



NYSBA News Release

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NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION TO HONOR PRESIDENT'S PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Twenty recipients were honored with 2015 President's Pro Bono Service Awards May 5 in Albany. President Glenn Lau-Kee (Kee & Lau-Kee) and President-elect David P. Miranda (Heslin Rothenberg Farley & Mesiti), co-chair of the President's Committee on Access to Justice, recognized the honorees during a luncheon at the State Bar Center.

"Attorneys in New York have a long and distinguished tradition of helping the disadvantaged," said Lau-Kee. "Their selfless commitment to increasing access to justice for New Yorkers provides us with inspiring examples of what is possible and helps raise public awareness about the importance of access to justice for all – not just for those who can afford it."

In addition to honoring attorneys representing 12 of New York's 13 judicial districts, the awards were given to a lawyer under age 36 or practicing less than 10 years, a senior lawyer, law school group, law student, in-house counsel, small firm, mid-size firm and large firm.

The recipients include:

1st Judicial District (Manhattan)

Marjorie J. Peerce (Ballard Spahr) of New York City helped develop the Clemency Project 2014, under which as many as 5,000 to 7,000 prisoners nationwide may qualify for, and receive, presidential clemency.

3rd Judicial District (Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster counties)

Lynne A. Papazian of Albany (The Law Office of Lynne A. Papazian) spent 40 hours assisting eight clients in 2014 through the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York's Attorney for the Day program.

4th Judicial District (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington counties)

Natasha B. Hill of Massena (Lekki, Hill, Duprey & Bhatt) represented six clients, providing about 60 hours of service the past two years through the Legal Aid Society's Private Attorney Involvement pro bono project.

5th Judicial District (Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego counties)

Emilee K. Lawson Hatch of Syracuse (Bousquet Holstein) assisted more than 40 clients through multiple programs offered by the Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga County.

6th Judicial District (Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Otsego, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins counties)

William L. Gibson, Jr. of Johnson City donated 115 hours of pro bono service to Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc. in 2014, defending indigent tenants in Binghamton City Court eviction cases and volunteering for Legal Aid's Helpline and Veteran Center Talk to a Lawyer programs.

7th Judicial District (Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates counties)

Sandra M. Williams of Rochester donated more than 236 hours of service to low-income clients in 2014, working with the Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County.

8th Judicial District (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming counties)

John L. Trigilio of Buffalo, a partner in the two-attorney firm Trigilio Ciambrone Partnership, performed more than 70 hours of pro bono work through the Erie County Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project, and also volunteered for the Family Court Help Desk.

9th Judicial District (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester counties)

Sarah Sulkowski of New York City (Clifford Chance US) worked with My Sister's Place on a complex, contested modification of a custody matter with severe domestic violence and spent hundreds of hours to gain a successful outcome for the client.

10th Judicial District (Nassau, Suffolk counties)

Harold M. Somer of Westbury (Nassau Suffolk Law Services Volunteer Lawyers Program) helped hundreds of low-income individuals make fresh financial starts with Chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings. He has logged in excess of 300 hours in 24 years for the Volunteer Lawyers' Project's bankruptcy clinic.

11th Judicial District (Queens County)

Brandy A. Beltas, a solo practitioner in Astoria, has provided pro bono service to the CLARO-Queens Consumer Debt Clinic, since 2012. She provides legal assistance to low-income Queens residents and also has provided service to the Queens Foreclosure Conference Project.

12th Judicial District (Bronx)

Eric Faragi of New York City (Baker Botts) worked on eight matters for five clients with Her Justice. He was one of its first pro bono attorneys to successfully argue that an adverse party's signing and filing of an I-864 Affidavit of Support for a client's immigration case legally bound the husband to provide spousal support.

13th Judicial District (Staten Island)

Jack Yoskowitz of New York City (Seward & Kissel) worked with 21 clients on 26 matters referred to Seward & Kissel by Her Justice. Of the 26 matters, 18 were litigated divorce cases.

Young Lawyer

Josie Sheppard of Rochester (Trevett Cristo Salzer & Andolina) donated 297 hours of pro bono work during 2013-2014 through the Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County.

Senior Attorney

Janet Axelrod, formerly an associate general counsel of the New York State United Teachers, has worked with the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York since her retirement in 2011. She assisted 232 clients with unemployment insurance benefits and holds advice clinics.

Law Student

Shelby Maroselli, a student at the State University of New York Buffalo Law School, volunteered more than 350 hours with the Volunteer Lawyers Project in 2014. She also assisted with the Homeless Task Force at Neighborhood Legal Services.

Law School Group

The Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights of Columbia Law School worked under the supervision of attorneys from the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project (and partner law firms), Kids in Need of Defense (and partner law firms) and Immigration Equality on projects in New York City, El Paso, Texas, and Jordan.

In-House Counsel

American International Group's (AIG) Global, Legal, Compliance, Regulatory Affairs & Government Affairs Department personnel volunteered 2,027 hours to 34 projects in 2014, working with 28 nonprofit organizations. The 128 AIG attorneys focused on 10 areas of law, and about 1,500 hours were devoted to New York-based projects.

Large Law Firm

In 2014, 374 attorneys from *Shearman & Sterling LLP* in New York City performed 18,600 hours of pro bono work, supplemented by 2,813 hours performed by legal staff. The activities helped low-income workers in New York City, immigrants and battered women, among others. The group also worked with the Supplemental Social Security Income Waiver Clinic.

Mid-Sized Law Firm

In 2014, more than 26 *Hodgson Russ* attorneys of Buffalo provided pro bono legal assistance in 113 cases through the Volunteer Legal Project's Attorney of the Morning eviction defense program, Federal Court Pro Se Assistance Program, National Green and Healthy Homes initiative and the Say Yes to Education Buffalo legal clinic initiative.

Small Law Firm

The Law Offices of Remy R. Perot of Binghamton established a divorce referral program to help low-income individuals and also provides training to undergraduate Binghamton University pre-law students.

The 74,000 member New York State Bar Association is the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation. It was founded in 1876.

Photos and more information: Contact Christina Couto at ccouto@nysba.org for photos of award recipients. To read more about the Presidents' Pro Bono Service Awards, go to www.nysba.org/PBawards.

