



Pro Bono: A Gift not a Chore

To whom much is given, much is expected. As lawyers, we are given the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life especially for those who are underserved and have no financial access to justice. I represent pro bono an elderly minority couple who were victims of a bank error that resulted in the bank filing a wrongful mortgage foreclosure action against them. When pro bono clients tell you that "I thank God for you for helping us out of this mess," it makes being a pro bono lawyer that much more gratifying. Every lawyer in their legal career should do pro bono work and I can tell you that by doing so the practice of law becomes more meaningful and satisfying.



Aurora N. Abella Austriaco
President, Chicago Bar
Association

The Chicago Bar Association & The Chicago Bar Foundation's

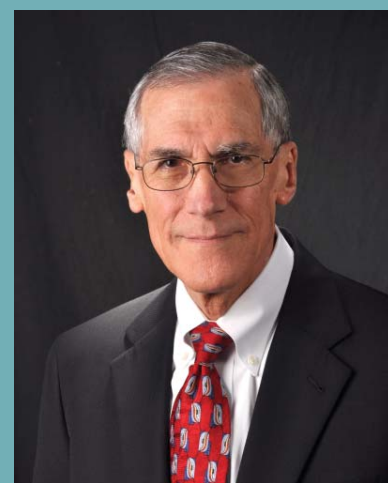
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Pro Bono: A Gift not a Chore

When I retired in 2004, after a forty-five year career as a trial attorney, I continued my volunteer commitment by working as a pro bono part-time legal aid staff attorney. Each week, I work twenty to thirty hours assisting clients with consumer issues in the areas of foreclosure, bankruptcy and debt collection. My experiences have provided me with fulfillment over these past seven years. Most significantly, they have added greater meaning and purpose to my life.



Howard Goffen
Retired attorney

The Chicago Bar Association & The Chicago Bar Foundation's

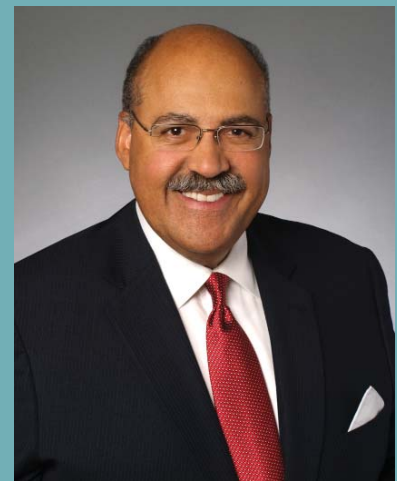
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Pro bono work has allowed me to remain grounded in life situations faced by people in our society who I originally went to law school to serve. Ours is a nation of haves and have-nots. Pro bono work has allowed me to help the have-nots receive and benefit from quality legal services that they'd otherwise not be able to access. Isn't that a big part of why all of us wanted to go to law school? Thank goodness for the pro bono opportunities we have to help people in need.



Graham Grady
Partner, Shefsky & Froelich

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Over the past eight years, as a student at Loyola's ChildLaw Clinic and an associate at McDermott Will & Emery, I have represented many children and young adults facing crises in their families, their education and their own lives. Despite their hardships and pressures, every one of these young people showed courage, resilience and respect. Being able to help them, even in some small way, has been greatly fulfilling for me. The work is not just career changing; it is life changing.



Elizabeth Lewis
McDermott Will & Emery

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As Attorney General, some of my most important work has been focused on helping homeowners facing foreclosure. Every year, my office receives thousands of calls for assistance from families desperate to save their homes. When it comes to helping them, the most important resource we can provide is an advocate. Quite simply, there is no substitute for legal representation. Pro bono attorneys are a lifeline for the thousands of Illinois families who need someone to advocate for them in the courtroom and give them a fighting chance to stay in their homes.



Lisa Madigan
Illinois Attorney General

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Teaching and encouraging our future lawyers to provide pro bono services to the unrepresented is extremely important. Getting involved in pro bono services is a must in our profession. I am blessed with the opportunity to do both. My long history of representing the underserved stems from witnessing the injustices people in my community suffered due to unawareness of their rights. My dedication to teaching law and helping people who otherwise would not be served is extremely rewarding.



Damian Ortiz
Clinical Professor, The John
Marshall Law School

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My pro bono work at the Indo-American Center lets me experience, first-hand, how we can use our training as lawyers and advocates to make legal services accessible to members of our community. I am often humbled by the strength and courage of our clients, who invoke the legal process to confront culturally controversial issues like divorce and child custody. It is a privilege to serve these clients and a profound reminder of our role in creating an equitable system of justice.



Sheetal Parikh
Vice President Legal and
Compliance Division,
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney

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When I was appointed Nicole's guardian ad litem, she was fourteen, pregnant, and a dropout. She'd spent her life in-and-out of the court system and viewed the courts and its actors suspiciously. I promised Nicole that, while I could not guarantee that she would get all she wanted, her voice would be heard. Since then, I successfully have seen Nicole through juvenile proceedings, changes in homes and schools, and a custody battle involving her baby. While these legal victories are rewarding professionally, the biggest reward is my weekly call from Nicole to chat about school, boys, and parenting.



Shauna Prewitt
Associate, Skadden Arps Slate
Meagher & Flom

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The legal profession is supposed to be about helping people get justice. Not everyone can afford an attorney to make sure that happens. Low income clients are scared and confused. They can't sleep. They can't concentrate on work. I'm an attorney. It is my job to help them and it is unbelievably rewarding to get justice for them. I find time to be a pro bono attorney because, as an attorney, it would be unacceptable for me not to.



Kathleen M. Robson
Robson & Lopez LLC

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My great-grandmother came to the U.S. as an immigrant and raised four daughters herself on a seamstress' salary. She lived to be 100. Standing on her shoulders and her daughter's, two generations later, I was the first in my family to go to college and then law school. When I sit across the table from my pro bono clients, many of whom have been women with little means seeking political asylum, I know I am not only helping them fulfill their dreams, I am impacting generations to come. That's an amazing feeling.



Natalie Spears
President, The Chicago
Bar Foundation

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