

PRO BONO LEGAL WORK represents a significant way in which Ropes & Gray “practices with purpose,” both locally and in the broader global community. We are proud to note that our commitment to *pro bono* service was recognized by *Chambers and Partners*, which awarded Ropes & Gray “*Pro Bono Program of the Year*” honors on June 6 at a ceremony in San Francisco. Each year, *Chambers* honors one firm dedicated to offering the most innovative and successful *pro bono* support to its local or global community. While we are gratified by the recognition, we view our commitment to making a positive difference for our clients, communities and people as fundamental to our firm culture and identity. To learn more about our *pro bono* work, [view our “Practice with Purpose” video](#).

PRESERVING Student Loan Forgiveness

MANY YOUNG PROFESSIONALS enter public service with the understanding that a portion of their student debt will be forgiven if they comply with a well-established U.S. Department of Education (DOE) program.

In 2016, however, the DOE changed the eligibility requirements for its Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program—launched in 2007 by President George W. Bush—without warning or coherent explanation, and retroactively refused to honor loan forgiveness commitments it made under the program. This threw into chaos the lives of many people, including four attorneys—Geoffrey Burkhart, Michelle Quintero-Millan, Jamie Rudert and Kate Voigt—each of whom graduated from law school intent on building a career in public service and suddenly faced federal student loans that totaled in the six figures.

In December 2016, Ropes & Gray, working on a *pro bono* basis, began representing the four public servants along with the American Bar Association (ABA) in a lawsuit alleging that the DOE mismanaged the PSLF program. The case—*American Bar Association v. United States Department of Education*, in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia—concluded in February of this year with a resounding victory for a team of Ropes & Gray attorneys led by litigation partner **Chong Park**, litigation associate **John Dey** and former associate Ed Roche. U.S. District Judge Timothy J. Kelly of the District of Columbia ruled that the DOE had improperly changed the terms of the PSLF program, calling the department’s actions “arbitrary and capricious.”

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Pro Bono HONOR ROLL

AS OF AUGUST 31, 712 Ropes & Gray attorneys and 76 support team members have performed 20 or more hours of *pro bono* service in 2019. We laud their efforts, as well as those of the many Ropes & Gray employees whose time is not tracked but who are essential to the success of our *pro bono* program. [View the honor roll](#)

If you have *pro bono* projects you would like to propose, or would like to learn more about opportunities currently available, please email probonoteam@ropesgray.com.

SUMMER ASSOCIATES Join Firm Volunteers at BizGrow 2019

A TEAM OF ROPES & GRAY associates, summer associates and interns from the firm’s Boston office recently attended BizGrow 2019, an event designed to connect current and aspiring small-business owners with free legal and business support. The team spent the day meeting with *pro bono* clients to discuss legal topics of interest to

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PRO BONO NEWS

SUMMER ASSOCIATES Join Firm Volunteers at BizGrow 2019

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small-business owners, including incorporation, tax and intellectual property. The event took place on July 18 at Suffolk University Law School in Boston.

Hosted annually by Lawyers for Civil Rights, BizGrow offers attorneys a unique opportunity to support underserved populations on a *pro bono* basis while networking with business executives and fellow attorneys. In addition to providing small-business owners with free one-on-one legal assistance, volunteer lawyers lead workshops on topics ranging from entity formation to leases and contracts. Executives from local companies also hold discussions on issues such as business planning, insurance and e-commerce.

The Ropes & Gray team was led by corporate associate **Melicia Morris** and included strategic transactions associate **David Acquay**; corporate associates **Jordan Bryant**, **Tyler Cash**, **Will Little** and **Anthony Lombardi**; summer associates **Vania Cornelio**, **Shirley Duquene**, **Becca Gottesdiener**, **Debbie McElwaine**, **K.P. Pierre**, **Connie Shen**, **Meredith Sterritt** and **Mallory Ursul**; and interns **Courtney Brunson** and **Genesis Ruano**.

Noteworthy RECOGNITION

Ropes & Gray regularly earns honors for its commitment to pro bono service. Here are highlights of recent noteworthy recognition received by both the firm and individual attorneys.

ASIAN LAW CAUCUS HONORS ROPES & GRAY

THE ASIAN LAW CAUCUS (ALC), the nation's oldest nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the civil and other legal rights of Asian Pacific Islander communities, honored Ropes & Gray with its 2019 *Pro Bono* Award at the organization's annual awards gala in April. ALC recognized the firm for its *pro bono* impact litigation on behalf of the San Francisco Chinatown Community Tenants

PRESERVING Student Loan Forgiveness *(continued from page 1)*

In August, several ABA employees, including two former ABA employees, received communications from FedLoan Servicing, which administers the PSLF program on behalf of the DOE, stating that the ABA is an eligible employer under the PSLF program, and that previous determinations otherwise had been an error.

“We are pleased that the Department of Education has decided not to appeal Judge Kelly’s order, and has instead started restoring loan payment credits to affected public servants,” said Chong. “The department is finally doing the right thing, and the positive impact this has on our individual plaintiffs—and other student loan borrowers in similar positions—is very encouraging.”

FIGHTING TO OVERTURN a Wrongful Conviction

GARY CIFIZZARI, convicted of murder 35 years ago, exited prison in July after a court agreed to consider a motion for a new trial filed by the New England Innocence Project and a Ropes & Gray litigation team. Mr. Cifizzari, 62, was serving a life sentence for the 1979 murder of Concetta Schiappa, his great aunt. His brother Michael, also convicted of the crime, died in prison.

Worcester, Mass. Superior Court granted the motion after Mr. Cifizzari’s legal team submitted newly tested DNA evidence demonstrating that the Cifizzari brothers were wrongly convicted. The legal team’s motion cited evidence that conclusively identifies the murderer of Concetta Schiappa as Michael Giroux, an original suspect in the case who is now deceased.

The motion further stated that the Cifizzari brothers were erroneously convicted on testimony that purportedly showed bite marks on the victim. Forensic experts have subsequently condemned such evidence as lacking any scientific basis. Moreover, one of the prosecution’s original experts has since recanted the testimony he gave at Mr. Cifizzari’s trial. Litigation partner **Kirsten Mayer** is leading Ropes & Gray’s *pro bono* efforts on behalf of Mr. Cifizzari.

In the coming months, Mr. Cifizzari’s legal team plans to submit additional briefing while the former Taunton, Mass. resident takes small steps to rebuild his life following decades of wrongful imprisonment. Other members of the firm team working on Mr. Cifizzari’s behalf are counsel **Kevin Angle** and associates **Marc Roitman**, **Yana Grishkan**, **Christine D’Auria**, **Cole Goodman**, **Hannah Vail**, **Roy Dixon** and **Alyssa Fixsen**; former associate Christine D’Auria was also a member of the team.

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Noteworthy RECOGNITION

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Association and multiple individual tenants who reside in Chinatown.

For the past year, Ropes & Gray served as co-counsel with ALC, representing tenants—mostly elderly, low-income immigrants with limited or no English proficiency—living in single-room occupancy buildings across Chinatown. These tenants have been subject to unauthorized fines, the purported unilateral imposition by the landlord of a new, English-only lease agreement containing improper liquidated damages penalty terms, and other actions prohibited under fair housing, unfair business practices and other laws. ALC documented a portion of the firm’s ongoing *pro bono* work in [a short video](#) that was screened at the awards gala.

The Ropes & Gray team working with ALC is led by litigation partner and *pro bono* committee member **Rocky Tsai** and includes litigation associates **Traci Irvin**, **Torryn Taylor**, **Matthew Tolve**, **Nicole Horowitz** and **Hasti Ahangi**.

SAN FRANCISCO BAR RECOGNIZES LISA GOODMAN

THE JUSTICE & DIVERSITY CENTER of The Bar Association of San Francisco recently named corporate associate **Lisa Goodman** a “2018 Outstanding Volunteer.” Lisa was honored for her *pro bono* work in successfully settling more than 10 eviction cases in the Housing Negotiation Project, which is managed by the Justice & Diversity Center.

PILI NAMES ROPES & GRAY TO RECOGNITION ROSTER

THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW INITIATIVE (PILI) honored Ropes & Gray by naming the firm to its 2019 *Pro Bono* Recognition Roster, which recognizes law firms and corporations that have made significant *pro bono* commitments in Illinois. In Chicago, Ropes & Gray partners with PILI on a range of public service initiatives; the firm also works with other legal aid organizations, including Chicago Volunteer Legal Services.

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PROTECTING JUVENILES at Iowa School

AN IOWA SCHOOL’S USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINTS and solitary confinement for juveniles, some with severe mental disabilities, was the subject of a June 2019 federal trial that has placed a spotlight on the treatment of adolescents, ages 12 through 19, who are or have been confined to the Boys State Training School in Eldora, Iowa.

On behalf of three juveniles held at the center, Ropes & Gray joined in early 2018 with two nonprofit organizations, Disability Rights Iowa and Children’s Rights, Inc., in a lawsuit against the director of the Iowa Department of Human Services and other officials. The suit, filed in November 2017, alleges that the school, which houses about 100 boys, routinely punishes juveniles through the illegal and unconstitutional use of solitary confinement and a 14-point physical restraint called the “wrap” that completely immobilizes the body.

The trial followed eight months of intensive discovery, where Ropes & Gray attorneys took or defended 11 depositions, including those of high-ranking state officials and the school’s superintendent.

At the nine-day June trial in U.S. District Court in Des Moines, Ropes & Gray litigation associates **Timothy Farrell** and **Katelyn Saner** questioned more than 15 witnesses, including school officials and psychologists, to argue that the disciplinary actions were inhumane and that class members suffer from significant mental illnesses yet are routinely denied any meaningful mental health treatment.

Litigation partner **Nick Berg** led the Ropes & Gray *pro bono* team, which included associates **Elizabeth Noonan-Pomada**, **Amanda Seitz**, **Rebekah Newman**, **Andrew Bellis**, **Chimso Okoji** and **Patrick Doherty**; litigation analyst **Preston Miller**; and former litigation paralegal Samantha Sleevi.

Post-trial briefing culminated on August 23, after which Judge Stephanie Rose of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District may set a hearing for oral closing arguments. A written decision could come as early as the fall of 2019. The lawsuit does not seek monetary damages, but asks the State of Iowa to appoint a monitor to ensure that the institution changes its practices.

PRO BONO NEWS

Noteworthy RECOGNITION

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF HOUSING COURT SERVICE

ROPES & GRAY HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED for 20 years of service in the Volunteer Lawyers Project's (VLP) "Housing Court Lawyer for the Day" program. Since May 1999, the program—a partnership between the VLP, the Boston Bar Association (BBA) and several other agencies—has assisted more than 18,000 low-income, unrepresented landlords and tenants in Eastern Housing Court. Through the program, volunteer lawyers spend one day providing advice and information, assisting in the preparation of pleadings or motions, and representing clients in mediation or negotiation. Ropes & Gray is one of only two firms to have participated in the program for the entire 20 years of its existence; the firm was honored at a May 29 event at the BBA.

The Power of PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP

Ropes & Gray is always looking for ways to team with clients on pro bono initiatives. Our New York office recently held three events in conjunction with clients.

JOINING WITH PFIZER AND KIND TO HELP CHILDREN

Volunteers from Ropes & Gray and firm client Pfizer joined with nonprofit organization Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) on May 29 to host an immigration clinic in the New York office. With the assistance of the volunteers, who conducted intakes and served as interpreters, KIND screened nine unaccompanied children for immigration relief and placed six cases with clinic volunteers for ongoing representation.

Ropes & Gray provided lunch, snacks and refreshments, as well as space for the children to engage in art activities. Many children were able to take home newly donated toys, as well as the news that their case would be accepted for representation.

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PAIR Honor for ASYLUM WORK

THE POLITICAL ASYLUM/IMMIGRATION REPRESENTATION PROJECT (PAIR) provides free legal services to asylum seekers while advocating for the rights of detained immigrants. PAIR's work depends on the participation of volunteer attorneys and firms such as Ropes & Gray, a longtime PAIR *pro bono* partner.

In June, PAIR presented a team of Ropes & Gray attorneys and support team members with its 2019 *Pro Bono* Asylum Award. The award, presented at the annual PAIR Gala in Boston, recognized the team's successful efforts to secure asylum for the five members of the Guevara-Reyes family of Honduras. The Ropes & Gray team represented the family in its initial September 2016 application for asylum, an August 2017 asylum hearing, a successful defense in summer 2018 against a Department of Homeland Security appeal before the Board of Immigration Appeals, and the final grant of asylum in November 2018.



(l. to r.) Susan Cohen, PAIR board of directors president, joins Ropes & Gray team members Jenny Rikoski, Alex Intile, Isabelle Farrar, Tom Hannigan and Daniel Swartz.

The Ropes & Gray team honored by PAIR included retired partner **Tom Hannigan**, benefits partner and *pro bono* committee co-chair **Jenny Rikoski**, tax associate **Isabelle Farrar**, litigation associate **Alex Intile** and former litigation associate Daniel Swartz.

Beyond its work with PAIR, Ropes & Gray is extremely active in a wide range of *pro bono* immigration- and asylum-related matters. This work encompasses everything from securing visas and asylum for immigrants to helping reunite families separated at the U.S. southern border. With regard to family separation at the border, Ropes & Gray attorneys and support team members have made repeated trips to South Texas to help address the separation crisis. Since June 2018, the firm has represented more than 30 families—about 70 individuals—and has facilitated their release from detention centers and their reunion with loved ones. Firm attorneys are now helping these individuals navigate immigration courts and asylum processes.

[Watch a video about our work at the southern border](#)

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The Power of PRO BONO PARTNERSHIP *(continued from page 4)*

PREPARING U VISA APPLICATIONS WITH BLOOMBERG

Ropes & Gray lawyers joined lawyers from firm client Bloomberg at a July 24 clinic in the New York office to help low-income, immigrant crime victims gain U nonimmigrant status, commonly called a “U visa.” This status is available to crime victims who have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse and have cooperated with law enforcement.

Attorneys from Legal Services NYC supervised the clinic and provided a 90-minute training, which was followed by brief case preparation and three hours of client meetings. At these meetings, teams of Bloomberg and Ropes & Gray volunteers completed initial forms, identified relevant documentation to support each application and created a plan for proceeding on individual cases. Ropes & Gray will continue to provide clients with full representation, with Bloomberg volunteers welcome to join the post-clinic phase of representation, as well.

ASSISTING TRANSGENDER CLIENTS WITH GOLDMAN SACHS

For many transgender people, securing a legal name change is an important—and necessary—step toward matching their legal identities with their lived experience, since a lack of appropriate identity documentation can deter people from applying for jobs, school and public benefits, and ultimately lead to discrimination.

To assist transgender individuals with the challenging process of securing a legal name change, Ropes & Gray lawyers joined lawyers and other volunteers from firm client Goldman Sachs and the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF) at an August 1 clinic in the New York office. TLDEF lawyers conducted a 90-minute training that prepared the Ropes & Gray and Goldman Sachs volunteers to perform initial intakes and complete the necessary paperwork. Firm attorneys also provided post-clinic assistance to TLDEF clients, culminating in a hearing for each client.

16th Annual GLOBAL PRO BONO AWARDS



Firm chair Brad Malt (l.) poses with all Boston pro bono award winners.

AS ROPES & GRAY'S PRO BONO PROGRAM HAS EXPANDED, so has the scope of the firm's annual *Pro Bono* Awards. The firm held the 16th annual *Pro Bono* Awards on June 5 in all U.S. offices and London; awards for the firm's *pro bono* efforts throughout Asia were presented at events held in the firm's Asia offices on March 14.

Firm chair Brad Malt led a celebration of Ropes & Gray's *pro bono* achievements at the June 5 ceremony, which included several new awards. He highlighted the broad participation of firm attorneys in *pro bono* work—nearly 1,700 attorneys, summer associates, retired partners, paralegals and other legal professionals logged more than 156,000 *pro bono* hours in 2018.

Outstanding Pro Bono Contributor—Retired Partner

- **Win Quayle**, who retired in 2016 after a distinguished career in Boston that included serving as the firm's general counsel, received the Outstanding *Pro Bono* Contributor—Retired Partner award for the diversity of his volunteer work. In retirement, Win has participated in the Access to Justice Fellows Program, worked with the Conservation Law Foundation and helped low-income individuals apply to become U.S. citizens through Project Citizenship.

Deborah Levi Award

- Established in 2004, the Deborah Levi Award honors the memory of the former litigation associate and *pro bono* advocate. This year, the award went to Boston litigation associate **Mark Cianci** for his work on the firm's medical—

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PRO BONO NEWS

SHANGHAI LAWYERS Lead Workshop

ASIA REGIONAL MANAGING PARTNER ARTHUR MOK and three Shanghai office colleagues—strategic transactions partner **Eric Wu** and associates **Cheryl Bao** and **Alyce Chen**—hosted a workshop for new *pro bono* client Chinese Biopharmaceutical Association (CBA) at the organization’s annual conference in Guangzhou in June. A nonpolitical, nonprofit organization working to support its members, the CBA is one of the largest Chinese American professional associations in the United States. The workshop focused on helping scientists understand their position in an



(l. to r.) Arthur Mok, Alyce Chen, Cheryl Bao and Eric Wu presented at the Chinese Biopharmaceutical Association’s annual conference in June.

increasingly complex landscape. It drew on the Ropes & Gray lawyers’ knowledge and experience across a range of key subjects, including the importance of understanding corporate policies regarding trade secrets, confidentiality and nondisclosure obligations. “We aimed to give practical help to bench scientists to help them appreciate and therefore avoid the potential problems and challenges they might encounter in these areas,” said Eric.

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legal partnership with Dorchester House Community Health Center, Boston Children’s Hospital and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Mark was recognized for reorganizing and refocusing the program to expand access to broader areas of legal assistance and to reach even more low-income clients.

Outstanding Pro Bono Contributor—London

- Tax associate **Chris Agnoli** was honored for his work volunteering on nine separate *pro bono* matters over the past three years. Chris was one of the first volunteers at the London office’s Domestic Violence and Family Law Clinic in the city’s East End, advises Water Unite Limited and the International Senior Lawyers Project, and supervised a team drafting materials for the June Lawyers Without Borders training addressing interpersonal and gender violence in Namibia.

Outstanding Pro Bono Team Award

- This year’s team award went to the Innocence Project Core Team, a cross-office group of associates and paralegals who help the Innocence Project evaluate a lengthy backlog of wrongful conviction claims. The team has dedicated nearly 4,500 hours to scanning files and guiding more than 200 firm lawyers—including lawyers from several Asia offices—through training and the creation of summary case files. Receiving the award were associates **Deanna Foster**, **Christy Gately**, **Caitlin Giaimo** and **Chris Walsh**; senior paralegal **Puri Camu**; and bar and policy compliance specialist **Tom Tuttle**.

Outstanding Pro Bono Contributor—Associate

- Washington, D.C. litigation associate **John Dey** was honored for his important work serving as team leader in the firm’s ABA loan forgiveness matter—a successful effort to restore the original eligibility requirements for the U.S. Department of Education Public Service Loan Forgiveness program *(see page 1)*.

Pro Bono Innovation Award

- The firm presented a special innovation award to an associate-led group that has taken the initiative to seek out *pro bono* appellate opportunities. As a result of the group’s efforts, associates have delivered oral arguments in several circuit court cases that yielded four precedential decisions. The team includes counsel **Sam Brenner** and associates **Jonathan Ference-Burke**, **Erin Macgowan** and **Patrick Roath**; former associate Courtney Cox was also a member.

Terry Iandiorio Pro Bono Leadership Award

- Ropes & Gray established the Terry Iandiorio *Pro Bono* Leadership Award in 2018 to honor the *pro bono* dedication and leadership of former

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PRO BONO NEWS

Securing ELECTORAL JUSTICE

VOTING RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES have a long and tortured history. In May 2017, Ropes & Gray joined with Lawyers for Civil Rights in a groundbreaking federal voting rights lawsuit against the city of Lowell, Mass. The suit alleged that Lowell's municipal election system diluted the voting power of communities of color—particularly Latino and Asian American communities—in violation of both the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the U.S. Constitution. Although communities of color account for almost half of Lowell's population, the city's nine-member City Council and six-member School Committee have had virtually no minority representation throughout all of Lowell's history.

In May 2019, the parties in the lawsuit reached a landmark consent decree that requires Lowell to change its municipal electoral system to ensure a fairer and more equitable election process. Pending court approval, the minority voters of Lowell will finally receive justice.

Led by litigation partner **Robert Jones**, the Ropes & Gray *pro bono* team that represented the coalition of Latino and Asian American voters included IP litigation associate **Scott Taylor**; litigation associates **Matthew Mazzotta**, **Daniel Fine**, **Martin Njoroge**, **Elizabeth Douglas** and **Lillian McCullough**; and corporate associate **Jonathan Magaziner**.

Pro Bono COMMITTEE

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Felicity Kirk, *International Pro Bono*

Tom Sciattara, *Sr. Human Resources and Pro Bono Administrator*

Elizabeth Levi, *Pro Bono Assistant*

16th Annual GLOBAL PRO BONO AWARDS *(continued from page*

counsel **Terry Iandiorio**, who passed away in August 2017. This year, the firm's Border Work Leadership Team received the award for its exhaustive efforts on behalf of the many firm attorneys who traveled to the Texas-Mexico border during the summer of 2018 to help separated immigrant families. The team consists of professional development and training manager **Maria Arlotto**, legal project manager **Katie DeCesar**, senior practice development specialist **Tracey Hurley**, senior manager of legal personnel **Amy Thompson**, and the entire U.S. *pro bono* team: director & *pro bono* counsel **Roz Nasdor**, *pro bono* coordinator **Byrne Harrison**, *pro bono* assistant **Elizabeth Levi**, and senior human resources and *pro bono* administrator **Tom Sciattara**.

Recognizing Pro Bono Work in Asia

- Ropes & Gray held its 2019 Asia *Pro Bono* Awards ceremony on March 14. Managing partner David Chapin attended a reception in Tokyo; all Asia offices were linked by video for the event, with each holding its own reception.



Honored for her commitment to pro bono service, Karen Oddo receives her award from Andy Dale.

David congratulated Asia office members for the firm's notable *pro bono* achievements in the region in 2018, which included continuing to assist individuals in search of asylum in Japan, in conjunction with the Japan Association for Refugees and local counsel (Tokyo); participating in Innocence Project case reviews (Hong Kong, Seoul and Shanghai); and collaborating with Hong Kong University's Street Law program and a group of international law firms and financial institutions on a landmark case that strengthened LGBTQ rights (Hong Kong). Additionally, Ropes & Gray sponsored and helped organize the seventh Asia *Pro Bono* Conference in Hong Kong in October 2018, which has helped develop *pro bono* practices around the region.

Following David's remarks, litigation partner and *pro bono* committee co-chair **Andy Dale** honored Hong Kong litigation associate **Karen Oddo** for her strong and consistent commitment to *pro bono* service, particularly with regard to her work with anti-human trafficking organization Liberty Shared and firm *pro bono* partner Lawyers Without Borders.