



PRO BONO PUBLICO

SUMMER 2023

Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County
The Natalie Lanam Justice Center
Sobrato Center for Nonprofits – Redwood Shores
330 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 123
Redwood City, CA 94065
(650) 558-0915
www.legalaidsmc.org



LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

Happy Summer!

It has been a productive and exciting year so far at Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County's Pro Bono Project. We have added several new firms to our panel, we are helping more clients than we have since the start of the pandemic, and we have successfully restarted our in-person housing clinic. All this progress is thanks to your generosity and hard work. In this issue of Pro Bono Publico, we honor Deborah Heller, who has gone above and beyond for our clients in handling both domestic violence and guardianship cases. We express our gratitude to Latham & Watkins for their enduring support of our pro bono programs. We are also highlighting volunteers who received the Wiley W. Manuel Certificate for their exceptional pro bono work in 2022. We thank all of them for their dedication to Legal Aid SMC.

I want to thank everyone who volunteered with Legal Aid SMC whose names are not mentioned in this newsletter. We have so many fantastic people who fit pro bono into their lives and represent clients when time permits. Without the constant flow of volunteers, we would not be able to sustain these vital programs.

I wish you all a wonderful and joy-filled summer.



Sincerely,

Stephanie Bilinski
Pro Bono Director
Legal Aid SMC

Wiley W. Manuel Award Winners

The Wiley W. Manuel Certificate for Pro Bono Legal Services was established by the California State Bar in 1989. This certificate, named for the first Black Justice of the California Supreme Court, recognizes pro bono attorneys who have generously donated their time to assist low-income communities. Each of the pro bonos listed below gave more than 50 hours of their time over the course of 2022 to assist clients through Legal Aid SMC's Pro Bono Project.

Our deepest gratitude to you all!

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Regina Agopian | <i>Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP</i> |
| Michelle Akerman | <i>Hanson Bridgett LLP</i> |
| David Bernstein | <i>Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP</i> |
| Feb Cabrasawan | <i>IBM</i> |
| Anissa I. Chitour | <i>Morrison & Foerster LLP</i> |
| Jina Choi | <i>Morrison & Foerster LLP</i> |
| Stephanie Dilworth | <i>Jones Day</i> |
| Rosanna W. Gan | <i>Hanson Bridgett LLP</i> |
| Juan Pablo Gonzalez | <i>Cooley LLP</i> |
| Katie Gonzalez | <i>Jones Day</i> |
| Andrew J. Gray IV | <i>Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP</i> |
| Reza John Harris | <i>Cooley LLP</i> |
| Deborah Heller | <i>Solo</i> |
| Ellis Herington | <i>Cooley LLP</i> |
| Ahren Hsu-Hoffman | <i>Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP</i> |
| Adrienne Jackson | <i>Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP</i> |
| Michael Joshi | <i>Dechert LLP</i> |
| Jacqueline Jung | <i>Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati</i> |
| Gloria Liang | <i>Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati</i> |
| Jonathan David Loeb | <i>Dechert LLP</i> |
| Maribel Lopez | <i>Hanson Bridgett LLP</i> |
| Andrew McCreary | <i>Covington & Burling LLP</i> |
| Sunnie Ning | <i>Latham & Watkins LLP</i> |
| Patrick S. Ntchobo | <i>Covington & Burling LLP</i> |
| Nira Pandya | <i>Covington & Burling LLP</i> |
| Marina Remennik | <i>Cooley LLP</i> |
| Emily Ann Roberts | <i>Cooley LLP</i> |
| Robert Sandoval | <i>Morrison & Foerster LLP</i> |
| Kapri Saunders | <i>Jones Day</i> |
| Richa Sharma | <i>Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati</i> |
| Michael Shenker | <i>Haynes and Boone, LLP</i> |
| Joel Benjamin Silver | <i>Gilead Sciences, Inc.</i> |
| Kathleen Vanderpan | <i>Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP</i> |
| George Wailes | <i>Solo</i> |
| Kara Wilson | <i>Cooley LLP</i> |
| Esther Yang | <i>Cooley LLP</i> |
| Anna Yunan Yuan | <i>Morrison & Foerster LLP</i> |

Legal Aid SMC 'And Justice For All' Awards

The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County held our 26th Annual 'And Justice For All' Luncheon on May 19th, 2023. Two pro bono awards were presented to recognize volunteers who have been especially devoted to Legal Aid SMC's Pro Bono mission to provide low-income children, families, people with disabilities, and seniors access to justice.

THE DOROTHY M. WOLFE AWARD

Deborah Heller

This award is in memory of one of the first women attorneys in San Mateo County, noted for her deep belief in equal access to justice. Dorothy Wolfe was an ardent supporter of the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County throughout her career.

Deborah Heller represents plaintiffs in a broad range of personal injury cases. She is passionate about helping individuals stand up to insurance companies and corporations when personal injuries have irreparably changed their lives. Deborah has also worked pro bono on domestic violence restraining order and legal guardianship cases for the past 30 years, working with Legal Services for Children, Bay Area Legal Aid, and CORA as well as Legal Aid SMC. Deborah is a native San Franciscan. She received her J.D. from the University of San Francisco School of Law.

Deborah came to Legal Aid SMC in October 2020 looking to get involved in pro bono work. From the moment we met, Deborah has been a constant and dedicated pro bono. Deborah has taken on 13 Legal Aid SMC cases, including domestic violence restraining orders, guardianships, and conservatorships. She worked on guardianships for five children who lost their parents. Clients highly praise her excellent work and professionalism. While it is easy to laud Deborah for the number of domestic violence survivors she has helped get a restraining order, or the number of families she has been able to get guardianships for, the most impressive thing is how her clients have felt about working with her. Across the board, Deborah's clients rave about how kind and caring she is, even talking about how they feel like she is part of the family. She has a talent for taking difficult cases and making the clients feel supported and empowered. We are so lucky to have a pro bono like Deborah serving families in San Mateo County.



Deborah Heller



“Repairing the world one person at a time has been the best way to find meaning in this crazy world.”

Deborah Heller

THE GUARDIAN OF JUSTICE AWARD

Latham & Watkins

The Guardian of Justice Award is given each year in recognition of volunteers whose efforts are steeped in a commitment to justice for all the children, families, and seniors in our community.

Latham & Watkins is one of the world's largest providers of pro bono services, steadfastly supports initiatives designed to advance diversity within the firm and the legal profession and is committed to exploring and promoting environmental sustainability.

Latham has been a dedicated pro bono supporter for many years, bringing valuable resources to Legal Aid SMC's domestic violence prevention and housing programs. One Latham team settled a complicated domestic violence case on the eve of trial with exceptional effort. Twenty Latham attorneys were trained to represent domestic violence survivors and other attorneys helped families threatened with eviction.

Latham has never shied away from taking challenging cases and providing a high level of service to our clients. Latham & Watkins attorneys have taken difficult guardianship cases where a parent, despite not being able to care for a child, wants to contest. They represent domestic violence survivors who may have complicated custody or support issues. They recently jumped right into our Unlawful Detainer project, working quickly to make sure that tenants are not evicted by default. Latham also hosted our Domestic Violence Collaborative training this past fall, bringing in a new cohort of trained attorneys. Most importantly, they support a culture of pro bono, providing in-house mentorship to associates and allowing them the time to handle these difficult cases. It is always a pleasure to have a Latham & Watkins attorney involved in a case, and we thank them for their long history of supporting Legal Aid SMC.

Thank you to all the attorneys and support staff that allow us to keep our Pro Bono Projects running. Although we haven't been able to highlight all the work you have done in 2022, please know that we see and appreciate each and every one of you. With your support, we are working together to build a better and more just tomorrow.

www.legalaidsmc.org/pro-bono-programs



*Gabe Gross accepts
Guardian of Justice Award
for Latham & Watkins*



For more than 50 years low-income residents of San Mateo County have entrusted Legal Aid SMC's Pro Bono Project to help them with their legal issues. By joining our Pro Bono panel, you will assist clients who would otherwise be without legal representation in areas affecting their basic needs.

We welcome pro bonos of all experience levels, from new attorneys looking to gain litigation experience to experts willing to take on difficult cases. You will join thousands of other attorneys that have used their education and skills to ensure justice for the underserved populations of our county. We are here to partner with you, assist you, train you, and provide you with a panel of attorneys who will mentor you as you help others. For more information, please contact Stephanie Bilinski, Pro Bono Director at sbilinski@legalaidsmc.org.

