Attorney Greg Schweizer has been busy over the past 18 months.

After finishing a clerkship with Judge Cheryl Krause on the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in mid-2016, he moved to Chicago, got a puppy, started work as a litigation associate at Eimer Stahl, and married his now-husband, Jordan Rice. Yet with all these goings-on, Greg still managed to dive deep into pro bono work with Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, co-counseling two cases with our Hate Crime Project. For that commitment to social justice, coming so early in his legal career, we recognize Greg Schweizer as our outstanding volunteer this quarter.

Greg insists that he’s not unusual—that many young associates are
contributing their time and talent to pro bono matters. Still, his willingness to
take on extra work in a new area is remarkable, particularly as many of his
peers are just trying to keep their heads above water. Greg learned about the
work of Chicago Lawyers’ Committee from Lisa Meyer, partner at Eimer Stahl
and current Board Chair. Greg says that all the firm’s partners have been
“completely supportive” of the hours and resources he has spent assisting
clients of our Hate Crime Project.

In early 2017, Greg represented a gay man who was
harassed and assaulted by his neighbors because of
his sexual orientation.

Greg met with the client, conducted witness interviews, and worked with the
Assistant State’s Attorney to prepare the client to testify in the resulting hate
crime case. Greg counseled the client throughout the course of an emotional
bench trial that resulted in a misdemeanor conviction. The case taught Greg
how hard it can be to get the criminal justice system to take hate crime charges
seriously, and how educating police officers, prosecutors, and the court about
the contours of both the law and the realities of discrimination is critical to the
effective enforcement of hate crime laws.

Challenges notwithstanding, Greg signed up for another hate crime case
immediately after finishing his first. He supported his second client—a Latina
woman attacked because of her heritage by a White woman—through the
criminal court case in the fall of 2017. Greg is now representing the victim in a civil action against her attacker. He has once again contributed numerous hours on client meetings, witness preparation, research and pleadings.

**Why get involved?**

On a practical level, Greg says he’s developed new skills and had in-depth client interactions that are not typical for a young associate doing complex commercial litigation. On a deeper level, he believes that lawyers have a responsibility to provide public service and use their training for good. When he heard news about the dramatic increase in hate crime during 2016, he knew he had to help. And, as a gay man, Greg realizes how members of the LGBTQ community have often endured harassment, hatred and violence. He has friends who have been ostracized simply for expressing who they are. Standing up against such bigotry, Greg says, is how the legal system shows its value, policing norms of civilized society and protecting the most vulnerable among us.

We are grateful to have Greg’s energy, enthusiasm and intellect on our team at Chicago Lawyers’ Committee.

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights is a group of civil rights lawyers and advocates working to secure racial equity and economic opportunity for all since 1969. Every quarter, we spotlight a pro bono volunteer engaged in impactful public interest work. To nominate an attorney, contact Julie Justicz at jjusticz@clccrul.org.

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