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MESSAGE FROM PETER KNIGHT, PRO BONO PARTNER

In policy and practice, all major law firms “support” pro bono work. How can they not when each individual lawyer has an ethical obligation to provide some amount of free or low-cost counsel to individuals and organizations who can’t afford those services? But a pro bono program that depends only on its individual lawyers to “do the right thing,” even with the firm’s blessing, will never be truly successful. The efforts of a few dedicated lawyers can never match the strength of an institution that is, itself, dedicated to the crucial role that pro bono service plays in our legal system and in our communities. While fortunate to have many lawyers who would provide free legal services to the needy regardless of the firm’s support, Robinson+Cole has always maintained pro bono service as a core value. This support takes many forms, one of which is financial.



In 2018, Robinson+Cole contributed over \$75,000 to organizations that provide free or low-cost legal services. The beneficiaries of these funds are a mix of legal aid organizations, such as Connecticut Legal Services and Greater Boston Legal Services, and mission-specific non-profits, such as the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center and the Pro Bono Partnership. These organizations are on the front lines in providing legal representation to underserved communities and they count on financial support from private corporations and firms like ours in order to serve their mission. In addition to the financial support they receive from Robinson+Cole, they also benefit from the direct involvement of our lawyers, whether someone volunteers time providing pro bono legal work or serves on a board of directors of a legal services organization.

When it comes to fostering a truly impactful pro bono program, the best approach incorporates the individual efforts of volunteer lawyers supported and encouraged by an institution that appreciates the important role pro bono work plays in providing access to justice for all. When those things come together, as they do at Robinson+Cole every day, we end up with a pro bono program we all can be proud of.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE PRO BONO COMMITTEE

The Pro Bono Committee is happy to announce that we have been joined by Steve Cooper, a Stamford partner in the Business Transactions Group; Dan Bryer, a New York partner in the Insurance + Reinsurance Group; and Jon Small, Hartford counsel in the Insurance + Reinsurance Group. Steve has been a major proponent of the Pro Bono Partnership, which last year recognized him as a Connecticut Volunteer of the Year. Dan has been pivotal in organizing a collective effort by lawyers in the New York office to volunteer in NY Family Court. Jon has spearheaded the Firm's efforts to represent children in immigration cases through the Center for Children's Advocacy and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). The addition of these Committee members provides representation throughout most of the Firm's offices and among most of our practice groups. The Committee is indebted to the work and support of Ken Baldwin, Greg Ligelis, and Brian Nichols, who have cycled off after many years of service.

ED HEATH ELECTED PRESIDENT OF GREATER HARTFORD LEGAL AID

Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA), an organization whose mission is to secure justice for, and to protect the rights of, the needy residents of Hartford County, has elected Ed Heath to president and chair of its board of directors.

For 60 years, GHLA has increased access to the courts, advocated for fairness in the application of law, broken down barriers and improved systems while practicing preventive law. Robinson+Cole has been a GHLA partner since the agency's inception in 1958. The firm's managing partner, Steve Goldman, served as a GHLA board member from 1986 to 2002 and as Board President from 1997 to 2002.

Ed also has a strong commitment to pro bono work. He chaired the firm's Pro Bono Committee for seven years, during which time the firm as well as individual lawyers, including Ed, received more than a dozen awards or other forms of recognition for pro bono work. He previously served as GHLA Vice President and has been a member of its board of directors for the last seven years.

Robinson+Cole lawyers serve on the boards of many of the State's most impactful legal service providers, including, in addition to GHLA, Connecticut Legal Services and Statewide Legal Services.

ROBINSON+COLE CLIMBS THE AM LAW 200 PRO BONO RANKS

The *American Lawyer's* most recent pro bono rankings of the Am Law 200 (the nation's 200 highest-grossing firms) have Robinson+Cole at #98, cracking the top 100 for the first time in recent years. Half of the pro bono score is calculated from the average number of pro bono hours per lawyer, while the other half represents the percentage of lawyers who performed more than 20 hours of pro bono work. Participation is the key. Twenty hours of pro bono is the target number for all our lawyers, so there is a great opportunity to climb the list even further in the year ahead.

ROBINSON+COLE AND STEVE ARONSON TO BE RECOGNIZED BY THE PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP

Robinson+Cole has been selected as the Pro Bono Partnership's Connecticut Law Firm Volunteer of the Year. Additionally, Steve Aronson has been selected as its Connecticut Individual Volunteer of the Year, the first time the Partnership has had an individual honoree come from the law firm honoree.

Priya Morganstern, Director of the Partnership's Connecticut Program in the Hartford office, wrote that these selections "speak volumes about the depth of commitment at Robinson+Cole."

Each year, more than 150 corporations and law firms and as many as 1,000 individual attorneys respond to the Pro Bono Partnership's call to provide free legal assistance to its clients, nonprofit organizations serving the poor or providing other important social and community services in Connecticut, New Jersey and New

York.

In any given year, the dedication of some volunteers rises well above the ordinary, distinguished by the complexity or transformative nature of a pro bono project, the extraordinary responsiveness of a volunteer or volunteers, or the sheer volume of matters or time committed to pro bono service through the Partnership. It is the Partnership's practice to celebrate the commitment of these extraordinary volunteers by naming them Volunteers of the Year.

Morganstern wrote, "I nominated Robinson+Cole because of its sustained, multi-year commitment to our program; the number of projects its attorneys have taken; their willingness to jump in quickly if necessary; the high quality of their work; and the Firm's generosity and graciousness in hosting our program in its offices for almost eleven years now. Really, the support Robinson+Cole has provided to our program is extraordinary."

In a similar manner, she lauded Steve Aronson for "responding to the smallest questions or the most significant, challenging issues in a timely, efficient, and enthusiastic way. He has helped so many nonprofits and has done it so well. He is a true partner."

Robinson+Cole and Steve will be recognized during the Volunteers of the Year awards ceremony in Hartford on April 30.

THE INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER CAN ASSIST WITH PRO BONO MATTERS

Just because a matter is pro bono doesn't mean you need to go it alone. If you have research or other questions, just as you might in a billable matter, the Information Resource Center (IRC) can assist with pro bono projects by retrieving case law and dockets, setting up alerts, searching public records, doing legal research, and more. And if you are a non-litigator and need to register for a PACER account, contact Liz Figueroa. For other assistance, contact the IRC at libraryirc@rc.com

ROBINSON+COLE LAWYERS TEAM WITH UTC LAWYERS TO REPRESENT CHILDREN IN IMMIGRATION MATTERS IN MASSACHUSETTS

On January 14, 2019, Peter Knight and Jon Small represented Robinson+Cole at a training session hosted by United Technologies and presented by KIND (Kids In Need Of Defense). The firm has been discussing with UTC ways in which our lawyers can collaborate on pro bono matters. Representing children in immigration cases provides a good opportunity to team up with a client and make a difference in the lives of children facing a difficult process, often unrepresented by counsel. Under the model developed with UTC, the firm will be helping children seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status in matters referred to us by KIND. The matters will be based in Massachusetts, which is one of KIND's regions. If you are interested in participating in the UTC program (training is provided), or are interested in doing similar work in Connecticut or one of our other regions, please let Peter or Jon know.

NEW YORK OFFICE LAWYERS VOLUNTEER IN FAMILY COURT

New York office lawyers Anna Wang and Dan Bryer participated in the Brooklyn Family Court Volunteer Attorney Program on January 17, 2019. Anna and Dan counseled a number of clients on a host of issues before the Family Court. The issues are as important as they are diverse. For example:

- Dan and Anna advised a mother involved in a custody proceeding. After the parents reached an out-of-court custody agreement, including with respect to the mother's pending relocation to Georgia, the father filed a custody proceeding. We also advised the mother regarding a cross-claim for custody, evidence that will support her claim, and the procedure for obtaining a court-appointed attorney at the custody hearing.
- Dan and Anna advised a man who was asked by his ex-wife to sign a settlement agreement pursuant to which he would agree to be responsible for half of the medical bills of his 16-year old daughter who received treatment not covered by his medical insurance at an out-of-state facility.
- Dan and Anna advised a retiree who was recently informed that he owed unpaid child support for his three now-adult children, even though he believes he made every payment. Our volunteers helped the client identify the appropriate records he will need to prove that he made all the required

payments.

The following day, David Sienko and Anna attended a training session on Custody, Visitation and Family Offense presented by the New York Family Court Volunteer Attorney program. Jennifer DeCarli, Assistant Commissioner for Family Justice Centers and Outreach, Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, discussed the function of her office, and provided guidance on working with those who have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV). This is yet another example of our lawyers helping individuals who have experienced domestic violence.

BILL EGAN AND JON SCHAEFER REPRESENT VETERAN FACING EVICTION

Bill Egan and Jon Schaefer recently represented a disabled veteran facing eviction from his home. The veteran sustained his disabilities during his active tour of duty before moving back to Connecticut, where he lived with his mother and sister. One late rent payment in August resulted in the almost immediate service of a notice to quit.

Once Bill and Jon were retained, they discovered that the landlord was facing a foreclosure on the property. The landlord wanted our client out of the property to give himself more options in dealing with his lender. The veteran's disability, along with the fact that he lived with several pets in addition to his family members, made it difficult for him to find new housing on short notice, and the landlord was pressing for a quick judgment and eviction.

Our lawyers were able to negotiate an agreement with the landlord that allowed the veteran time to find a new home, and which also waived the final two months' rent, giving him a head start on his new lease. Additionally, they obtained the withdrawal of the eviction action instead of a stipulated judgment, so the eviction action will not appear on his public records.

Robinson+Cole has a dedicated team of volunteer attorneys who, working with the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center, help those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

ROBINSON+COLE LAWYERS HELP WITH ACQUISITION AND FINANCING OF BRASS CITY CHARTER SCHOOL

More than a dozen lawyers and paralegals from the firm's Real Estate, Construction and Public Finance Groups, led by Steve Elbaum and Dave Panico, were instrumental in clearing the way for a new construction project at the Brass City Charter School (BCCS) in Waterbury.

A message from Andy Sternlieb, the BCCS Chairman, lauded the firm's work on behalf of the school. He shared the news with Steve and Dave that at a meeting of the school's board and senior leadership on January 16, 2019, it was unanimously agreed "to name the boardroom in the rectory the 'Robinson+Cole Boardroom,' in honor of the work you and your colleagues have done for BCCS."

"Since you all worked pro bono, our thanks are not enough. Having the firm's name on the boardroom wall will always remind us of all your hard work and kindness and will be an enduring example of generosity for our kids. You have an open invitation to come see what you have helped us accomplish over the past two years."

There will be a groundbreaking at the school this spring, at which Robinson+Cole will be recognized for its many contributions to this project.

DVRO CASE HANDLED BY ROBINSON+COLE LAWYERS

Je'Quana Orr, with the assistance of Dan Brody and Evan Seeman, recently obtained a restraining order for a victim of domestic violence. The client suffered through years of abuse abroad in her home country, eventually fleeing to the United States. Her husband invaded her family's house in her home country and threatened their lives until they disclosed her location. After the husband learned of her whereabouts, he threatened to find and kill her here. She contacted Greater Hartford Legal Aid and filed an application for a restraining order. Our Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) Team, led by Je'Quana, advocated on the client's behalf at a contested hearing and successfully obtained the order of protection.

JIM NAULT ASSISTS VETERAN WITH HONORABLE DISCHARGE

Appellate Group lawyer and U.S. Naval Academy graduate, Jim Nault, was instrumental in helping a fellow military veteran gain access to the full scope of Veterans Affairs benefits. Click [here](#) to read a letter recognizing Jim's successful efforts.

2019 PRO BONO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

[Peter R. Knight](#) | [Daniel E. Bryer](#) | [Steven J. Boyajian](#) | [Karla L. Chaffee](#)

[Stephen E. Cooper](#) | [Kathleen E. Dion](#) | [Edward J. Heath](#)

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