



PRO BONO At a Glance

February 2014

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R&C LAWYERS COMMENDED ON PRO BONO WORK FOR DVRO PROGRAM

Connecticut Legal Services honored Robinson & Cole at its annual meeting on October 29, 2013, for the firm's Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) Program. The recognition was presented on behalf of the board, staff, and clients of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc., to Robinson & Cole for its "innovative and successful efforts to create the Pro Bono Restraining Order Project benefiting victims of domestic violence who seek relief from the Middletown Court." The efforts of 11 Robinson & Cole lawyers, who have provided over 550 hours of pro bono service through the DVRO Program, have made the following legal representation possible: 50 engagements initiated, 17 *ex parte* applications and affidavits completed, and 33 evidentiary hearings held.

Also in recognition of Robinson & Cole's DVRO Program, the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) honored six Robinson & Cole lawyers among its "First 100" at a breakfast ceremony on November 19, 2013. Benjamin B. Adams, Patrick M. Birney, J. Tyler Butts, Edward J. Heath, Kristopher I. Moore, and Jonathan H. Schaefer were among the male leaders from across Connecticut recognized for making a difference and standing committed to raising awareness of the availability of, and access to, domestic violence services.

Robinson & Cole's DVRO Program was also

MESSAGE FROM ED HEATH

Robinson & Cole's pro bono program had another stellar year in 2013. With more than 7,500 hours of time, valued at nearly \$2.8 million, donated to a diverse array of pro bono projects for clients very much in need of legal help, we have much for which to be proud. It is not surprising that last year our colleagues were recognized repeatedly for their outstanding pro bono contributions, earning awards and formal accolades from the Connecticut State Bar, professional associations, legal services organizations, clients, and legal publications.



FIRM LAWYERS ASSIST U.S. BOBSLED TEAM TO PROTECT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS



featured in the article "Partnering with Robinson & Cole LLP to Serve Victims in Family Court," published in the Summer 2013 issue of *Coalition Chronicles*, a newsletter of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The article focuses on the collaboration between the firm and New Horizons, a service that provides crisis intervention, advocacy, peer counseling, support groups, children's programs, shelter, food, and clothing to victims of domestic violence. In particular, 11 Hartford lawyers were mentioned for their pro bono representation of victims of domestic violence: Benjamin B. Adams, Amanda B. Barry, Patrick M. Birney, J. Tyler Butts, Kathleen E. Dion, Nuala E. Droney, Amanda E. Gordon, Edward J. Heath, Kristopher I. Moore, Andrea Donovan Napp, and Jonathan H. Schaefer. Their work resulted in over 550 pro bono hours.

The work of the DVRO program continues to grow. Lawyers in the program are now providing pro bono representation for Interval House in Hartford, which provides services to prevent and break the cycle of family and intimate partner abuse. Additionally, attorneys in Robinson & Cole's Boston office have, since May 2012, been participating in a similar program in coordination with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office (MDAO). Boston attorneys work with the MDAO to provide free legal assistance to victims of domestic violence during the restraining order process. This program was featured in our April 2013 newsletter after real estate litigation and title insurance associate Kendra L. Berardi was presented with the Middlesex District Attorney's 209A Pro Bono Initiative Award.

FORMER PRO BONO ASYLUM CLIENT LAUNCHES ART CAREER

A former pro bono asylum client of Robinson & Cole successfully launched her art career at the end of 2013, with a Massachusetts-based gallery showcasing her work in an art exhibition in November.

The firm was invited to attend a public reception with the artist, featuring her collection of paintings on canvas, rendered in oil. Artwork of her two young sons was also displayed. Her paintings detail women and nature, and frequently carry symbols of her traditional culture while "celebrating the beauty of her adopted land in America," according to the gallery's description.

Attorneys Karla Chaffee and Steve Perlmutter helped this client and her sons gain derivative asylum approximately two years ago, after assisting her husband in gaining asylum a year earlier.

Robinson & Cole lawyers Craig A. Raabe, Elizabeth R. Leong, and Jamie M. Landry assisted the Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project, on a pro bono basis, with protecting the intellectual property rights for the project's innovative Night Train 2® bobsled. The Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project was started in 1992 by Daytona 500 winner Geoff Bodine, who watched the Winter Olympics that year as other nations soundly defeated the United States Bobsled Team. Bodine committed to develop a "Made in America" bobsled project that would utilize designers and builders from the NASCAR racing industry. After nearly 20 years of development and dedication, the result was the original Night Train bobsled that won the Olympic gold medal in 2010.

The Bo-Dyn Bobsled Project continued its innovative design and construction work and recently unveiled the Night Train 2® bobsled. Robinson & Cole volunteered its intellectual property experience, and the firm worked closely with Bo-Dyn to develop a strategy to protect the new technological improvements, especially from foreign competitors. The Night Train 2® has seen much success and captured its second gold medal in World Cup competition this past December. The sled will soon make its way to the Winter Olympics in February. "We are extremely grateful for Robinson & Cole's legal guidance and teamwork as we work together to create the next generation of world-class bobsled," Bodine said.

ATTORNEY LAUREN SIGG SETTLES SECTION 8 CASE ON BEHALF OF TENANT

Immigration lawyer Lauren M. Sigg successfully settled a Section 8 tenant's case against a landlord for the return of the tenant's security deposit. The tenant rented an apartment under the Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance Housing Choice Voucher Program. As part of the program, the Connecticut Housing Authority was responsible for all of the apartment's rent. In June 2013, the Housing Authority ceased paying rent because the landlord failed to provide adequate heat for the apartment, as required under the program. Despite our client vacating the property within the allotted time, the landlord withheld \$950 of her \$1,450 security deposit, failed to timely return the balance, and failed to timely provide an itemized list of claimed damages as required by the Connecticut General Statutes. Statewide Legal Services referred the case to Ms. Sigg. After meeting with the client, she developed a strategy that included sending a demand letter threatening imminent litigation, seeking damages well beyond the security deposit. Within 10 days of receiving that letter, the landlord appeared at our office unannounced with a check payable to our client for the full amount of her security deposit.



ATTORNEY KEANE AURES SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVES PRO BONO CASE FOR CONNECTICUT VETERANS LEGAL CENTER

Robinson & Cole attorney Keane E. Aures recently reached a successful resolution of a housing dispute on behalf of a Connecticut Veterans Legal Center (CVLC) client. In resolving the case, Mr. Aures helped a veteran and his family avoid an eviction and provided them with additional time to transition to other living arrangements without suffering further financial hardship. The CVLC's mission is to help Connecticut veterans recovering from homelessness and mental illness overcome the legal barriers to housing, health care, and income. The firm frequently handles cases referred by this valuable organization.

2014 PRO BONO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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