



## PRO BONO At a Glance

### Stamford Business Attorneys Negotiate Successful Merger

Two Robinson & Cole attorneys from the Stamford office, Paula Pescaru, an associate in the Business Transactions Group, and Stephen E. Cooper, counsel in the Business Section, successfully negotiated and executed a merger on



behalf of the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership, Inc. (RYASAP) and the Dispute Settlement Center, Inc. (DSC), both of Bridgeport, Connecticut. DSC was merged with, and is now a division of, RYASAP. RYASAP's programs focus on juvenile justice, youth and young adult leadership development, education reform, parent leadership, substance abuse prevention, and public safety. DSC's programs focus on conflict resolution in schools, juvenile court proceedings, evictions, and foreclosures. The merger closed June 30, 2012.



### Veteran's Case Against Landlord is Settled

John P. Casey, counsel in the firm's Land Use and Zoning Practice Group, successfully settled a veteran's case against his landlord for payment of gas utility bills for heat. The heating system was not designed exclusively for his apartment, which is a violation of

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



October is National Domestic Violence Awareness month. It also marks the third month of a pilot program that our firm has pioneered in Connecticut, through which our lawyers have been assisting victims of domestic violence obtain and preserve restraining orders. Over the last year, attorney Nuala E. Droney and I worked extensively to develop this program with the Honorable Lynda B. Munro, Chief Administrative Judge of Connecticut's Family Court, as well as personnel from Connecticut Legal Services (CLS) and the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV).

Following a training session with CLS and CCADV this summer, a team of Robinson & Cole partners, counsel, and associates began appearing every Monday at the Middletown, Connecticut, court house. The team includes myself, Nuala E. Droney, Patrick

statute. Tenants can only be made responsible for utilities when they have exclusive control over the utility. In the veteran's case, vents from the furnace, run on gas paid for by him, went to another apartment in the building. This fact was confirmed by representatives of the local utility company and building inspector's office. The gas bill was transferred to the landlord for a few months in late 2010, but he ostensibly fixed the problem by installing a metal plate over the vent in the other apartment. While this satisfied the utility company, the veteran was not convinced the problem was corrected, and he eventually left the apartment in October of 2011.

Attorney Casey began representing the veteran in November of 2011. The initial focus was to secure new housing for the veteran, as he was living in a tent in the woods at the time. A local community service agency found the veteran a new apartment, which he moved into in early 2012. Thereafter, a demand was made upon the landlord for approximately \$5,000 in gas utility payments for the period of July 2008 through January 2011. After the landlord failed to respond to the demand letter, a small claims action was initiated on the veteran's behalf, seeking the jurisdictional maximum of \$5,000. The landlord, through his attorney, filed an answer and counterclaim for \$3,843 for unpaid back rent, damages to the apartment, and the claimed conversion of an antique cast iron claw-foot bathtub. The counterclaim was answered and the matter was set for a trial on September 4, 2012. Prior to trial, counsel for the landlord contacted attorney Casey about the possibility of a settlement. After negotiations, the matter settled for \$1,500.

### April F. Condon Receives Recognition from Connecticut Legal Services



April F. Condon, counsel in the Real Estate Practice Group in the Stamford office of Robinson & Cole, has been selected as an honoree by Connecticut Legal Services (CLS) for her commitment to helping CLS serve low-income families and individuals throughout Connecticut. Specifically, she was recognized for providing nearly a decade of pro bono real estate services to CLS in connection with its twelve Connecticut

M. Birney, Andrea D. Napp, Benjamin B. Adams, Kathleen E. Dion, J. Tyler Butts, Amanda E. Gordon, Nicolas F. Perry, and Kristopher I. Moore. We also have been joined by two lawyers from Northeast Utilities—Honor Heath and Janet Helmke-Elmore. Our work has consisted of preparing applications for restraining orders and representing the applicants at hearings before the court. This program has allowed us to represent many women and children, some of whom were toddlers, facing varying degrees of abusive and threatening behavior. To my knowledge, this is the first pro bono program of its kind in Connecticut, and I have seen firsthand the difference our team has made in the lives of these deserving clients.

### Hartford R&C Attorneys Receive 2012 District of Connecticut Pro Bono Award



Litigation partners Craig A. Raabe and Jeffrey J. White of the firm's Hartford office were awarded the 2012 District of Connecticut Pro Bono Award at the Federal Court Bench/Bar Conference on October 19, 2012. Attorneys Raabe and

White were selected to receive the award by the Connecticut District Court Judges for their representation of a federal prisoner during a challenging jury trial and appeal to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Robinson & Cole associate Katherine S. Kayatta of the Boston office and Hartford paralegal Lori A. Gizzi were also recognized for their work on the case by Chief United States District Judge Alvin W. Thompson. Robinson & Cole lawyers and paralegals dedicated over 1,300 hours in this representation.

### Robinson & Cole Attorneys in the Boston Office Assist the Friends of Minute Man National Park

offices.

Connecticut Legal Services is a private, nonprofit civil law firm that serves low-income families and individuals in Connecticut by providing a wide range of civil law and counseling services, including services surrounding housing and homelessness, public benefits, employment, domestic violence, and other family law matters.

Attorney Condon was recognized on October 23 at the CLS annual meeting and awards dinner in Cromwell, Connecticut.

## Joey Lee Miranda Elected to Board of Directors of Lawyers for Children America



Lawyers for Children America elected energy and utilities partner Joey Lee Miranda to its board of directors on June 6, 2012.

Lawyers for Children America is a child advocacy organization that protects the rights of children who are victims of abuse,

abandonment, and neglect by providing pro bono legal representation and by collaborating for systematic change. The organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Hartford, Connecticut.

## Firm Donation to Help Mother-Child Reunion

Robinson & Cole's considerable donation to the University of Connecticut Law School Foundation is helping a woman, who endured severe persecution and feared torture from the Democratic Republic of Congo, reunite with her children in the United States. The woman was forced to leave her children behind and fled to the United States for safety because her family was accused of criticizing Congo's president.

With legal representation from law students at the clinic, the woman was granted asylum in the United States and obtained approval from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. State Department for visas to allow her children in Congo to join



Five Robinson & Cole attorneys continue to provide assistance to the Friends of Minute Man National Park (Friends) in a zoning and boundary dispute with the Town of Lincoln, Massachusetts. The Friends provide financial, volunteer, and administrative support to the Minute Man National Historical Park in Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord, Massachusetts. Robinson & Cole agreed to help the Friends after attorney Dwight H. Merriam, who has a long-standing relationship with the park, learned that a piece of property within the jurisdictional boundaries of the park, but under private ownership, was threatened by a proposal for a large and modern development. The property has historic significance and a high probability of archaeological significance because of its close proximity to the site of Parker's Revenge in 1775, sometimes referred to as the "second battle of Lexington."

Attorneys Michael S. Giaimo and Karla L. Chaffee, from the firm's Boston office, have represented the Friends in their land court appeal of a special use permit granted by Lincoln to the property's prospective developer. John R. Bauer, also of the Boston office, and attorneys Giaimo and Chaffee are additionally involved in a pending motion to intervene in a related case filed by the United States of America in federal court. Attorney Christopher S. Pitt from the Boston office has applied his expertise to develop a title opinion regarding access to the property, which is a critical factual issue.

## 2012 PRO BONO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Kenneth C. Baldwin
- Nicole A. Bernabo
- Pamela K. Elkow
- Christopher F. Girard

her in the United States. The firm's donation will help the woman, who has a low-wage job, purchase plane tickets for her children.

- Edward J. Heath
- Gregory T. Ligelis
- Megan R. Naughton
- Christopher S. Pitt