

CAMILLE F. GRAVEL, JR. PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD



This award is named in honor of the late Camille F. Gravel, Jr., a veteran trial attorney and a champion in the battle for civil rights and equal justice irrespective of financial means. Mr. Gravel's career paralleled the years of the civil rights movement in the South, and his desire to help those in trouble led him to embrace fully the call for equal justice for all races. In 1980, an African-American civil rights leader, and a contemporary of Mr. Gravel, wrote: "I know of no other man in this state who has been more dedicated to the problems of the weak, the oppressed, the down-trodden, the have-nots, and those who are least able to defend themselves than Camille Gravel." This award recognizes an attorney who has done substantial public service legal work in keeping with the spirit and values exemplified by Mr. Gravel.

Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver, LLC is the recipient of this year's Camille Gravel Pro Bono/Public Service Award, honoring the firm for its outstanding commitment to pro bono legal work. With only twenty-six attorneys, Barrasso Usdin has dedicated over 3,000 hours to public service since 2020 alone. Barrasso Usdin's attorneys regularly answer the call to serve from our local courts and various non-profit organizations seeking legal assistance, serving as an excellent example of how important it is for the private bar to get involved in pro bono work in our community.

Founded in 2003, Barrasso Usdin is a litigation boutique firm with a national reputation for trying high-stakes, complex, and challenging cases. The firm handles most types of civil litigation, representing clients across a spectrum of industries like insurance coverage and bad faith, product liability and toxic tort, securities litigation and regulation, and commercial, class action, and complex litigation, as well as appellate matters.

Founded by attorneys who have always been stewards of our broader community and committed to local causes, Barrasso Usdin has been guided by a unique commitment to public service and community engagement since its inception. As legal needs reached heightened levels over the last few years, the firm responded by renewing that commitment and increasing efforts to promote and celebrate its attorneys' pro bono accomplishments.

From representing sexual assault survivors at the United States Supreme Court to a modest homeowner in St. John the Baptist Parish, Barrasso Usdin has recently been involved in a variety of significant pro bono cases. As active members of our courts' pro bono panels, the firm's attorneys have been especially willing to accept pro bono appointment. This work has included handling a wrongful conviction civil rights lawsuit before the Eastern District of Louisiana that recently resulted in a favorable settlement for the exonerated plaintiff, as well as a habeas appeal before the United States Fifth Circuit litigated all the way to the Supreme Court. Barrasso Usdin is also

working with the American Civil Liberties Union on its “Justice Lab” initiative, which involves litigating federal civil rights lawsuits aimed at influencing the application of qualified immunity.

Firm attorneys have also partnered on significant projects with numerous other non-profit organizations, including the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Brennan Center for Justice, Innocence Project of New Orleans, The Pro Bono Project, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Due Process Institute, and Families Against Mandatory Minimums, among others. Working with these organizations, the firm has been actively involved in cases ranging from criminal, post-conviction, and compassionate release matters to employment, landlord-tenant, interdiction, election protection, and redistricting work. The firm has also helped author several amicus briefs in the United States Supreme Court, the Louisiana Supreme Court, and the United States Fifth Circuit.

The impact that these attorneys have had on their clients has been immeasurable. As one partnering organization stated, “The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is greatly indebted to the pro bono assistance provided by Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver, LLC.” Barrasso Usdin’s work “has made a significant impact on civil rights progress in our community.” Today, we celebrate the firm and its attorneys for going above and beyond in their service to others.

2020 AWARD HONOREES

JOSÉ R. COT, 2020 PRESIDENT’S AWARD

KATHRYN M. KNIGHT, 2020 JACK MARTZELL PROFESSIONALISM AWARD

WILLIAM C. SNOWDEN, 2020 CAMILLE GRAVEL PUBLIC SERVICE & PRO BONO
AWARD

2021 AWARD HONOREES

S. GENE FENDLER, 2021 PRESIDENT’S AWARD (POSTHUMOUSLY)

EVA J. DOSSIER, 2021 JACK MARTZELL PROFESSIONALISM AWARD

JEE PARK, 2021 CAMILLE GRAVEL PUBLIC SERVICE & PRO BONO AWARD