

FALL 2007

### Message from the Pro Bono Partner

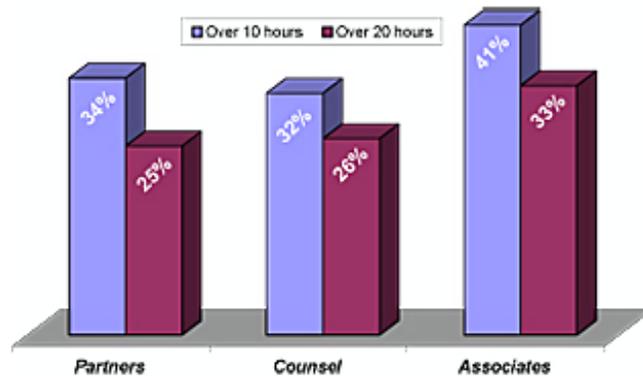
The more things change, the more they stay the same—a cliché, but accurate. As I write this, I note the changes we've made over the last few years: implementing Pro Bono at a Glance, creating the new pro bono brochure and updating the mission statement, improving pro bono intake, providing office space to the Pro Bono Partnership and to NPBI, adding new pro bono partners like PAIR and the Veterans' Pro Bono Consortium. Yet so much hasn't changed, in a good way. People remain excited and energized about our pro bono program. We see new matters from a wide variety of sources, complementing the traditional pro bono initiatives in which we're engaged. Individuals and charities continue to benefit from our time and good work. I'm very proud to have been the Pro Bono Partner. Thanks to everyone who made this firm and me look good while we were doing good.

**Pamela K. Elkow, Pro Bono Partner**

### Pro Bono Committee

- Pamela K. Elkow, Pro Bono Partner
- Frank L. Baker III
- Kenneth C. Baldwin
- Gurdon H. Buck
- Martha A. Chace
- Sandra D. Dawson
- Edward J. Heath
- Christopher S. Pitt
- Elizabeth C. Sackett
- Melissa F. Savage

### Pro Bono Performance



### Pro Bono Year-to-Date Statistics

In the category of more than 10 pro bono hours contributed, partners ended October 2007 with a 1 percent increase over September 2007 to 34 percent, counsel ended with a 3 percent increase to 32 percent, and associates ended with a 2 percent increase to 41 percent. In the category of more than 20 pro bono hours contributed, partners, counsel, and associates ended October 2007 with a 3 percent increase across the board over September 2007 to 25 percent, 26 percent, and 33 percent respectively.



Dances With Wood, Inc., founder and incorporator Robert "Woody" Wilkins with Robinson & Cole Associate Jennifer Rossi Auwarter

### Advancing Artistic Expression

Jennifer Rossi Auwarter and J.C. David Hadden

recently drafted the nonprofit incorporation documents for Dances With Wood, Inc., working with the organization on a pro bono basis. The mission of the not-for-profit Dances With Wood, Inc., is to provide children with life-threatening or serious illnesses and their families with programs that encourage creativity, imagination, artistic expression, and literary skills. Dances With Wood creates wooden projects for children and adults in medical facilities to serve as therapeutic tools for social workers, nurses, and hospital staff to provide to the patients. The projects include, among other things, wooden racecars, boxes.

and CD racks.

## Expanding Affordable Housing

Over the last three years, R&C has done extensive work for [Southwest Boston Community Development Corporation \(Southwest Boston CDC\)](#) regarding its 22-unit affordable housing development in Roslindale, Massachusetts, a neighborhood within the City of Boston. The development, known as Roslindale Field, is to be built by a joint venture partnership of Southwest Boston CDC and Urban Edge, another nonprofit based in Jamaica Plain/Roxbury, on Rowe Street in Roslindale on property currently owned by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). This property was originally taken for the extension of Interstate 95 directly through the city in the early 1960s. Over the course of an arduous 18-monthlong public approval process, the project obtained small project review approval from the BRA as well the required zoning relief (variances and an interim planning overlay district permit) from the Boston Board of Appeal in June of 2006. Most recently, [Matt Lawlor](#), board chair of Southwest Boston CDC and a resident of Roslindale, has been directly involved in the discussions over the final funding package for the construction of the project, which is now projected to include 4 percent low-income housing tax credits and the use of the Cleveland Housing Authority's "rent-to-own" model. This project is badly needed, especially in light of the upcoming expiration of affordability covenants on a number of housing developments in the neighborhood.

## R&C Lawyers Copresent Seminar

Recently, the [Nonprofit Pro Bono Initiative \(NPBI\)](#), part of the Connecticut Urban Legal Initiative (CULI), sponsored a seminar at Robinson & Cole's Hartford office titled Real Estate Issues for Nonprofits, copresented by [Mimi Lines](#) and [Diana MacPherson](#). The program provided an overview of the legal issues applicable to both leasing and purchasing space. CULI is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity that operates from the campus of the University of Connecticut School of Law, working to provide direct legal services, including corporate, real estate, zoning, contract, and other nonlitigation advice related to transactions and development efforts to community-based nonprofit organizations; NPBI is a program of CULI and provides free legal services to Hartford-area nonprofit organizations. Pro bono work through NPBI is available only to lawyers/legal assistants employed in NPBI's partner corporations and law firms, which includes R&C. Approximately 35 people attended the training session.

## Navigating State Bureaucracy

[Jim Wade](#) and [Meghana Shah](#) have been volunteering their time as pro bono attorneys for the [Cherish the Children Foundation \(CTCF\)](#) for the past year or more. CTCF is an all-volunteer based organization made up of a dedicated board of directors, enthusiastic volunteers, and generous donors. CTCF serves a unique role in Connecticut as a direct resource for children who have a financial or medical equipment need, often stemming from a terminal or long-term illness, that is not being met by traditional funding, such as insurance.

Specifically, Jim and Meghana have been representing Tina Williams-Jack and her five-year-old daughter, Shaneece, in navigating the state social services and insurance systems. Shaneece was seriously injured in a car accident several years ago and, as a result, became severely disabled.



Tina Williams-Jack with Robinson & Cole Associate Meghana Shah at the Cherish the Children Star Bright Ball

Since her accident, she has been residing at the Hospital for Special Care in New Britain. The Williams-Jack family wants to bring her home to live, but found two major obstacles in doing so: Shaneece would lose her medical benefits if she came home because she would no longer be a ward of the state, and she could not come home unless her home was completely retrofitted with features to accommodate her disability. Jim and Meghana's role has been to navigate the state bureaucracy surrounding the first issue. In addition, good progress is being made to bring Shaneece home; Cherish the Children is footing the bill for retrofitting the Williams-Jack family home.

On October 27th, Meghana attended the Cherish the Children Foundation Star Bright Ball at the Connecticut Convention Center. The dinner was held to honor and support the firm's client, Tina Williams-Jack, and her daughter, Shaneece.

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