

Welcome to the second Pro Bono newsletter of 2010.

**RC** ROBINSON & COLE LLP  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Attorney Advertising



PRO BONO  
At a Glance

## Verdict Represents a Church's New Beginning



Without the pro bono assistance from attorneys Ted O'Hanlan and Frank Baker, St. Andrew's Church in Stamford, Connecticut would have been forced to end its 145-year ministry. The struggling church could no longer afford to maintain its unsound rectory, which had not been utilized

since 1999 and had become a refuge for the city's homeless. Under the guidance of attorneys Baker and O'Hanlan, the church was able to enter into an agreement with a local developer allowing for demolition of the rectory to make way for a residential complex. Proceeds from a lease-purchase agreement with the developer were to provide the church with a steady revenue for up to eight years and enough funds to keep the church and its community programs flourishing. A local preservation group, Save Old Stamford, opposed the razing of the rectory, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and brought a lawsuit to halt the project. The pro bono team at Robinson & Cole proved with key experts that the condition and historical value of the building was significantly diminished and that costs to restore or renovate the rectory would have been prohibitive for St. Andrew's. A verdict in favor of the church was delivered, much to the relief and joy of its parishioners.

The church serves as a beacon of hope in the community and provides its parishioners with a broad range of important services, including daycare, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and programs for non-traditional high school students. According to attorney O'Hanlan, "the community would have suffered a terrible loss with the closing of this church."

## Asylum Granted for Client from Togo

Robinson & Cole Real Estate Litigation and Title Insurance attorney Kate Moran



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Verdict Represents a Church's New Beginning
- Asylum Granted for Client from Togo
- Pro Bono Child Advocacy Awards
- Pro Bono Efforts from the Stamford Office
- From Priya Morganstern, Esq., Director of the Pro Bono Partnership, Hartford Program
- Message from Edward J. Heath, Pro Bono Committee Chair

## Message from Edward J. Heath, Pro Bono Committee Chair

During the first quarter of 2010, more than 75 percent of our firm's partners and associates have performed pro bono legal services (and land law associates lead the pack with an impressive 93 percent participation).



To put that 75 percent figure into context, our total pro bono hours so far equate to a full year's worth of work by two full-time lawyers. At the same time, we have been laying the groundwork for a series of pro bono projects that we hope to launch later this year. The centerpiece is a Robinson & Cole -- sponsored legal clinic for veterans in Connecticut. Three of our colleagues--Ken Baldwin, Nicole Bernabo, and Keane Aures--have already attended training on how to handle veterans' benefit claims, and dozens more have offered to provide pro bono assistance for other veteran-related matters in connection with this project. If all goes as planned, the

Carter prevailed before the Immigration Court on an application for asylum for a pro bono client from Togo. The client fled to the United States after enduring arrest and torture due to his political affiliation. While the Department of Homeland Security asserted that conditions in Togo had changed in ways supportive of the client's safe return, Ms. Carter argued otherwise. She relied in part on expert testimony to establish that the conditions in Togo had not changed in any fundamental manner and that her client could not return safely to his homeland.

Ms. Carter summed up the experience:

"As anxiety-provoking as these cases are, given the potential adverse outcomes, they have brought me such joy. The clients are so thankful, and you get to be a small part of reuniting families who have been separated for extended periods of time because of unimaginable conditions and hardships. It is very humbling and such a nice reminder of how the legal system is supposed to work."

Ms. Carter is one of a number of Boston office attorneys dedicated to the Political Asylum/Immigration Representation (PAIR) project, an organization assisting individuals from around the globe seeking political asylum in the United States. Robinson & Cole attorneys have successfully represented individuals from Cameroon, Zimbabwe, and Congo, winning asylum for them and family members in several cases. The firm is also in the process of representing two other individuals from Togo and Uganda.

## Pro Bono Child Advocacy Awards

Immigration attorneys Joshua S. Mirer, Megan R. Naughton, and Natasha A. Sharubina received the Child Advocate Award of the Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA) in April this year. Since 2002, they have worked with the CCA to resolve immigration cases, to advocate for appropriate policies with the Department of Children and Families, and to provide legal research and training on immigration issues affecting juveniles.



## Pro Bono Efforts from the Stamford Office



Frank Baker has contributed a significant amount of pro bono hours for a number of institutions in Stamford, including the Stamford Center for the Arts, which was formerly in bankruptcy. Frank recently

clinic will be up and running by the fall. If you are interested in becoming involved in this or any other pro bono effort, please let me know.

## From Priya Morganstern, Esq., Director of the Pro Bono Partnership, Hartford Program

"On behalf of the Pro Bono Partnership, I wanted to let you know how grateful we are for the extraordinary pro bono work Holcomb Farm Learning Centers received recently from a team of R & C



attorneys and paralegals. Holcomb Farm (of which Eric Lukingbeal is a board member) provides educational, agricultural, arts, and recreation opportunities on a historic farm site in Granby, Connecticut. The Farm came to the Pro Bono Partnership seeking help determining its rights under an agreement with a tenant and seeking assistance with the acquisition of a new, agricultural program - two complicated and intertwined projects.

Joel Norwood came in as the original volunteer and addressed corporate structure issues, preliminary due diligence, tax and real estate analysis, and initial drafts of the purchase and sale agreement. When he started getting swamped with other matters, he recruited Keisha Palmer, who did initial drafts of all other documents, and Matt Spaeder, who coordinated most of the closing documents, negotiations, and logistics, as well as much of the due diligence work and analysis. Melissa Mack provided key analysis of tax-exempt issues. Paralegals Eileen Nelson and Sherry Strickland also put in a substantial amount of work.

According to Eric Lukingbeal, the team poured it on, even over the winter holidays, enabling the deal to close just before the New Year. Excellent service! And because all those services were provided pro bono through the Partnership and Robinson & Cole, Holcomb Farm was able to conserve its resources to focus on delivering its mission to the community."

## 2010 Pro Bono Committee Members

Taylor L. Archambault

negotiated on behalf of the Center, a lease with NBC Universal to bring to Stamford the taping of TV shows that include the Jerry Springer Show and the Maury Povich show.

Kenneth C. Baldwin  
Sandra D. Dawson  
Pamela K. Elkow  
Edward J. Heath  
Gregory T. Ligelis  
Megan R. Naughton  
Christopher S. Pitt

©2010 Robinson & Cole LLP. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission. This document should not be considered legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship between Robinson & Cole and you. Consult your attorney before acting on anything contained herein. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Robinson & Cole or any other individual attorney of Robinson & Cole.