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## American Bar Association Honors Katten With 2016 Pro Bono Publico Award

Katten's pro bono program is receiving the prestigious [2016 Pro Bono Publico Award](#) from the American Bar Association (ABA) for the firm's exceptional commitment to volunteer legal services for the poor and disadvantaged. The ABA is recognizing Katten especially for its innovative work in establishing the Katten Legal Clinic at José de Diego Community Academy, the first legal clinic located in a Chicago Public School. The clinic provides assistance with basic legal issues to members of the school community and surrounding neighborhood. Since its launch in 2013, the Katten Legal Clinic, with support from [LAF](#), operating the third Wednesday of each month, has provided legal assistance to nearly 200 people. Last year alone, Katten attorneys and staff provided more than 800 hours of pro bono legal services, including extended representation of many Clinic clients.

Katten was nominated for the award by Chicago-based LAF, and letters of support were also submitted by four other legal aid agencies, including those the firm's attorneys work with in Los Angeles and New York. The award, bestowed each year by the ABA's Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service, will be formally presented to Katten at the 2016 ABA Pro Bono Publico Awards Luncheon on Saturday, August 6 in San Francisco. Click [here](#) to read the letters of support for Katten.



## Jessica Wilson Obtains Clemency for Long Imprisoned Non-Violent Inmate

Austin Environmental and Workplace Safety associate **Jessica Wilson** is one of several Katten attorneys volunteering with [Clemency Project 2014](#), a working group of legal professionals who assist federal inmates who would have received a shorter sentence had they been charged today. Her client is a low-level, non-violent drug offender who was sentenced to life in prison based on harsh mandatory minimum laws that have since been revised. Had he been sentenced today for the same crime, he would have received a significantly lower sentence—possibly as low as six years. In March, Jessica was notified by the Department of Justice that President Obama had granted her client's petition for clemency and, after serving 13 years of his life sentence, he will be released this summer.

## After Pro Bono Victory, Chicago Shelter Names Its Lobby To Honor Katten



A team led by Chicago Real Estate Litigation head **Tim Patenode** and including Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Brian Poronsky** and associates **Matthew Haws** and **Brian King** handled a matter for [BEDS Plus Care](#), a residential homeless shelter in the Chicago area. BEDS' development of a 311-unit affordable housing facility was stymied by a cloud on title created by an individual opposed to the project. With dim prospects and a number of complications, Tim's team managed to resolve the matter, enabling BEDS to move on with its project. BEDS, which also has a strong relationship with **Christian Kemnitz**, co-head of the firm's Financial Services Litigation practice, was so delighted by the results of the matter that it plans to name the shelter's lobby after Katten.

## Noah Balch Provides Legal Support for Los Angeles' Olympic Bid



Los Angeles – Century City Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Noah Balch** is working with the [LA 2024](#) Bid Committee this summer on its candidature file for the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Los Angeles is competing with Paris, Rome, and Budapest to host the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the committee has a host of guarantees, agreements, responses and materials to deliver to the IOC before October 7. With the Rio Games this summer, the committee hopes to complete its submission early and asked Los Angeles managing partner **Zia Modabber** if Noah could work in-house with the committee on a pro bono basis.

Some of Noah's responsibilities include reviewing, drafting and providing opinions on a variety of agreements and issues, including those related to medical services for the athletes and Olympic personnel; insurance and hospital/provider/plan selection; immigration; importation of goods and animals; securing hotels and other accommodations, including the athlete village, venues and practice facilities; making government cooperation arrangements; preparing joint marketing plans; licenses for images; releases for events; rights of publicity; social media; advertising and related television, digital and print media; and the formation of the entities themselves that would guide and oversee production of the Games.

Noah's pro bono efforts are greatly appreciated due to the staggering costs of the bid process. One of the attributes of the Los Angeles bid is an efficient financial approach, and the committee hopes the legacy of the Games will enrich Los Angeles and the United States by providing youth sports programs, environmentally friendly housing, mass transit, sustainable landscaping and cityscapes, and athletic centers.

After Noah returns to Katten in the fall, he will still work with LA24 on deliverables for submission on February 3, 2017. These include games delivery, experience and venue legacy. After that, the IOC selects the host city at its September 2017 session in Lima, Peru.

## New York Team Thwarts Retaliatory Litigation Against Nonprofit Animal Rescue Shelter Operator

New York Litigation and Dispute Resolution associates **Camille Richard** and **Zachary Denver** secured dismissal of two lawsuits against the operator of a nonprofit animal shelter in the Bronx, filed in retaliation for her involvement in the plaintiff's arrest and conviction for abusing and torturing 69 cats in October 2008. When the plaintiff's conviction was overturned on speedy trial grounds, he began a scorched-earth effort to sue anyone he thought was involved in his arrest by alleging malicious prosecution, aiding and abetting false arrest, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and replevin, among other accusations. From 2009 to 2016, the plaintiff filed multiple complaints and amended complaints, keeping the action alive as long as possible, going through three judges and four attorneys. Camille and Zach filed and successfully argued two strong motions, which resulted in the dismissal with prejudice of all pending claims against their client. The team was supervised by New York Litigation co-chair **Anthony Paccione**.

## Katten Assists ImpactAssets in Connection With New Global Sustainable Agriculture Note Offering



Structured Finance and Securitization partners **Seth Messner** (Washington, DC) and **Don Macbean** (New York) and special counsel **Ken Oettinger** (Charlotte) represented [ImpactAssets](#) in a financing transaction aimed at supporting grower cooperatives and agricultural enterprises that help smallholder farmers and promote rural livelihoods around the world. ImpactAssets runs a \$250 million donor-advised fund that is invested across asset classes. Its mission is to provide products and leadership that enable philanthropists, other asset owners and their wealth advisors to make investments with positive social, environmental and financial returns.

## Chris DiAngelo and Asanka Pathiraja Help Afghani National Apply for Refugee Status in the United States



**Chris DiAngelo**, managing partner of the New York office, and Structured Finance and Securitization associate **Asanka Pathiraja** continue their work with the [International Refugee Assistance Project](#) (IRAP), which provides legal representation to Iraqi refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, as well as to refugees of other nationalities. By pairing with local partners, IRAP helps refugee applicants successfully navigate the rules and processes for resettlement in a safe third country. Chris and Asanka are currently working with IRAP with respect to the matter of a US-affiliated Afghani national seeking refugee status in the United States. The asylum seeker served as a cook for the US Government for several years and is currently under threat from various anti-American groups in the region. At present, the application process is ongoing.

## Kyra Smerkanich and Jonathan Boswell Represent Equal Rights Center in Reaching Settlement With Discriminating Landlord



Washington, DC Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Kyra Smerkanich** and Real Estate associate **Jonathan Boswell** represented [Equal Rights Center](#) (ERC) in a proceeding against Fred A. Smith Company, a local landlord, before the DC Office of Human Rights (OHR). The ERC had submitted a complaint alleging that Fred A. Smith was repeatedly discriminating against prospective tenants who required the use of a companion animal because they suffered from bipolar disorder, in violation of the Fair Housing Act and the DC Human Rights Act of 1977. Following mediation at OHR, Kyra and Jon ultimately reached, and drafted, a settlement agreement on behalf of ERC. Under the agreement, Fred A. Smith agreed to reimburse the ERC for all of the costs it had incurred—approximately \$40,000—for a fair housing training to curb future discriminatory practices.

## Allison Hite Popp Wins Domestic Violence Protective Order for Safe Alliance Client



Charlotte Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Allison Hite Popp** won a domestic violence protective order for a [Safe Alliance](#) client in a case that was challenging due to contested facts and the nature of the matter. Although she was ready to go to trial, Allison hoped to achieve a protective order without subjecting her client to the stress of live testimony. Ultimately, she defused a tense situation and was able to persuade a difficult defendant to consent to a one-year order rather than put her client through the ordeal of a bench trial.

## New York Team Helps New Yorkers Against Gun Violence Launch a Digital Yearbook To Remember Young Victims



In the last 15 years, more than 30,000 young Americans have lost their lives to gun-related violence before graduating high school. With the goal of raising awareness through legislative advocacy and education, [New Yorkers Against Gun Violence](#) (NYAGV) has honored many of these students with a commencement season campaign called “Sign Their Yearbook.” The digital yearbook is designed to encourage action, influence public opinion and spur policy change. Anyone can sign the virtual yearbook, which is filled with photos and memories provided by the victims’ families, at [www.SignTheirYearbook.com](http://www.SignTheirYearbook.com). The signatures will be delivered to Congress as an official petition to strengthen US gun laws. New York Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Mark Ciani** has been working with NYAGV since 2012, and for this campaign Mark worked with Privacy, Data and Cybersecurity partner **Doron Goldstein** and Intellectual Property staff attorney **Alexandra Caleca** to help NYAGV obtain the services of Stockholm, Sweden-based advertising agency Volt AB to create and launch the campaign. Sign Their Yearbook already has generated media coverage in publications such as [Adweek](#).

## Sarah Bull Involved in Release of Imprisoned Journalist in Azerbaijan, Assists Community Links With Potential Employment Litigation



London Litigation and Dispute Resolution counsel **Sarah Bull** serves as a trustee for [Media Legal Defence Initiative](#) (MLDI), which provides legal support to journalists, bloggers and independent media across the world. MLDI recently was involved in the [highly publicized](#) release of a journalist in Azerbaijan. The investigative journalist, Khadija Ismayilova, exposed official corruption in the country and was serving a seven-and-a-half-year sentence on embezzlement and tax evasion, among other charges. Human rights groups protested and claimed her imprisonment was a government effort to stifle dissent. After her release, Ismayilova vowed to continue her investigation, underscoring how this case is significant for freedom of expression in Azerbaijan.

Sarah also is assisting [Community Links](#) with a potential piece of employment litigation. Community Links is very active in East London and runs multiple projects that reach more than 14,000 people each year. Its Employment, Training and Enterprise program helps thousands of unemployed individuals find sustainable jobs through mentorships, job search support, motivational workshops and job placements.

## Washington, DC Attorneys Continue To Dedicate Their Legal Services to the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program’s Advice and Referral Clinic



On May 14, five Washington, DC attorneys assisted 68 walk-in clients at the [D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program’s Advice and Referral Clinic](#) at [Bread for the City](#)’s Northwest Center, a local non-profit community service organization. The attorneys provided much-needed legal assistance to the local community, addressing issues ranging from housing concerns to bankruptcy to drafting motions for ongoing litigation. The attorneys who participated include Structured Finance and Securitization partner **Seth Messner**, Real Estate partner **Julia Schmidt**, Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Katie Barajas**, Real Estate associate **Schuyler Armstrong** and Tax Planning associate **Sarah Ma**.

## Team With Incoming Associate Clears Man Wrongly Convicted of Quadruple Homicide



Incoming first year associate **Cassie Hightman** was a key member of a team at the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law's [Center on Wrongful Conviction of Youth](#) (CWYC) that helped win the release of Davontae Sanford, a Michigan prison inmate who was wrongly convicted of a quadruple homicide that took place in Detroit in 2007. Davontae was 14 when he was picked up in his front yard on Runyon Street, still wearing pajamas, and taken to the police station where he was subjected to more than 24 hours of interrogation, including two overnight sessions, without a lawyer or parent present. The police lied and told him they could link him to the murders and that if he just confessed he could go home. Davontae finally broke and confessed, though his confession made little sense.

With little hope, Davontae pled guilty and was sentenced to 39–92 years in prison. Two weeks after Davontae's sentencing, professional hitman Vincent Smothers freely confessed to the murders. Though Smothers' confession perfectly corroborated the police's evidence and he was able to produce one of the murder weapons, the Wayne County Prosecutor's office offered him a plea deal in exchange for his silence regarding the Runyon Street murders. Smothers, for his part, rejected the plea deal and maintained his confession.

Last April, the CWYC partnered with the Michigan Innocence Clinic at the University of Michigan Law School to file a motion for relief from judgment detailing Davontae's innocence and attached a 30-page affidavit from Smothers. The Michigan State Police launched a reinvestigation of the case and presented its evidence to the Wayne County Prosecutor's office this past May, fully exonerating Davontae of the murders. After serving nearly nine years of his sentence, 23-year-old Davontae was able to return to his family and live as a free man.

## LAF Lauds Katten for Its Commitment to the Pro Bono Legal Clinic



[LAF](#), Illinois' leading provider of free legal services to people living in poverty, published a profile on the Katten Legal Clinic and spoke with Director of Pro Bono Services **Jonathan Baum** and litigation paralegal supervisor **Keith Forrest**. The feature discusses how in 2013, Katten partnered with LAF and the [Law Project](#) to establish the clinic at José de Diego Community Academy in order to assist low-income families and children connected with the public school. On the third Wednesday of each month, Katten attorneys tackle issues involving public benefits, housing and family law. Click [here](#) to read the complete article.

## Individual Attorneys Earning Recognition



### Ronni Davidowitz Honored at the UJA-Federation of New York Trusts & Estates Group 25th Annual Event

**Ronni Davidowitz**, head of the New York Trusts and Estates practice, was honored at the [UJA-Federation of New York](#) Trusts & Estates Group 25th Annual Event for her contributions to pro bono work. The members of the UJA-Federation Trusts & Estates group volunteer their legal services at auction houses, investment firms and banks in order to support communal planning and philanthropy in the New York Jewish community.



## Yelena Shagall Honored as Role Model for Young Lawyers by the Seventh Circuit Bar Association

Chicago Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Yelena Shagall** was nominated for the [Seventh Circuit Bar Association](#)'s Pro Bono Service Award due to her outstanding service in a recent *habeas* appeal. While a more senior nominee was ultimately selected for the award, the organization was so impressed with Yelena's initiative and service, particularly so early in her career, that it formally recognized her as a role model for young lawyers at its New Lawyers Breakfast. The breakfast is an opportunity for lawyers who have recently joined the Seventh Circuit bar to visit with Seventh Circuit judges.



## Dean Razavi Wins Pro Bono Star Award From Human Rights First

New York Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Dean Razavi** received the Pro Bono Star award from [Human Rights First](#) for his work securing asylum for a Transnistrian whistleblower fleeing political persecution. Human Rights First presents the Pro Bono Star award to attorneys who demonstrate extraordinary commitment to cases related to asylum or other forms of immigration protection.



## Eugene Endress Honored With Volunteer Recognition Award

Chicago Intellectual Property associate **Eugene Endress** was honored with a Volunteer Recognition Award from [Chicago Volunteer Legal Services](#) for his commitment to CVLS, the Ark Legal Clinic, and pro bono in general.



## Tom McNeill Named to Pro Bono Honor Roll by Legal Services of Southern Piedmont and Legal Aid of North Carolina-Charlotte

Charlotte Real Estate staff attorney **Thomas McNeill** was named to the 2015 Pro Bono Honor Roll by [Legal Services of Southern Piedmont](#) and [Legal Aid of North Carolina-Charlotte](#). Members of the honor roll are recognized for their superior commitment to pro bono service and providing access to justice for those in need in the community by dedicating more than 20 hours or three cases to pro bono service in 2015.

## NATIONAL IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER

A HEARTLAND ALLIANCE PROGRAM

### Victoria Jepson Honored as Rising Star at the National Immigrant Justice Center's Human Rights Awards

Chicago Insolvency and Restructuring associate **Victoria Jepson** was among nine attorneys honored by the [National Immigrant Justice Center](#) (NIJC) with a Rising Star award for her dedication to providing high quality pro bono services to clients with complex immigration cases. She received the award as part of the 17th Annual Human Rights Awards luncheon, which was attended by more than 800 Chicago civic leaders, businesspeople, attorneys and philanthropists.



### Karen Artz Ash Re-elected Vice President of Volunteers of Legal Service

New York Intellectual Property partner **Karen Artz Ash** has been re-elected to the office of vice president of [Volunteers of Legal Service](#) (VOLS), and as a continuing member of its executive committee and board of directors. She has led the nominations committee for the past year, resulting in adding financial resources and individual board members to support the ongoing work of VOLS in the fields of microenterprise support, incarcerated mother support and immigration support for children, among other projects.



### Daniel Render Speaks at Anti-Defamation League's Summer Associate Research Program Kickoff

Chicago Corporate associate **Daniel Render** gave a speech at the annual Summer Associate Research Program introductory breakfast for the [Anti-Defamation League](#) (ADL) to share his experience as a former participant in the program. Through the ADL's Summer Associate Research Program, summer associates at Chicago law firms, under the direction of a supervising partner, research an assigned topic and provide a memorandum to ADL. The program has given participating associates the opportunity to research topics of particular interest to ADL, including issues concerning bullying, freedom of speech, immigration, reproductive rights, separation of church and state, and religious freedom. The ultimate objective of the annual program is to provide ADL's regional and national staff with trailblazing legal research on civil rights issues while exposing young attorneys to ADL's mission and the importance of pro bono work.

## Chicago Real Estate Team Hosts After-School Program for Low-Income Youth

Led by Chicago Real Estate partner **Gregory Pierce** and associate **Emily Thomas**, the Real Estate practice partnered with Inland Mortgage Capital to host 20 students and instructors from [All Stars Project](#), an after-school program that trains inner-city youth between the ages of 16 and 21 in performing arts and professional skills. At the conclusion of the All Stars Project program, students are placed in paid internships with partner corporations around the city of Chicago. During Katten's event, attorneys from the Real Estate practice and staff from Inland worked with the students to practice their networking skills in a corporate setting. Additionally, staff from Inland, as well as Greg and Emily, presented on careers in banking and transactional law, followed by a question and answer session.



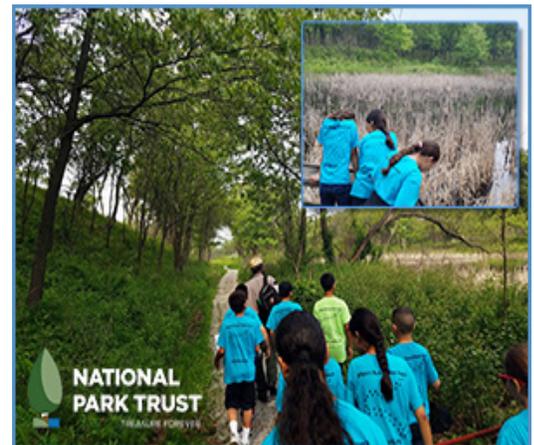
## Washington, DC Office Raises More Than \$12,000 for Food From the Bar Campaign To Fight Hunger

More than 70 attorneys and staff from the Washington, DC office provided food and monetary donations and/or volunteered to support [Food From the Bar](#), the Washington, DC legal community's annual fundraiser campaign in partnership with the [Capital Area Food Bank](#) (CAFB). The month-long campaign was capped by Katten's second annual regatta fundraiser, which involved 22 teams of attorneys racing down the Potomac River in canoes and kayaks. In total, the office raised more than \$12,000 and 200 pounds of food to children, seniors and families in need. The CAFB estimates that with the monetary donation it will be able to provide 30,000 meals to the community.



## Chicago Office Sponsors Buddy Bison Park Experience Program for Students at José de Diego Community Academy

For the fourth year in a row, Katten's Chicago office partnered with the [National Park Trust](#) (NPT) to sponsor NPT's Buddy Bison School Program for fifth-grade students at José de Diego Community Academy. The environmental education program predominantly works with urban Title 1 schools to create hands-on, outdoor classrooms at parks and other outdoor education centers. The 2016 program included trips to the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, where the students created an edible garden; Trailside Museum of Natural History for observations on predators and prey; Windy City Harvest Youth Farm in Washington Park, where students created their own compost; and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, where the kids learned about pond, dune, savanna and bog habitats and the forces that create them. Katten funded each fieldtrip, including bus transportation, program fees, T-shirts and visits from Buddy Bison.



## From a Grateful Client

In a note to its Board of Directors, [Lenox Hill Neighborhood House](#) thanked New York counsel **Mal Barasch** for securing, through years of complex probate litigation, a multimillion-dollar bequest for the organization:

*We also owe our immense appreciation to Mal for his years of astute representation of our interests and wise counsel in this legally complex and repeatedly frustrating legal matter. Lawyers for the parties came from at least three states, many different legal actions and appeals were filed and litigated in a variety of courts and states (the Supreme Court of Connecticut issued a long decision in this case this past January), the New York State Attorney General's Office was involved, there were many settlement conferences and calls, and some parties and attorneys involved did not act as one might have hoped. Through it all, Mal maintained his steady hand and guided and prodded and researched and advised and drafted and fulfilled our Board's express desire to follow [the donor's] clear wishes. [The donor's] desires and our bequest would not have been realized without Mal's astute, persistent and enormously effective lawyering.*



LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE  
SINCE 1894