Too often these days, lawyers who are in mid-sized to larger firms do not have the opportunity to connect with real people who have simple, but important legal problems. Doing pro bono work gives us a chance to relate to clients directly and share with them their moments of elation or sadness, depending upon the outcome of their problem. Pro bono publico means “for the good of the public,” but pro bono work can be good for the soul as well.

J. Timothy Eaton
Partner, Shefsky & Froelich Ltd.
President, The Chicago Bar Association
“Do Something Great” is not an invitation. It is a mandate for lawyers. What that “something” is can be defined by each of us. With the blessings of at least nineteen years of formal education comes a responsibility to give “something” back – handling pro bono matters is a great “something.” Serving on a legal aid board, mentoring a pro bono lawyer, or raising funds to support access to justice are other examples. As you do that great “something” you will get much more in return.

William Conlon
Partner, Sidley Austin LLP
President, The Chicago Bar Foundation

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The opportunity to bring high-quality legal services to those most in need is one of the best things about practicing law. At Jones Day, we serve a wide variety of pro bono clients with just as wide a variety of legal problems. I’ve worked on matters that sought justice and fair treatment for individuals, and matters that pursued systemic change. It’s a source of great pride that we give the same, maximum effort to each and every client. What we take from our pro bono experiences is often particularly fulfilling given the personal connections we develop and the important interests we serve.

Theodore T. Chung
Partner, Jones Day
As a transactional attorney, I had to get outside my comfort zone to engage in pro bono work, but I’m glad I did. While dealing with branches of the military and the Veterans Administration is not something I do in my daily practice, I use the same skills I use every day as a corporate attorney – gathering information, simplifying concepts, writing, making sense of complex rules – to navigate the rules of these bodies on behalf of my pro bono clients. I get a lot of satisfaction in helping veterans work through a complicated system and get the benefits they deserve.

Martin A. DiLoreto Jr.
Partner, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

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I do it because...

- It is the right thing to do
- It makes me feel good
- Families need it
- Judges appreciate it
- A few hours brings dramatic change
- I learn new areas of law
- It makes me a better person
- I LOVE IT

You should do it because...

- It is the right thing to do
- It will make you feel good
- Families need it
- Judges appreciate it
- A few hours brings dramatic change
- You will learn new areas of law
- It will make you a better person
- YOU WILL LOVE IT

Ruben M. Garcia
Ruben M. Garcia, PC

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Brett J. Hart
Executive Vice President,
General Counsel & Secretary,
United Airlines, Inc.

Do Something Great

It doesn’t have to be a big complex case or one that involves many people. It doesn’t even have to be a case at all. Whether your pro bono effort helps one person in need or many, whether it is a large, complex and lengthy case, a transaction, or a simple appearance, great is defined by the act itself. Throughout my legal career at the U.S. Government, in private practice and now at United Airlines, I’ve experienced that any and all pro bono work that assists those in need is great work. Complex, big, simple or small, all pro bono work is great work.

Brett J. Hart
Executive Vice President,
General Counsel & Secretary,
United Airlines, Inc.

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On my first day of law school, I was told that a lawyer should be a social engineer ... a highly skilled, perceptive, and sensitive lawyer, who understands the Constitution and laws of the United States and who knows how to use them to solve the problems of local communities and better the conditions of underprivileged citizens. I serve as a pro bono attorney because I enjoy it, find it rewarding, and believe that it is an obligation.
Every day on the bench I see volunteer lawyers do great things helping people, through programs such as the Chicago Bar Association’s Municipal Court Pro Bono Program and legal service agencies. Solo practitioners, big firm lawyers, and even students with JusticeCorps, all taking time from their demanding practices and lives.

I also see the relief from worry and confusion, and the sense of justice in the eyes of the people they help. It’s heart-warming to see the difference these lawyers make.
I have always believed a law license is a gift and if you do not use it to help those who cannot help themselves you have squandered that gift. I have been fortunate to be able to correct a handful of wrongful convictions. Most recently, we were able to convince the Court of Appeals to reverse a conviction of a woman convicted of committing murder based on outdated and inaccurate arson science. My heart swelled with joy and pride watching her walk out of prison after 18 years. It is hard to imagine a greater professional reward.

Ronald S. Safer
Managing Partner, Schiff Hardin LLP