

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

Happy Summer!

The past six months have brought extraordinary challenges to the communities we serve. From rising rates of evictions, fear of deportation, and deepening economic insecurity, our clients are facing multiple crises. But through the support of our unwavering pro bono partners, we have continued to stand by our clients and provide critical legal services. We are deeply grateful to all of our amazing volunteers and supporters.

In this issue of Pro Bono Publico, we honor two award winners from our Annual "And Justice for All" Awards Luncheon held in May: Feb Cabrasawan, in-house attorney at IBM, who consistently handles limited conservatorship cases from his home in Texas; and Morgan Lewis, who have been great supporters for many years, including handling difficult and heart-wrenching domestic violence matters. We also recognize the thirty-four attorneys and support staff who have received the Wiley W. Manuel Certificate for their commitment to pro bono work in 2024.

Thank you all for your continued support of Legal Aid Society SMC!



Sincerely,

Stephanie Bilinski
Pro Bono Director
Legal Aid SMC

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Bilinski".

Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County
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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 2024 to assist clients through Legal Aid SMC's Pro Bono Project.

Benjamin Baek	<i>Jones Day</i>
Julia Michelle Barrero	<i>Covington & Burling LLP</i>
Kyle K. Batter	<i>Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP</i>
Robert Buch	<i>Solo</i>
Joyce Chang O'Brien	<i>Hanson Bridgett LLP</i>
Wyatt Christiansen	<i>Cooley</i>
Anna Erickson White	<i>Morrison Foerster</i>
Jonathan D. Gonzalez	<i>Cooley</i>
Deborah Heller	<i>Solo</i>
Thea Percival Herrera	<i>Perkins Coie</i>
Sabrina Hoàng-Lan Jones	<i>Jones Day</i>
Irene Jang	<i>Kirkland & Ellis LLP</i>
Omar R. Jishi	<i>Jones Day</i>
Kwan Kim	<i>Covington & Burling LLP</i>
Sarah King	<i>Covington & Burling LLP</i>
Jason Kramer	<i>McDermott, Will & Emery</i>
Jack Lane	<i>Morrison Foerster</i>
Sarah Leadem	<i>Covington & Burling LLP</i>
Yanna Lee	<i>Covington & Burling LLP</i>
Scott Lin	<i>Cooley</i>
Ida Mahmoudi	<i>Cooley</i>
Brandon Marquez	<i>Cooley</i>
Mark McKane	<i>Kirkland & Ellis LLP</i>
Michelle My Anh Le	<i>Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP</i>
Udoka J. Okafor	<i>Morgan Lewis</i>
Alexis Ramsey	<i>Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP</i>
Kapri Saunders	<i>Jones Day</i>
Lindsay A. Solanki	<i>Cooley</i>
Deborah Sung	<i>Jones Day</i>
Ines Tzolov	<i>Kirkland & Ellis LLP</i>
Cole Uzat	<i>Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP</i>
Majid Abdul Waheed	<i>Covington & Burling LLP</i>
Nicolle Wainer	<i>Covington & Burling LLP</i>
Bryan Joseph Wilson	<i>Morrison Foerster</i>

LEGAL AID SMC “AND JUSTICE FOR ALL” AWARDS

The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County held our 28th Annual “And Justice For All” Luncheon on May 15th, 2025. 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.

GUARDIAN OF JUSTICE AWARD

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.

MORGAN LEWIS

Morgan Lewis has been one of our strongest pro bono partners for more than 20 years. Their work impacts every pro bono area at Legal Aid SMC which includes conservatorships, guardianships, domestic violence restraining orders, the housing clinic, the Advance Healthcare Directive/Power of Attorney Clinic and our Half Moon Bay U visa project. Morgan Lewis is always looking for ways to get more of their colleagues involved with the organization and held a pro bono fair featuring Stephanie Bilinski, Pro Bono Director at Legal Aid SMC, who extolled the Morgan Lewis team for always being such a great support and willing to jump into any new area to serve our community.



The Pro Bono team highlighted the work of David Bernstein, Associate at Morgan Lewis. In 2022, at the height of the pandemic, Legal Aid SMC saw a higher level of abuse in our domestic violence cases. David took a domestic violence restraining order case where the facts were clear, but the opposing party refused to accept responsibility for their actions and continued to abuse throughout the legal process, making terrifying threats to the client. David handled the client’s restraining order case which included obtaining custody of her daughter. He continued to stand by his client when the opposing party violated the restraining order and David had to file his own restraining order requests against the abuser. David is now an expert in this area and helps other Morgan Lewis attorneys better serve clients facing domestic violence.

On behalf of everyone at Legal Aid SMC, thank you and congratulations to Morgan Lewis!

DOROTHY M. WOLFE AWARD

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.

FEB CABRASAWAN

Feb Cabrasawan has volunteered his time with Legal Aid SMC for the past twenty years. Feb took his first conservatorship case with us in 2005 and received the Dorothy M. Wolfe award that same year for his work with the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California (FBANC) at the Daly City Legal Clinic.

In 2020, at the start of the pandemic, Feb reached out to our Pro Bono Director from his new home in Texas. He shared how much he loved working with Legal Aid SMC and, now that there was an opportunity to handle cases remotely, he wanted to work with us again. Since then, he has continued to have at least one, if not two, conservatorship cases open at all times.

His recent work includes representing the brother of a woman with developmental delays who needed an emergency temporary conservatorship so that she could receive life-changing surgery. Another case involved helping the monolingual immigrant parents of three disabled children obtain conservatorship. He is an all-around pleasure to work with and a great example of our dedicated volunteers who consistently do high-quality work for families that need it. As in-house counsel, he is probably not used to getting the accolades he deserves, solely doing the work for the good of our clients.

On behalf of everyone at Legal Aid SMC, thank you and congratulations to Feb Cabrasawan!



Retired But Still Want to Make a Difference in Your Community? Join the Legal Aid SMC Pro Bono Program!

Retirement doesn't mean your impact has to end! We are actively seeking retired and soon-to-be-retired attorneys eager to offer their skills to our community through meaningful pro bono work. You will represent survivors of domestic violence, assist with guardianship and conservatorship matters, and help tenants remain in their homes. We provide professional liability coverage for all pro bono work, trainings in each area with MCLE credit, and expert mentorship on every matter.

Your work is more important than ever. As the actions of the new administration threaten the rights and stability of our neighbors, we need your help. Your years of legal experience, practical insights, and accumulated knowledge can make a large difference in the lives of low-income families, seniors, people with disabilities, and immigrants. Now is the time to get involved!

We are qualified to accept licensed volunteer attorneys through the California State Bar's Pro Bono Practice Program, which waives annual license fees. For those who are not interested in maintaining an active license, you can still contribute by participating in our clinical programs or through other work supervised by Legal Aid SMC staff.

For more information on how your time and talents can help protect our neighbors, please contact Pro Bono Director Stephanie Bilinski at sbilinski@legalaidsmc.org or (650) 517-8912.