

Pro Bono Affairs

2007 President's Pro Bono Service Award Winners

Prisoners in the state's jails who needed mental health care, victims of the June and November floods in central New York, and asylum seekers who have fled persecution in their home countries all benefited last year from the legal assistance of some of the state's best lawyers working pro bono to make life fairer and better for low-income and disadvantaged New Yorkers. The New York State Bar Association will honor some of the outstanding volunteer lawyers with its 2007 President's Pro Bono Service Awards.

The Association will present the awards on April 30 at the State Bar Center in Albany. This year's awards honor attorneys representing 11 of New York's 12 judicial districts, two young lawyers (practicing law for less than 10 years or under the age of 36), a large law firm, two small or mid-size law firms, two law students and a law school group.

"The lawyers of New York State have a long tradition of generous pro bono service, and the attorneys and law students we honor each year with our President's Pro Bono Service awards represent the very best in that tradition. Last year, many low-income and disadvantaged New Yorkers received the legal assistance they needed to help them live better and more productively," said 2006-2007 President Mark H. Alcott of Manhattan (Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison LLP). "We applaud these law practitioners because they remind us all of our obligation to 'Do the Public Good'."

The winners are:

- James W. B. Benkard (1st Judicial District: Manhattan)
- Michael J. O'Connor (3rd Judicial District: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster counties)
- Matthew H. Dwyer - posthumously (4th Judicial District: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington counties)
- Martin L. Fried (5th Judicial District: Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego counties)
- James R. Franz (6th Judicial District: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison Otsego, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins counties)
- Jodie L. Ryan (7th Judicial District: Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates counties)
- Francis J. Offermann, Jr. (8th Judicial District: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming counties)
- Edith Sullivan (9th Judicial District: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester counties)
- Lewis C. Edelstein (10th Judicial District: Nassau, Suffolk counties)
- Regina Alberty (11th Judicial District: Queens County)
- Benis Guzman (12th Judicial District: Bronx County)
- Adrienne D. Gonzalex and Gail Rodgers (Young Lawyers)
- Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP (Large Law Firm)
- Costello, Cooney & Fearon, PLLC and Kaplan and Brennan, LLP (Small & Mid-Size Law Firms)
- Olivia T. Nix and Willow F. Baer (Law Students)
- Student Hurricane Network, Chapters in 13 New York State Law Schools (Law School Group)