

Victories on Behalf of Clients

Katten Team Wins New Convention Against Torture Hearing for Gay Jamaican Man

A Katten team led by Chicago Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Allison Freedman** has won a swift and decisive victory in the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit for a gay Jamaican man facing deportation to a country infamous for its hostility to LGBTQ individuals. An immigration judge, sustained by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), had denied the man's claim that he faced torture if forced to return to Jamaica. Just nine days after Allison argued the case in the Court of Appeals—her very first appellate argument—a three-judge panel unanimously held that the immigration judge committed an error of law in focusing on the client's testimony that he had not been harmed when he previously lived in Jamaica, while ignoring his testimony that he hid his homosexual relationship while in Jamaica, met with other members of the Jamaican LGBTQ community about how to act in public to avoid discovery, and did not intend to conceal his sexual orientation if he returned to Jamaica. Finding that the immigration judge also engaged in other conduct at the client's hearing that suggested bias, the Second Circuit not only reversed the decisions of the BIA and the immigration judge and ordered a new hearing, but suggested that it be conducted by a different immigration judge.

Allison's team consisted of Chicago Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Hannah Koesterer** and partner **Peter Wilson**, and New York Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Michael Rosensaft**, who made tremendous contributions to the briefing and preparing Allison for the oral argument. Katten handled the case in cooperation with the [National Immigrant Justice Center](#).

Katten Team Wins Settlement for Black Family Targeted With Hate Crimes

Director of Pro Bono Services **Jonathan Baum** and former Katten associate **William Kraus**, in partnership with the [Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law](#), won a settlement for a black family in suburban Chicago after filing a lawsuit alleging that a white neighbor committed multiple hate crimes against the family in an effort to drive them out of their home. Iris Howe and her children were the first black family in the neighborhood when they moved into their home in northwest suburban Mount Prospect in April 2009. The family alleged that throughout the next four years their neighbor Therese Calliari repeatedly referred to Howe and her family members using the N-word and other racial slurs. She allegedly followed the Howe children around the neighborhood in her car, often coming within inches of touching them, and attempted to instigate physical altercations with them. On several occasions, Calliari allegedly told the family to leave the neighborhood.

In March, 2014, Iris Howe and her children filed a lawsuit in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, alleging that Calliari violated their rights under the Illinois Hate Crimes Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act. Following a contested hearing, the Howe family's attorneys obtained a court order barring Calliari from having any contact with the members of the family. This summer the family dismissed their lawsuit for monetary damages in return for payment by Calliari to Ms. Howe of a substantial sum of money and Calliari's apology to Ms. Howe for her conduct toward the Howe family. The case was covered in the [Chicago Tribune](#) and [Daily Herald](#).

President Obama Grants Two More Clemency Petitions for Katten Clients

New York Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Bonnie Lynn Chmil** and Los Angeles - Downtown staff attorney **Paul Grammatico** both received news that President Obama has granted clemency to their clients. Bonnie and Paul are among several Katten attorneys volunteering with [Clemency Project 2014](#), a working group of legal professionals who assist long-imprisoned federal inmates who would have received a shorter sentence had they been charged today. Both clients are low-level, non-violent drug offenders who received life sentences for crimes that would render significantly shorter sentences under revised laws. Bonnie's client has served 14 years of a life sentence and Paul's has served 19 years. The President agreed with the assertions that each inmate has paid his due to society, and both will be released this December. Bonnie's client wrote the following to her:

Dear Attorney Bonnie Chmil,

I just want to thank you and your firm from my heart for working so hard for my clemency and freedom in the real world. The day you called I could tell by the tone of your voice on the phone that you were genuinely thrilled I received my clemency. I was also thrilled to believe that after all this time of incarceration I'm going to be a free man. I sincerely send my well wishes and just a big hug from me and my family and friends.

Thank you very much and blessings to you and everyone at the law firm.

Eric Werlinger Settles Domestic Dispute, Secures Joint Custody for Father

Washington, DC Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Eric Werlinger** helped reunite a local father with his children following nearly two months of separation resulting from a custody dispute. The client had a falling out with the children's mother, after which she refused to allow the client to speak with, much less visit, his children. The client filed a *pro se* custody suit in the DC Superior Court in an attempt to break the standoff. Eric stepped in only days before a court hearing to help the client navigate DC's family law system. The client went into the hearing with the hope of obtaining a temporary visitation order but instead, Eric secured a permanent custody order granting the client joint legal and physical custody of the children. The order took effect immediately, with father and children reunited the following day. The father is overjoyed with the result, and is thrilled to be spending every weekend with his children. He even brought one son to the office to meet Eric.

Katten Team Wins Lower Sentence for Client Who Previously Won *Habeas* Relief

Last year, a multi-office team led by Chicago Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Yelena Shagall** obtained a victory in the US Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit on behalf of a client who was pursuing *habeas* relief based on ineffective assistance of his previous *habeas* counsel. The precedent-setting ruling enabled the client to reopen his case. This year, in the US District Court for the Southern District of Illinois, Yelena succeeded in reducing her client's sentence from 300 months to 128 months.

Yelena received the case through a court appointment and was supported by **Gil Soffer**, managing partner of Katten's Chicago office and national co-chair of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice, and Washington, DC Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Robert Smith**.

National and International Accolades

American Bar Association Celebrates Katten's Pro Bono Publico Award With Ceremony and Highlights Video

At the American Bar Association (ABA) Annual Meeting in San Francisco, the [ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Services](#) presented the prestigious Pro Bono Publico Award to Katten for demonstrating outstanding commitment to volunteer legal services for the poor and disadvantaged. The ABA also filmed a video about Katten's award-winning pro bono service. The video features interviews with Director of Pro Bono Services **Jonathan Baum**, Chicago office managing partner **Gil Soffer**, Chicago associates **Hannah Koesterer** (Litigation and Dispute Resolution) and **Matthew Holub** (Intellectual Property Litigation), and **Keith Forrest**, who serves as litigation paralegal supervisor and director of the Katten Legal Clinic at José de Diego Community Academy. The video can be viewed [here](#).



Pictured: Katten Chairman Roger Furey, Director of Pro Bono Services Jonathan Baum and ABA President Paulette Brown

Katten UK Ranked Fourth by *The American Lawyer* for International Pro Bono Efforts

[The American Lawyer](#) named Katten Muchin Rosenman UK LLP as a top firm for international pro bono services, ranking it fourth among all US law firms for pro bono efforts in non-US offices. Katten's pro bono services in the United Kingdom include performing corporate governance work, obtaining charitable tax-exempt status and providing commercial advice for nonprofit organizations that help the disadvantaged, the arts, developing countries and children with autism.

Nonprofits and Low-Income Communities

Terry Green Helps Sanitation First by Facilitating a Charity Partnership Between Two Clients

London Real Estate partner **Terry Green** realized two of his clients had similar philanthropic goals and facilitated an introduction. One client is an industrialist based in Singapore, India and London who operates a foundation for keeping water pure. Terry's second client is a trustee for [Sanitation First](#), a UK-based nonprofit organization that provides ecological toilets to communities in the developing world, especially India. Roughly 2.4 billion people around the world don't have access to a clean or safe toilet, impacting the health and wellbeing of entire communities. Part of Sanitation First's mission is to prevent raw sewage from contaminating water supplies and subsequently causing serious illness and even death. After Terry introduced his clients, the industrialist with a clean water foundation agreed to donate £300,000 annually to Sanitation First.

Janet Goelz Hoffman and Erin Nichol Help Establish Nonprofit To Raise Funds for Special Needs Students

Government and Public Finance partner **Janet Goelz Hoffman** and Chicago Corporate associate **Erin Nichol** advised a new Illinois nonprofit corporation, Friends of Jacqueline Vaughn Occupational High School (Friends of Vaughn) on drafting its articles of incorporation and bylaws as well as assisted it with obtaining federal tax exempt status and applying to register with the Charitable Trust Bureau of the Illinois Attorney General. [Jacqueline Vaughn Occupational High School](#) is one of the Chicago public schools that serves high school students with special needs. The purpose of Friends of Vaughn is to raise funds to support programs and provide resources at the school that would not otherwise be available in this era of cuts in public education.

Washington, DC Attorneys and Staff Volunteer at the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program's Advice and Referral Clinic

As they do each quarter, five Washington, DC attorneys and staff assisted 66 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 participants included Corporate associate Brett Seifarth, Environmental and Workplace Safety associate **Katie Barajas**, Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **John Kozak**, Real Estate associate **Schuyler Armstrong** and Litigation Business Development manager **Mac Borkgren**.

Michael Melzer Advises Nonprofit Treating and Researching Childhood Mental Health Disorders

Chicago Government and Public Finance associate **Michael Melzer** assisted the [International Society for Research in Child and Adolescent Psychopathology](#) (ISRCAP), a nonprofit that hosts forums for child psychopathology mental health professionals to exchange ideas concerning the nature and treatment of childhood mental disorders. Michael assisted ISRCAP in re-establishing its 501(c)(3) status retroactive to 2010. ISRCAP holds biennial meetings around the world and offers need- and merit-based scholarships to researchers, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

17th Annual Katten Pro Bono Service Awards

Katten recently honored 13 attorneys for their outstanding pro bono service at the firm's 17th annual Pro Bono Service Awards. The ceremonies, held at six Katten offices, recognized partners and associates, transactional lawyers and litigators for their extraordinary commitment to using their legal skills on behalf of those in need. Each recipient, highlighted below, also received a \$1,000 honorarium to donate to the charity of his or her choice.

Austin and Houston

Alissa Gomez, executive director of Houston Volunteer Lawyers, presented awards to Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Emily Rochy** and Environmental and Workplace Safety associate **Jessica Wilson**. Emily was honored for representing numerous clients in need, but especially refugees seeking asylum based on the threat of persecution in their home countries. Jessica was honored for helping a low-level, non-violent drug offender, who was sentenced to life in prison based on harsh mandatory minimum laws, petition for clemency and win. Emily donated her honorarium to Planned Parenthood - Gulf Coast and Jessica donated hers to the Texas Civil Rights Project.



Charlotte

Cindy Patton, the managing attorney of Legal Aid of North Carolina, presented the award to Real Estate staff attorney **Tom McNeill** for his work at Legal Aid, where he assists clients who have been denied employment or other services because something detrimental has appeared on their criminal record. Tom donated his honorarium to Legal Aid of North Carolina.



Chicago

US Magistrate Judge Sidney Schenkier presented awards to Government and Public Finance partner **Janet Goelz Hoffman** and Employment Law and Litigation special counsel **Nineveh Alkhas**. Janet received her award for rendering 2,000 hours of volunteer services in the last five years to a broad array of community outreach organizations and arts and educational institutions as well as organizations providing services to specialized and vulnerable populations, including disabled children, mentally ill or developmentally disabled populations, and early literacy programs. Nineveh was recognized for providing employment-related counsel to a variety of nonprofit and charitable organizations and for serving as court-appointed counsel to *pro se* plaintiffs who have been terminated from their jobs. Janet donated her honorarium to the Leslie Shankman School Corporation and Nineveh donated hers to Rape Victim Advocates.



London

Corporate partner **Philip Watkins** and senior associate **Victoria Rodley** were honored for their exceptional pro bono work for the Roundhouse Trust, a program that targets marginalized and disadvantaged youth by enriching their lives with education and cultural experiences via music, performing arts and media projects. Both Philip and Victoria donated their honoraria to the Roundhouse Trust.

Los Angeles

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge (and former Katten partner) Joshua Wayser presented awards to Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Ryan Larsen** and former Insolvency and Restructuring associate **Jessica Mickelson Simon**. Ryan was honored for his longstanding leadership in Katten's pro bono program and specifically for representing prison inmates through the Central District of California Pro Bono Civil Rights Panel. Jessica was honored for co-chairing Katten's Adoption Project, which has assisted in securing adoptive homes for more than 40 children formerly in state custody and has obtained thousands of dollars in benefits to help care for the adopted children, many of whom suffer from physical and mental disabilities. Ryan donated his honorarium to the Anti-Defamation League and Jessica donated hers to Public Counsel.

New York

Amy Barasch, executive director of Her Justice, presented awards to Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner **Michael Rosenshaft** and former associate **Dean Razavi**. Michael was recognized for securing asylum for refugees and representing a prisoner at Rikers Island who filed a Section 1983 suit against the City of New York and the prison guards who severely beat him. Dean was recognized for winning asylum for a Transnistrian citizen fleeing political persecution. Michael and Dean donated their honoraria to Human Rights First.



Washington, DC

Eric Angel, executive director of the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, and Joan Meier, founder and legal director of DV LEAP, presented awards to Environmental partner **David Hoffmann** and Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate **Daniel Lipton**. David was honored for representing victims of domestic violence whose specific issues, be it securing a restraining order or winning a custody battle, are further complicated by other problems. Daniel was honored for a variety of pro bono activities, including retrieving a couple's life savings after they were erroneously seized by US Customs and Border Protection agents in Houston. David donated his honorarium to DV LEAP and Daniel donated his to the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia.

Awards and Honors

Katten Receives Champion of Justice Award From Brooklyn Legal Services

Ronni Davidowitz, head of the New York Trusts and Estates practice, accepted the Champions of Justice award on behalf of Katten from [Brooklyn Legal Services](#) at its fall fundraiser. Through Brooklyn Legal Services, Katten attorneys have helped HIV-infected individuals who cannot afford legal services with trusts and estates documents such as wills, health care documents, deeds of guardianship and powers of attorney. The partnership began in 1989 and has recently expanded to include low-income elderly individuals.

Houston Office Named Equal Access to Justice Champion by Houston Volunteer Lawyers

The Houston office was honored by [Houston Volunteer Leaders](#), the pro bono arm of the Houston Bar Association, as an Equal Access to Justice Champion for the 2015-2016 bar year, which ended in July. Houston Volunteer Leaders recognizes Houston firms that succeed in reaching the goals of its [Equal Access to Justice Champions Program](#) by handling an extensive amount of pro bono matters. Katten not only reached the goal, but surpassed it by double the number of matters.



Support for the Community

Chicago Office Donates School Supplies to José de Diego Community Academy

The Chicago office held a school-supply drive for José de Diego Community Academy and sent 31 boxes of brand new supplies to the children at the school. The supplies included backpacks, art supplies, notebooks, calculators, folders and crayons, among other school necessities. Chicago litigation paralegal supervisor **Keith Forrest** organized the drive with support from Chicago managing partner **Gil Soffer**, executive director **Andy Sprogis**, receptionists **Veronica Moncada, Michelle Dewey** and **Nancy Buzeky**, and Litigation project assistants **David Lopez, Alex Pina, LaTasha McGee** and **Matt Doran**.

Los Angeles Offices Raise Nearly \$3,000 for Food From the Bar Campaign

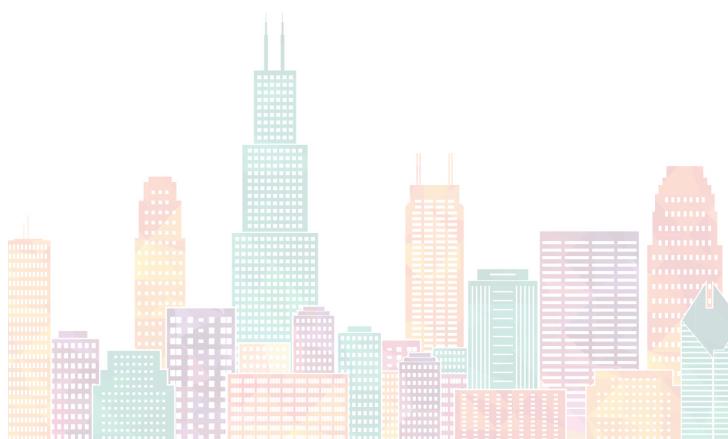
Employees of the Los Angeles offices, along with their friends and family, participated in a month-long food drive and series of fundraisers for the annual [Food From the Bar campaign](#). The staff spent a day working at the [Los Angeles Regional Food Bank](#), and attorneys and summer associates worked together at the West Los Angeles Food Bank.

Throughout the month of May, Human Resources manager **Nicole Callanan** and Administrative Services manager **Shelley Wissot** organized food donations and several fundraising activities to join forces with the Los Angeles legal community in raising funds needed to ensure children and seniors in LA County do not go hungry. With activities ranging from ice cream sales to jeans days, a pizza lunch and Thanks-A-Latte coffee sales, the Katten office raised almost \$3,000 for the food bank.



Katten Sponsors 2016 Race Judicata 5K Run/Walk in Chicago

Forty attorneys and employees participated in the 2016 Race Judicata 5K Run/Walk, benefitting [Chicago Volunteer Legal Services](#), an organization that provides free legal services to low-income Chicago residents. Katten was a sponsor of the event, covered the \$34 registration fee for all firm participants and hosted a tent with food and drinks for a team celebration.



From a Grateful Client

The executive director of **Lenox Hill Neighborhood House** recently wrote the following to **Ronni Davidowitz**, head of the firm's New York Trusts and Estates practice:

On behalf of our clients and the entire Lenox Hill Neighborhood House community, I want to thank you and your colleagues at Katten for the 123.50 hours of pro bono legal services you provided to us in fiscal year 2016. We so appreciate the legal advice and counsel that you and your colleagues provide, which helps us to deliver essential services—social, educational, legal, health, housing, mental health, nutritional and fitness—to more than 15,000 individuals and families on the East Side of Manhattan every year. Ronni, we have so enjoyed working together and look forward to continuing our partnership in the future. Thank you again for your invaluable counsel.

Please send comments, suggestions and news about interesting pro bono cases and matters you've been involved with, as well as any non-legal community service work you're doing, to jonathan.baum@kattenlaw.com.

