

Court Information Release



United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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Contact: Julie Hodek, Public Information Officer
United States District Court for
the Northern District of Illinois
219 S. Dearborn St., #2548
Chicago, IL 60604
312-435-5693

Twentieth Annual Awards for Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service Award Winners

Excellence in Public Interest Service



Matthew T. Gensburg, William J. Barrett, and Catherine L. Steege
Presented by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge A. Benjamin Goldgar
This team of lawyers, each a long-time member of the Bankruptcy Court's pro bono committee, created a free-standing charitable foundation to serve as a fund-raising vehicle to raise funds to finance the Bankruptcy Court's help desk in Chicago.

Excellence in Pro Bono Service



Jonathan S. Bedi and Dena M. Singer

Presented by U.S. District Judge Edmond E. Chang

Mr. Bedi and Ms. Singer, who comprise the two-lawyer law firm of Bedi & Singer, LLP, represented a prisoner plaintiff who brought a Section 1983 claim alleging failure to provide medical care. Their efforts resulted in a relatively quick settlement for their client.



Karen Hoffmann, Bridget Cambria, Amy Maldonado, Amy M. Rubenstein, John R. Wellschlager, Peter J. Farrell, Katrina A. Hausfeld, Leanne S. Mancari, and Thomas P. Yardley

Presented by U.S. District Judge Edmond E. Chang

This team of attorneys represented two Brazilian boys who were separated from their fathers after crossing the border, and the government prosecuted the fathers for illegal-entry misdemeanors. When the charges were brought, the boys were brought to Chicago while their fathers remained in New Mexico. Despite prompt guilty pleas and time-served sentences, the government did not reunite the boys with their fathers. This attorney team sprang into action, filing two separate cases. They succeeded at securing a preliminary injunction requiring unification within 72 hours, which was accomplished.



Thomas F. Geselbracht

Presented by U.S. District Judge Matthew F. Kennelly

Mr. Geselbracht represented an individual who claimed excessive force in the course of an arrest and denial of his subsequent requests for medical care. Through Mr. Geselbracht's efforts, the parties reached a settlement.



Joseph L. Kish

Presented by U.S. District Judge Matthew F. Kennelly

Mr. Kish represented an individual who had been terminated from her position as a school bus aide. She sued her former employer, alleging that her termination had resulted from the employer's failure, after her return from maternity leave, to assign her to a route that would accommodate her status as a breast-feeding mother. Mr. Kish was able to negotiate a settlement that involved securing a new position for his client.



Daniel D. Rubenstein and Ryan M. Dunigan
Presented by U.S. Circuit Judge Amy J. St. Eve, Seventh Circuit
Mr. Rubenstein and Mr. Dunigan represented a prisoner plaintiff in four civil rights cases and settled all of them.



Collette A. Woghiren, Eric Y. Choi, Jonathan S. Quinn, and Michael D. Sher
Presented by U.S. District Judge Gary Feinerman
This team of attorneys represented their client in a Section 1983 case alleging false arrest. Counsel handled all pretrial matters and the trial itself.



Jeffrey W. Finke

Presented by U.S. District Judge Robert W. Gettleman

Mr. Finke represented an inmate, confined to a wheelchair and with serious medical conditions, who alleged mistreatment by jail personnel. During the litigation, the client's medical condition worsened, and the client was relocated to an Arkansas facility, complicating the case. Through Mr. Finke's efforts, the plaintiff was transferred back to Chicago and settled his case for \$50,000.



Timothy K. Sendek, Robyn M. Bowland, Sara Barnowski, Sean P. MacCarthy, and Kaitlyn Luther

Presented by U.S. District Judge John Z. Lee

Attorneys successfully represented a father in a petition under the Hague Convention for the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction to return his to minor children to Spain, where they lived prior to their unauthorized removal by their mother.



J. Kevin McCall, Landon S. Raiford, Andrew W. Vail, Briana T. Sprick Schuster, Blake P. Sercye, and Lindsey A. Lusk

Presented by U.S. District Judge Joan B. Gottschall

This team of lawyers represented a client who was raped in 1991 at age 14. For 21 years her rape case went unsolved, and it was discovered by the Sheriff's Department that in the municipal police department where her claim originated dozens of rape kits went untested and dozens of rape cases unresolved. Attorneys filed a Section 1983 claim on behalf of their client, alleging the municipality had violated her equal protection rights on the basis of sex. Through mediation, the attorneys reached a settlement for their client, and a consent judgment was entered against the municipality explicitly finding that the municipality had violated the client's Fourteenth Amendment rights.



Stephen H. Pugh

Presented by U.S. District Judge Sharon J. Coleman

Mr. Pugh was assigned a criminal defendant who terminated a number of attorneys. Though the client was challenging and threatened harm to himself and others, Mr. Pugh handled the client with remarkable respect and professionalism.



Paula E. Litt

Presented by U.S. District Judge Sharon J. Coleman

Ms. Litt represented her client in a disability discrimination case after private counsel withdrew. She managed to reopen discovery, survive a motion for summary judgement, and take the case to trial on a narrow basis of liability.



Craig D. Leavell, Sylvia N. Winston, Ferlillia V. Roberson, Justin R. Bernbrock, Sabrina L. West, Casey McGushin, and Reed S. Oslan

Presented by U.S. District Judge Thomas M. Durkin

Starting in 2008 through April 2018, this team of lawyers represented an incarcerated plaintiff in several lawsuits alleging prison officials and healthcare workers were deliberately indifferent to his medical needs. Counsel represented their client throughout a jury trial and helped him reach a settlement in two of the lawsuits.



David P. Lindner

Presented by U.S. District Judge Thomas M. Durkin

Mr. Lindner represented an incarcerated plaintiff in a Section 1983 claim, alleging failure to receive medical attention. Mr. Lindner made numerous visits to his client, each visit clocking 500 miles roundtrip.



John W. Treece, Anna M. Kabat, and Hannah A. Posen

Presented by U.S. District Judge Sara L. Ellis

This team of attorneys reached a favorable settlement for their client, an inmate with physical disabilities and mental illness, who alleged two correctional officers attacked him while he was a pretrial detainee.



Giel Stein, Royal B. Martin, and Maureen J. Moody
Presented by U.S. Magistrate Judge Sheila Finnegan

This attorney team represented an inmate who claimed the defendant was deliberately indifferent to his need for treatment of a serious medical condition stemming from diabetes. Their client was out of prison in the period leading up to his trial, during which time he faced medical issues and was homeless. The attorneys went to great efforts to find him housing and other help. The jury awarded their client \$175,000.



Tara A. Amin
Presented by U.S. District Judge Joan H. Lefkow

Ms. Amin represented an inmate who alleged he was assaulted by a corrections officers, sustained abrasions around his neck, and was subjected to retaliatory solitary confinement. Ms. Amin was able to secure a settlement for her client.



Mary Ann Leuthner

Presented by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Thomas M. Lynch

Ms Leuthner represented a Vietnam veteran and his spouse. Due to unlawful garnishment, her clients had missed mortgage payments and faced imminent foreclosure of their long-term home. Through Ms. Leuthner's efforts, the bankruptcy case was discharged successfully, and the couple's home was saved.



C. David Ward

Presented by U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Thomas M. Lynch

Mr. Ward represented a bankruptcy client who suffered a heart attack and a year later, a suicide attempt. The bankruptcy ended creditor harassment and collection case filing, and the client credited Mr. Ward with "saving his life."



Craig E. Reimer

Presented by U.S. Magistrate Judge Mary M. Rowland

Mr. Reimer represented an owner of a small manufacturing shop who defaulted on a Small Business Loan but was determined not to declare bankruptcy and to keep his business afloat. Mr. Reimer was able to negotiate with the government a reasonable payment plan and ultimately resolve the matter.



Benjamin R. Kinney and Thomas R. Stilp

Presented by U.S. District Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer and U.S. Magistrate Judge Mary M. Rowland

Mr. Kinney and Mr. Stilp represented a factory worker in a sexual harassment and retaliation action against her employer and secured a settlement favorable to their client.



Bryan Krakauer, Blair M. Warner, Caitlin Maly, Frank J. Favia, Jr., John A. Prinziavalli, Alison R. Leff, and Alexa K. Perez

Presented by U.S. District Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer

This team of attorneys represented an arrestee who alleged excessive force during his arrest and the failure to provide medical care following his arrest. The parties ended up taking roughly forty depositions, and the case settled for \$100,000.



Lee N. Abrams, Marc R. Kadish, Benjamin A. Shoemaker, and Priya A. Desai

This attorney team represented a prisoner who alleged he had been stabbed while incarcerated. After three years of litigation, they helped their client reach a settlement.

Presented by U.S. District Chief Judge Rubén Castillo



Paul R. Steadman, Shuzo Maruyama, and Stephanie H. Lim
Presented by U.S. District Chief Judge Rubén Castillo

This team of attorneys represented a prisoner who filed a civil lawsuit over prison conditions. Counsel helped their client reach a settlement.



Robert (Rudy) Radasevich and Collette A. Woghiren
Presented by U.S. District Chief Judge Rubén Castillo

Mr. Radasevich and Ms. Woghiren represented an inmate who brought a complaint under Section 1983, alleging he was denied medication for hyperthyroidism. After two years on the case, counsel helped their client secure a favorable settlement.

**Ceremony co-sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and
the Federal Bar Association, Chicago Chapter**