

NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION



Sixteenth Annual Justice for All Luncheon

*Celebrating the Pro Bono Contributions
of the 2016 Empire State Counsel®*

New York Hilton Midtown
1335 Avenue of the Americas
Sutton Center, 2nd Floor

January 26, 2017



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A core value of our Association is equal access to justice for all. We work toward that by lobbying for greater support for an often-overwhelmed judicial system and for increased government funding for civil legal service providers. We help fund these providers through grants from The New York Bar Foundation, our Association's charitable arm. But we also take it personally, and encourage our members to volunteer to do the public good through pro bono work.

Attorneys have long been generous with their time and talent to help those who have a legal problem but cannot afford a lawyer. In 2006, then-NYSBA President Mark Alcott created the Empire State Counsel® Program to shine a light on attorneys who do pro bono work and to encourage more to volunteer. Response was swift, and in February 2007, we honored 394 attorneys who had rendered 50 hours or more of free legal service to those in need and eight law firms with 10 or more attorney-volunteers.

We learned that attorneys are eager to volunteer, and in the past 10 years our list of Empire State Counsel® has grown significantly, as has our celebration. Our Justice for All luncheon and awards ceremony is a centerpiece of the Annual Meeting. Today we honor the thousands of attorneys at dozens of law firms who are 2016 Empire State Counsel®. Thanks to their dedication and hard work, immigrants have been granted refuge from persecution and an opportunity to build a new life in the United States. Survivors of domestic violence have been freed from their abusive partners. Tenants have been empowered to require their landlords to provide safe and habitable apartments. These and other legal victories were achieved through the efforts of pro bono volunteers.

Of this distinguished group, we single out Shawndra Jones and Laurie Styka Bloom as the 2016 Outstanding Pro Bono Volunteers. For more than four years, Ms. Jones, a labor and employment attorney, has volunteered at the International Rescue Committee, assisting its Office of General Counsel and Human Resources Department, while still finding time to mentor law students. Ms. Bloom, who focuses on litigation arising out of environmental issues, volunteers in matters affecting individuals and families. Recently, she handled an appeal to the Appellate Division for a transgender man seeking to change his name and represented a man falsely jailed as an "influential Muslim."

Whether large or small, law firm support of pro bono is essential. We are pleased to honor six law firms whose attorneys collectively performed the most pro bono hours in their geographic region during 2016. Three are based

in New York City – Skadden Arps, Simpson Thacher and Milbank Tweed. Three are based outside the city – Nixon Peabody, Barclay Damon and Phillips Lytle. Their impressive pro bono practices are detailed in the program.

David Udell, Executive Director of the National Center for Access to Justice, now at Fordham Law School, is this year’s keynote speaker. A longtime thinker, researcher and actor in the fight for access to justice, Udell is an advocate for increasing the role of law schools in providing pro bono services to help fill the justice gap in our legal system. We are delighted he is here to share his thoughts and to help celebrate our Empire State Counsel® for their pro bono contributions.

Thank you for attending the Justice for All Luncheon. And thank you for all the good you do.

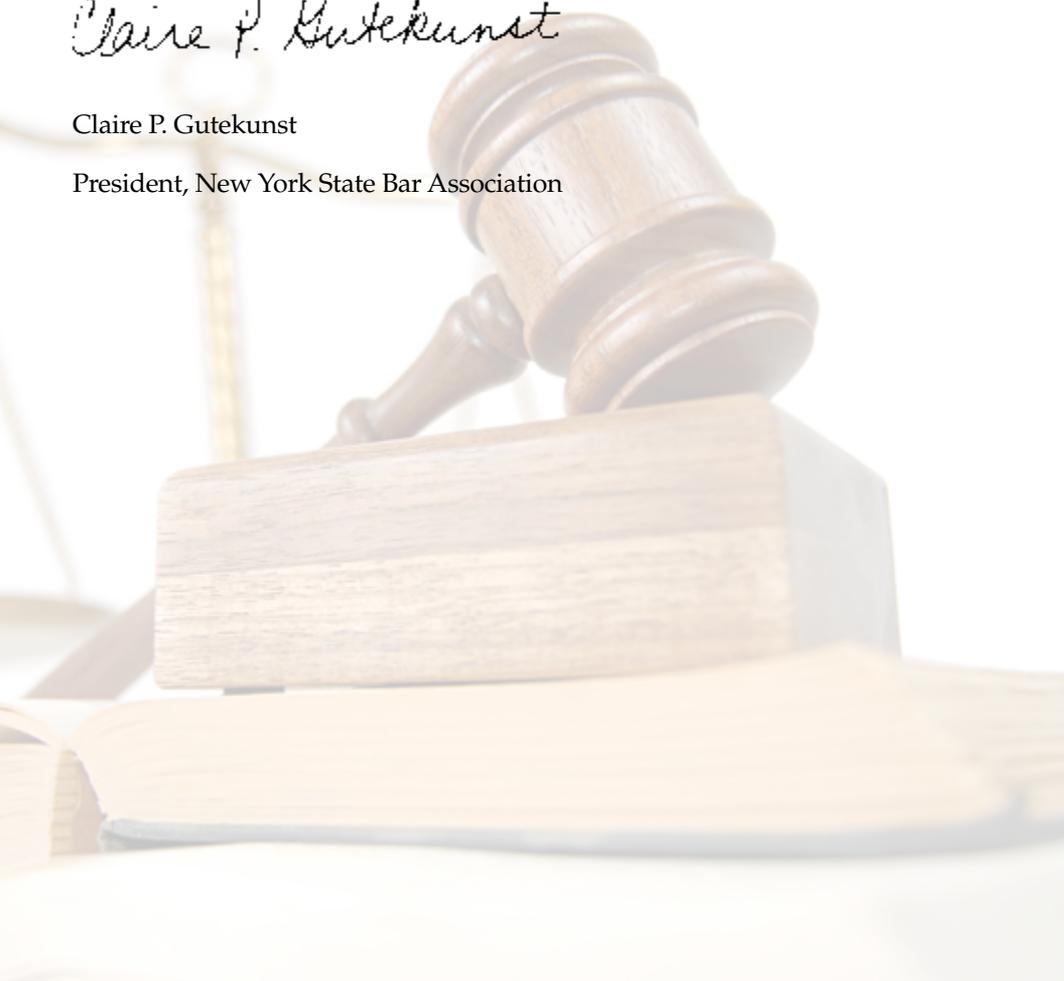
Sincerely,



Claire P. Gutekunst

Claire P. Gutekunst

President, New York State Bar Association



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of the 2016 Empire State Counsel®*

Welcome

Sharon Stern Gerstman

President-elect

New York State Bar Association

Introduction of David Udell

Claire P. Gutekunst

President

New York State Bar Association

Keynote Address

David Udell

Executive Director

National Center for Access to Justice

Presentation of Awards

Sharon Stern Gerstman

Claire P. Gutekunst



David Udell

Executive Director

National Center for Access to Justice

David Udell, Executive Director of the National Center for Access to Justice and Co-chair of the Fordham Law School Access to Justice Initiative (with Matthew Diller, Dean of Fordham Law School, and Jonathan Lippman, Counsel, Latham & Watkins and former Chief Judge of the NYS Unified Court System) guides the work of NCAJ in relying on research, data and indexing to improve the policies affecting vulnerable

people in the justice system. NCAJ's flagship project is its pathbreaking Justice Index, www.justiceindex.org, an online data-intensive resource that identifies selected best policies for access to justice. Founder of the Justice Program of the Brennan Center for Justice in September 1997 and its director until August 2010, he has also held positions as a senior attorney at Legal Services for the Elderly and as a managing attorney at MFY Legal Services. He has served as a leader in the national civil right to counsel movement and the national indigent defense reform movement, has guided national initiatives to help strengthen the nation's Legal Services Corporation, and has helped to develop new models for providing assistance to people with unmet civil legal needs. He has served as chair of the Subcommittee on Access to Justice of the Committee on Professional Responsibility of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, member of the Advisory Board to the Justice Center of the New York County Lawyers' Association, and member of the Pro Bono and Legal Services Committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. He has taught NCAJ's law school seminar, *The Justice Gap: Strategies for Securing the Delivery of Equal Justice in American Courts*, at Cardozo Law School, and has also taught courses at New York University Law School and at Fordham Law School. He is a 1982 graduate of New York University School of Law.



2016 EMPIRE STATE COUNSEL®

Pro Bono changes lives. The Empire State Counsel® Program recognizes our members' pro bono contributions. By generously donating their time and expertise, our members help low-income and vulnerable persons who otherwise could not afford an attorney gain access to the civil justice system. The program also recognizes the law firms who support and encourage pro bono. Congratulations to the 2016 Empire State Counsel® and their law firms.

Law Firms *

Alston & Bird LLP
Ballard, Spahr, Stillman
& Friedman LLP
Blank Rome LLP
Barclay Damon
Bond, Schoenack & King PLLC
Crowell & Moring LLP
Davis, Polk & Wardell LLP
Dentons US LLP
Duane Morris LLP
Hogan Lovells LLP
Hunton & Williams LLP
Katten, Muchin, Rosenman LLP
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Lowenstein Sandler LLP
Milbank, Tweed, Hadley
& McCloy LLP
Manatt, Phelps & Phelps LLP
Morrison and Foerster LLP
Nixon Peabody LLP
Orrick, Herrington
& Sutcliffe LLP

Perkins Coie LLP
Phillips Lytle LLP
Proskauer Rose LLP
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Sherman & Sterling LLP
Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett LLP
Skadden, Arps, Slate,
Meagher & Flom
Step toe & Johnson LLP
Sullivan & Cromwell LLP
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP
White & Case LLP
Willkie, Farr & Gallagher LLP
Wilmer, Cutler, Pickering, Hale
& Dorr LLP
Winston & Strawn LLP

* Law firms with three or more
Empire State Counsel®



2016 EMPIRE STATE COUNSEL®

Individual Attorneys **

Mark M. Baker
Upnit K. Bhatti
Melanie L. Brown
Eileen Buholtz
Martha Buyer
Bryan J. Butler
Lydia Allen Caylor
Mary D'Agostino
Devabhakthuni Sanjeev
Spencer L. Durland
Claire H. Fortin
Jonathan B. Fellows
Alissa Fortuna-Valentine
Margaret E. Gilmartin
James Michael Griffin
Patrick Hanley
David M. Hayes
Heisman Lewis
Myriah Jaworski
Shawndra G. Jones
David H. Kernan
Shaina Kovalsku
Anant Kishore
Raymond Lahoud
A. Thomas Levin
Lance Levin
George H. Lowe
Daniel Maguire

Kenneth Manning
Andrew Martin
Deena Mueller
Thomas E. Myers
Heather Navo
William M. O'Connor
Luis Emilio Ormaechea
Kimberly Pelesz
Thomas F. Puchner
M. Salman Ravala
Jessica N. Reich
Ian Rennie
Kellen G. Ressemeyer
Seth M. Rosner
Evelyn H. Seeler
Brendan M. Sheehan
Derrick Sparatorico
Magdalena Hale Spencer
John Suda
James J. Veneruso
Douglas Zamelis
Michael Leslie Walker

** From firms with less than three
Empire State Counsel® or solo
practitioners

2016 Empire State Counsel® Outstanding Pro Bono Volunteers and Law Firm Honorees

Laurie Styka Bloom

Counsel, Nixon Peabody LLP

Shawndra G. Jones

Associate, Axinn, Veltrop & Harkrider LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate Meagher & Flom LLP

Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett LLP

Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP

Phillips Lytle LLP

Barclay Damon LLP

Nixon Peabody LLP

NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION



Volunteer for Free Legal Answers

Free Legal Answers is an online version of the pro bono walk-in clinic model where clients request brief advice and counsel about a specific civil legal issue from a volunteer lawyer. Lawyers provide information and basic legal advice without any expectation of long-term representation. The purpose of the website is to increase access to advice and information about non-criminal legal matters to those who cannot afford it. There is no fee for the use of the system or for the advice and information provided by the lawyer. Sign up to be a volunteer today at NY.freelegalanswers.org!

Questions?

Contact Kristen Wagner | Director, Pro Bono Services, NYSBA
kwagner@nysba.org | 518.487.5640



Outstanding Pro Bono Volunteers



Laurie Styka Bloom

Counsel, Nixon Peabody LLP

Laurie Styka Bloom is Counsel at Nixon Peabody LLP. She represents clients in complex and commercial litigation as well as environmental based litigation claims.

Working with the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF), Ms. Bloom represented a local transgender man in connection with a name change application. This was the second time Ms. Bloom had represented on a pro bono basis a transgender individual seeking a name change. In January 2016 the trial court denied the name change application, citing only an old case that required

medical proof before a name change would be granted for a transgender person. That law had been repudiated by later cases. Ms. Bloom then moved to reargue the matter before the same judge, citing the more recent law. That motion was summarily denied. She then pursued relief through the appellate court (Fourth Department). In November, 2016 the Fourth Department granted the name change application, reiterating that all people have the right to call themselves anything they want so long as it is not done to defraud or to evade criminal responsibility. The client has now changed his name to match his gender and is happy to have this matter behind him.

Ms. Bloom also wrapped up a case that had been pending for a while where she represented a Muslim inmate in the State correctional system man who was put into sustained solitary confinement in a New York prison, purportedly because he might be a catalyst for organizing and advocating for other Muslim prisoners, and because he'd asked for special food for observation of a Muslim holiday. Such cases rarely settle, but she was able to obtain a cash settlement for her client, who is now out of prison and leading an upstanding life.

While representing another client at a hearing, she heard the plight of a family that emigrated from Puerto Rico that was trying to keep their hypoallergenic family pet – a micropig (about the size of a medium-sized dog). The local zoning authorities labeled it a farm animal and ordered the family to get rid of the pig. The family couldn't afford a hypoallergenic dog, which are quite expensive. She listened to the woman's children testify as to how they loved the pet (naming him "Ham Solo") and begged to keep him as they were highly allergic and desperately wanted a pet. On behalf of the family, she brought the matter to court. Working with the Town, she has now re-applied for a permit to keep the pig un-

der different criteria and the matter will be reconsidered in January.

Laurie Bloom has been selected by her peers for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America® 2017 in the field of Commercial Litigation in Buffalo, NY. She has been listed in Best Lawyers in America since 2016.

She has also been named to the Legal Elite of Western New York 2014 under the Legal Elite Leaders section, a supplement of Buffalo Business First and Buffalo Law Journal. She has also been recognized for her leadership as president of the Erie County Bar Association.

Laurie was selected as one of the Top 25 women lawyers in Upstate New York, based on a peer-review survey conducted by New York Super Lawyers magazine, 2009 Upstate Edition. She is a graduate of University at Buffalo Law School.



Shawndra G. Jones

Associate, Axinn, Veltrop & Harkrider LLP

Shawndra Jones, an associate at Axinn, Veltrop & Harkrider LLP in New York, practices in the areas of commercial litigation and labor and employment law. Ms. Jones's experience includes actions before state and federal courts and administrative agencies. As part of her labor and employment law practice, Ms. Jones has counseled employers concerning various issues, including family and medical leave, disability accommodation, wage and hour matters, veterans' rights, equal employment opportunity concerns, and questions arising at the intersection of technology and the workplace. Ms. Jones also lectures on the legal and ethical implications of emerging technologies, such as social media.

Ms. Jones, whose parents and brother instilled in her a zeal for giving back to the community, considers pro bono work to be an important part of her practice and has devoted a significant number of hours to that work, including by supervising fellow attorneys' pro bono work. Ms. Jones is grateful that she has had opportunities not only to perform pro bono work but also to do so with wonderful colleagues who likewise value such work. Indeed, Ms. Jones was delighted when another attorney recently told her that she motivated others to do more pro bono work.

The International Rescue Committee, Inc. ("IRC"), a nonprofit organization, is one of the clients to whom Ms. Jones has provided pro bono legal services. Created with Albert Einstein's help in 1933, IRC provides humanitarian aid to indi-

viduals affected by natural disasters or conflict by helping them survive, recover, and rebuild. Providing services to victims of human trafficking, refugees, asylees, and other immigrants, IRC works in over 40 countries and 29 cities in the United States. Working with both in-house counsel and human resources professionals located at IRC's headquarters in New York, Ms. Jones has advised IRC on employment law matters.

Ms. Jones is also involved in organizations serving the legal and other communities. Her professional memberships and activities include the National Bar Association, Labor and Employment Law Section & Women Lawyers Division; American Bar Association, Section of Labor and Employment Law; New York State Bar Association, Labor and Employment Law Section (Workplace Rights and Responsibilities Committee) & Commercial and Federal Litigation Section (Social Media Committee); New York City Bar Association, Judiciary Committee & Diversity in the Judiciary Subcommittee; Association of Black Women Attorneys; Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts; and Practicing Attorneys for Law Students Program, Inc.

Ms. Jones is a 2016 recipient of the National Bar Association's "40 Under 40 Nation's Best Advocates" and "Excellence in Innovation" awards. She was also selected to become a member of The National Black Lawyers – Top 40 Under 40 – for New York in 2016 and a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

After graduating cum laude with Distinction in Psychology from Yale University, Ms. Jones earned her juris doctorate from Columbia Law School, where she was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar and editor in chief of the Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems. Following law school, Ms. Jones clerked for the Honorable Alvin W. Thompson in the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut before entering private practice at Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP.

Do You Have A Story To Share...

- **Have you worked on or do you know of a special pro bono project?**
- **Has a pro bono case made a difference in the lives of others?**
- **Has an individual attorney or firm gone above and beyond to provide pro bono assistance?**

We invite you to submit articles showcasing excellence in pro bono service for upcoming editions of the Pro Bono Newsletter. For more information, go to www.nysba.org/probono.



Law Firm Honorees

The logo for Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, featuring the word "Skadden" in white serif font on a red rectangular background.

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and affiliates strongly encourages its lawyers, summer associates, and legal assistants to do pro bono work for those individuals and groups unable to afford legal services. The firm is a charter signatory to the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge, pledging to commit time equivalent to at least 3% of its annual billable hours to work on pro bono matters. In 2016, New York office lawyers and summer associates reached 5.6% of time billed. Firmwide, Skadden attorneys, summer associates, and legal assistants recorded 165,387.30 hours of pro bono legal work in 2016.

Deeply ingrained in the firm's culture, pro bono work provides vital help to a wide variety of individuals and organizations in need of legal assistance. Skadden attorneys regularly assist those seeking asylum in the United States and elsewhere in their attempts to escape persecution due to religious or political beliefs or sexual orientation. Attorneys also handle many cases for death row inmates; take on numerous matters involving wrongful imprisonment and prosecution, housing disputes, and family law; and frequently provide legal assistance to legal services organizations and other nonprofits, as well as micro-entrepreneurs.

The logo for Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, featuring the words "Simpson" and "Thacher" in a brown serif font, with "Thacher" positioned below "Simpson".

Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett LLP

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP (www.simpsonthacher.com) is one of the world's leading international law firms. The Firm was established in 1884 and has more than 900 lawyers. Headquartered in New York with offices in Beijing, Hong Kong, Houston, London, Los Angeles, Palo Alto, São Paulo, Seoul, Tokyo and Washington, D.C., the Firm provides coordinated legal advice and transactional capability to clients around the globe.

Pro bono work has strong institutional roots at Simpson Thacher. The particular matters pursued by the Firm are as diverse as the interests of its lawyers. The Firm

takes seriously its ethical obligation to support organizations that provide legal services to the poor. Lawyers at every level make significant contributions to legal service programs, government and nonprofits. Simpson Thacher approaches its pro bono projects with the same commitment to excellence as it does all its work and credits its lawyers' contributions on these matters equally with other engagements. In addition to long relationships with organizations for whom the Firm regularly does pro bono work, the Firm represents a wide variety of individuals and organizations both in the United States and abroad, including those relating to civil and human rights, the environment, education and the arts. Beyond the Firm's high-profile projects and work for organizations, many of its pro bono efforts are on behalf of indigent individuals, assisting them in obtaining the basic necessities of life, including housing, public benefits, immigration status, and freedom from abusive partners.

Milbank

Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP

Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP is a leading international law firm that provides innovative legal services to clients around the world. Founded in New York 150 years ago, Milbank has offices in 12 global financial centers. Milbank's lawyers collaborate across practices and offices to help the world's leading commercial, financial and industrial enterprises, as well as institutions, individuals and governments, achieve their strategic objectives.

Milbank believes access to legal counsel, regardless of ability to pay, is a fundamental right of all people. The firm's commitment to pro bono service stretches back more than a century, and is reflected in the firm's top rankings on The American Lawyer's A-List, where it placed 3rd among all elite firms overall in 2016, and 8th for pro bono. Milbank's pro bono work reflects the passions, interests and concerns of its attorneys, from redressing human rights violations to bringing safety and security to immigrants and victims of domestic abuse.



Nixon Peabody LLP

Nixon Peabody attorneys and staff have a rich history of supporting the communities in which we live, beginning from our founding days when William Rodman Peabody advised all young lawyers to give one third of their time to public service. Today, from representing refugees fleeing persecution in their home countries to

structuring sophisticated deals on behalf of microfinance institutions, our pro bono contributions are many and diverse.

We have a partner dedicated to connecting our lawyers to opportunities for pro bono service. Our attorneys, paralegals and other staff members are involved with pro bono matters involving societal issues ranging from protecting women who are victims of abuse to helping with transgender name changes, to preventing racial profiling, and ensuring access and diversity in education.

Across the firm, we also partner with clients providing pro bono service, serving side-by-side with them. We develop community-minded lawyers of the future by getting all of our summer associates involved in pro bono projects. And some of our attorneys tap their backgrounds and contacts in government to contribute pro bono service at the policy level—shaping legislation that addresses tomorrow's challenges.

At Nixon Peabody, we give billable credit for pro bono work and recognize our lawyers' achievements through an awards program and at evaluation time. And as a signatory to the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge®, Nixon Peabody has committed to spending more than 3% of our time on pro bono. We believe our time giving back is time well spent.

To learn more, visit http://www.nixonpeabody.com/firm_pro_bono.



Barclay Damon LLP

Barclay Damon has a proud history of giving back to the communities the firm serves, with an emphasis on using its skills to help the most needy among us achieve access to justice through an award-winning and innovative pro bono program. Because volunteer service is such an important part of the Barclay Damon culture, the firm encourages its attorneys to participate in meaningful legal work through a one-of-its-kind program that offers direct economic incentives to associates for their participation. At Barclay Damon, all associates are given billable hour credit toward their year-end performance reviews for pro bono work handled—in the same manner as if the work was performed for a top client of the firm. In 2010, this innovative program earned Barclay Damon the President's Pro Bono Service Award from the New York State Bar Association in the "Large Firm" category.

The firm's commitment to pro bono work runs deep and is part of the firm's core culture. More than three quarters of the firm's attorneys are currently providing pro bono assistance in their communities. Barclay Damon is especially proud of

the full-time associates in each of the firm's 11 offices—in 2016 they led the way with 100 percent participation in the pro bono program.

As a firm that has been in existence since 1855, a strong commitment to pro bono service has been a priority for Barclay Damon at every stage of the firm's development. Now the largest law firm in the Northeast based outside a major market area, the firm has more reason than ever to give generously of its time, talents, and passion for pro bono service.



Phillips Lytle LLP

Phillips Lytle LLP

Pro bono work has been an important commitment for Phillips Lytle throughout its 180+ history. Across all of our eight offices (six of which are in New York State), our more than 190 attorneys are dedicated to providing legal services to the poor, the disadvantaged and those in need. The legal services the firm provides also benefit organizations and institutions that assist the indigent and contribute to the quality of life in our communities. This work includes civil and criminal matters, and non-litigation legal assistance, ranging from matters that broadly impact communities, to representation of those in need in high-volume court settings, to complex individual case representations. As the firm plans for the future, pro bono services remains one of its core values.

Pro Bono Opportunities Guide

www.nysba.org/probono

Want to volunteer?

This easy-to-use guide will help you find the right volunteer pro bono opportunity. You can search by county, subject area, and population served.

Questions about pro bono service?

www.nysba.org/probono
(518) 487-5641 | probono@nysba.org



***Congratulations 2016
Empire State Counsel®!***



*Do the Public Good • Do Yourself
Good • Volunteer For Pro Bono*



**NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
DEPARTMENT OF PRO BONO SERVICES**

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