington, DC's Cecil Atkinson Named 2013 Urban Alliance Mentor of the Year

Records and Docket Manager **Cecil Atkinson** has been named 2013 [Urban Alliance](#) Mentor of the Year. For several years the Washington, DC office has partnered with the Urban Alliance program, providing mentoring, coaching and paid internships to under-resourced high school students from DC public schools. 99% of student participants graduate high school and 88% of these students attend college. Intern Leslie Ogu authored an essay nominating Cecil and Urban Alliance staff made the final selection. Cecil also mentors interns through the Don Bosco Cristo Rey program.



Los Angeles Summer Associates Participate in ADL SARP

Katten participated in the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) [Maxwell E. Greenberg Summer Associate Research Program](#) (SARP), donating the time of summer associates **Scott Cutrow** and **Courtnee Draper** to conduct pro bono legal research on cutting-edge civil rights issues facing ADL. This year, the summer associates examined 32 questions covering the areas of religious freedom, bullying remedies, sovereign citizens, First Amendment, discrimination, civil liberties and foreign law. Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Ryan Larsen** served as co-chair of the program.



New York Office Supports Anti-Depression Foundation

On July 16, a team of Katten's New York summer associates and attorneys participated in the [Dave Nee Foundation](#)'s Third Annual Summer Trivia Night Challenge. The event raised critical funds for the foundation's mission to eliminate stigma around depression, particularly among law students and within the legal profession, and prevent suicide by encouraging diagnosis, treatment, education and research.



Katten Presents Travel Scholarships for Cancer Research

For the seventh consecutive year, Katten provided travel scholarships to cancer researchers for the 2013–2014 academic year as part of the [Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University](#). Chicago managing partner **Gil Soffer** represented Katten at the award ceremony, where doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows received funds to help defray the cost of travel and registration fees to prestigious national scientific conferences where they present the results of their laboratory, clinical, population or behavioral research with implications for cancer prevention.



California Offices Get Moving for Good Causes

On September 15, a team of 13 Katten employees, friends and family members participated in the Greater Los Angeles Association of Legal Administrators' (GLAALA) annual "[Justice Jog](#)," a 5K walk/run in Century City held at the Westfield Mall. This is the third year in a row Katten has sponsored the Justice Jog, and the team raised \$1600 for [CASA](#) (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Los Angeles, a nonprofit organization that provides trained, court-appointed advocates for foster children in need of additional support and guidance.



On September 27, a team of 20 Katten employees climbed 75 stories (1700 steps!) in the US Bank Building as part of the [Ketchum-Downtown YMCA Stair Climb for Los Angeles](#). The Stair Climb—the Ketchum-Downtown YMCA's most important fundraiser—raises money to support two downtown preschools, as well as a long-running and successful afterschool program for at-risk teens in the downtown area.



From a Grateful Client

The executive director of the [Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition](#) recently wrote the following to Katten Chairman Vince Sergi:

I have recently had the distinct pleasure of working with Brian Sodikoff and Julia Kasper, two members of your Intellectual Property Group, and I want to laud their exceptional commitment, professionalism, and expertise.

Brian and Julia are providing pro bono services to my organization, the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition (IMCHC), as we attempt to rebrand and trademark a new organizational name. Renee Friedman, a partner at your firm serves on IMCHC's Board of Directors and referred us to Brian and Julia.

Often, the perception of pro bono work is direct service client representation and we are very lucky to know that a law firm as prestigious as yours can provide pro bono services outside of that traditional model. Brian and Julia have been remarkably responsive and supportive during this process. They even participated in the creative end of our rebranding campaign, demonstrating their multifaceted and wide skill sets. Also, they treated us with the courtesy and respect that I believe your firm has a reputation for providing all its clients – pro bono or billable.



EDUCATE • COLLABORATE • ADVOCATE

We know that the economy has affected all sectors of the work force. The fact that your firm still maintains its commitment to philanthropic and pro bono services is a testament to and an indicator of your continued success. Your pro bono work has been indispensable to IMCHC's growth and mission and because of your staff, we now have a basic understanding of the intricacies involved in trademarks, required for moving forward in this process.

Thank you for your support. It has been invaluable.

Sincerely,

Janine Lewis, Executive Director