



## PRO BONO At a Glance

### Connecticut Academy Dissolves and Transfers



Robinson & Cole's Managing Partner John B. Lynch, Jr., and associate Travis R. Searles, with the help of R&C attorneys Scott E. Sebastian, Susan E.

Roberts, and Nicole A. Bernabo, and Pro Bono Partnership attorney Priya Morganstern, assisted the Connecticut Academy for Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology, Inc., in the process of its dissolution and the closure of its affairs.

Among other services, Mr. Lynch and Mr. Searles drafted corporate resolutions, a plan of dissolution, and employee termination and severance agreements on behalf of the Connecticut Academy. They also assisted the Academy in transferring certain assets and program responsibilities related to its educational initiatives to the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc., a Connecticut nonprofit organization. The Connecticut Academy was a Connecticut nonstock, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving mathematics and science education statewide. Many of its initiatives to further this goal will continue to be administered by the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc.

### 2011 Pro Bono Awards Announcement

**Congratulations to William J. Egan and Virginia E. McGarrity - Robinson &**

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### Message from Ed Heath, Pro Bono Committee Chair



At the recent Connecticut Pro Bono Summit, Connecticut's Chief Justice explained that the state's courts are overwhelmed with pro se litigants. These self-represented parties typically lack an understanding of the relevant procedural and substantive law and have deep (perhaps blinding) emotional connections to their cases, which leads to extensive delays, needless complexity, and results that are less than just. In no forum is the danger for harm greater than family court. We on the firm's Pro Bono Committee have spent the last year focusing our efforts on aiding Connecticut's needy veteran population, and the commitment of R&C lawyers has been impressive. We will continue that good work, but at the same time we must challenge ourselves and our firm's lawyers to find appropriate ways to aid the judiciary's efforts to address the crisis in family

### **Cole's 2011 Pro Bono Award Recipients!**

Each year during the last week in October, the American Bar Association sponsors the National Pro Bono Celebration. This year's celebration took place from October 23 through 29 and was a fitting backdrop for the presentation of Robinson & Cole's 2011 Pro Bono Awards.

So far, in 2011, 123 Robinson & Cole attorneys have contributed their time and expertise to pro bono matters, making this another outstanding year for pro bono at the firm. The Pro Bono Committee acknowledges, in particular, the efforts of two of these attorneys.

#### **William J. Egan**



Mr. Egan's work on behalf of veterans during the past year was exemplary. Through Robinson & Cole's relationship with the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center, an organization dedicated to helping veterans overcome legal barriers to adequate housing and

benefits, he represented four veterans facing eviction and likely homelessness. Through his efforts, Mr. Egan's clients were able to stay in their homes or reach an agreement with their landlords as to a mutually agreeable move-out date without a judgment being entered against them. His professionalism and courtesy in handling these matters, and his efforts to reach a consensual resolution on what are often stressful and emotional issues, earned him high praise from his clients and their landlords alike.

#### **Virginia E. McGarrity**



From children to nonprofit organizations to veterans, Ms. McGarrity lent her legal talents to a wide variety of pro bono matters in 2011. Through referrals from Lawyers for Children America, Ms. McGarrity represented a teen and an infant in neglect proceedings

as well as handled a juvenile permanency review hearing for a young client. She further assisted her teen client in securing much-needed social and educational services and

court. If you have an interest in this work, please let me know.

### **Robinson & Cole and UnitedHealthcare Join Forces to Counsel Girl Scouts of Connecticut**



J. C. David Hadden, chair of the Tax-Exempt Organizations Practice Group at Robinson & Cole, has been working closely with Trish Bowen, associate general counsel from UnitedHealthcare/Uniprise of Hartford, to assist the firm's

client, Girl Scouts of Connecticut, with a significant corporate governance project extending over an 18-month period. The work was referred from the Hartford office of Pro Bono Partnership, Inc., and developed in the wake of the Girls Scouts' consolidation of several organizations into a single statewide group. The project was challenging and complex due to the various parties involved and the need to create a single, unified organization. Following an initial phase, the project expanded into an overarching strategic planning process. Attorneys Hadden and Bowen remained involved throughout, consulting a task force on corporate restructuring and ultimately helping the Girl Scouts adopt a revised governance structure with the approval of the general membership.

### **Helping Hands Receives Preliminary Distribution**



Kathleen M. Porter, intellectual property and technology partner at Robinson & Cole, successfully obtained \$153,000 as a preliminary distribution for the firm's pro bono client Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled. Helping Hands is a national nonprofit serving quadriplegic and other people

with severe spinal cord injuries or mobility impairments by providing highly trained monkeys to assist with daily activities. The organization was named as devisee under the will of Georgine Darcy, an actress and dancer in California who died in 2004. In fact, prior to her death, Ms. Darcy was the last surviving credited cast member of the famed Hitchcock movie Rear Window.

After several years, the executor was still selling off

helped with her transition to the JobCorps program, where she will learn vocational skills while earning her high school degree.

In addition, through referrals from the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center, Ms. McGarrity represented two veterans with regard to separate claims for disability benefits. In total, ten needy clients benefit from her recent efforts.

## Robinson & Cole Client Seeks Relief Under Federal Civil Rights Act



Jason B. Curtin, litigation associate, and Edward J. Heath, served as pro bono attorneys for a Waterbury, Connecticut, resident who filed an excessive force complaint against Waterbury police officers.

The client alleged that he was punched and kicked in the head after he was handcuffed and while following officer commands. The client sought damages under the federal Civil Rights Act. Because the client initially lacked representation and because of the merit of the case, the federal Connecticut District Court asked Robinson & Cole to represent him.

Attorneys Heath and Curtin took up the court's request and litigated the client's claim over two years, culminating in a bench trial last August. Although the client was denied relief, he very much appreciated the opportunity to litigate his claim with the help of experienced counsel.

## Managing Partner Encourages Pro Bono Work at Summit

The *Connecticut Law Tribune* quoted Managing Partner John B. Lynch, Jr., in its October 10, 2011, story, "Legal Leaders Seek Help for Overwhelmed Court System" about the Pro Bono Summit organized to increase attorney participation in pro bono activities. Mr. Lynch was part of a panel of law firm managers and corporate counsel. He said there is no push back against consuming pro bono cases at Robinson & Cole -- instead, pro bono work is strongly encouraged. "We give our lawyers credit for the time they spend on pro bono matters," Mr. Lynch said.

the property in the estate and kept requesting time extensions to complete the process. Then, in 2010, the executor's lawyers withdrew from the case.

Rather than wait for the estate assets to be sold, Ms. Porter strategized with local counsel from the California office of Bryan Cave LLP to seek a partial distribution, which was ultimately agreed to by all of the other devisees and then approved by the court. Monies were received by Helping Hands earlier this year. The estate remains open as the executor continues to dispose of estate assets. Until this is completed, additional partial distributions are expected.

## Integrated Health Services, Inc., Receives Assistance with Compensation Model



Alice E. DeTora, chair of Robinson & Cole's Labor and Employment Practice Group; Britt-Marie K. Cole-Johnson, labor and employment associate; and Taylor A. Denis, business transactions associate, recently counseled Integrated Health Services, Inc. (IHS), regarding a restructuring of its entire compensation model and other employment law issues. IHS is a nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive health care services, including medical, mental health, and dental services, through school-based health centers to children and their families who are either uninsured, underinsured, or without access to a health care provider.

IHS requested assistance in revamping its compensation structure to minimize its tax liability and to plan for future program expansion, including expansion of the school-based health center service model to serve schools beyond East Hartford, Connecticut. Attorneys Cole-Johnson, Denis, and DeTora provided critical advice and counsel to IHS regarding modifications to its compensation model, which resulted in savings for the organization and moved IHS closer to its goal of expanding services to children and their families.

A committee convened by Connecticut Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers and chaired by Connecticut Superior Court Judge William H. Bright, Jr., organized the summit held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford on October 5, 2011. Approximately 130 members of the bar attended. Business litigation lawyer Edward J. Heath and land law lawyer Dwight H. Merriam serve on the committee that planned the summit.

## **2011 PRO BONO COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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- Kenneth C. Baldwin
- Nicole A. Bernabo
- Pamela K. Elkow
- Christopher F. Girard
- Edward J. Heath
- Gregory T. Ligelis
- Megan R. Naughton
- Christopher S. Pitt