

Wiley Rein Recognizes 19 Individuals in Seventh Annual Pro Bono Program Celebration

October 29, 2019

Washington, DC—Wiley Rein honored 19 individuals last week for their outstanding commitment and contributions to pro bono matters in the past year. These deserving lawyers and professional staff, recognized during the firm’s seventh annual Pro Bono Program Celebration, were selected by the firm’s Pro Bono Committee based on nominations submitted by attorneys throughout the firm.

Managing Partner Peter D. Shields congratulated the honorees on their success in these important cases and thanked them for their support of the local community. He also thanked Pro Bono Partner Theodore A. Howard, and Pro Bono Committee chair Mary E. Borja for their leadership and hard work.

Ms. Borja introduced the individuals and teams who won awards, and described their outstanding work on the following pro bono representations:

- **Justice for plaintiffs in civil rights case (*Savage et al. v. Pocomoke City et al.*)** – Partner Brian Walsh; of counsel Craig Smith; associates Kendra P. Norwood, Moshe B. Broder, and Madeline J. Cohen, and senior legal assistant Wheknown Jasper-Booker. Representing the plaintiffs, we secured a favorable resolution to this high-profile civil rights case through mediation, bringing five years of litigation to a successful conclusion. Wiley Rein, along with the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs and the Maryland ACLU, filed the federal civil rights suit in 2016, challenging a conspiracy of race discrimination and retaliation among

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Worcester County and Pocomoke City's white officials targeting three African American police officers, including Pocomoke City's first black police chief. Our team achieved extraordinary results on behalf of the three officers, obtaining significant monetary awards for each of them. Pocomoke City, Worcester County, and the State of Maryland will also be subject to a court-approved Consent Decree, monitored for compliance by the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, with respect to their hiring, promotion, and retention practices affecting minority police officers – hopefully ensuring that the traumatic experiences suffered by our clients will not be repeated.

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- **Favorable settlement in ADA discrimination case against a major university.** Associate Nicole Audet Richardson and Pro Bono Partner Theodore A. Howard successfully resolved a long-running discrimination case on behalf of a student against a major university under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The student struggled with mental health issues while attending the university. After the student received treatment, the university told him he could not return to campus until he completed certain requirements to satisfy the school of his mental stability. The university refused the student's request for his classes to be recorded so that he could keep up with coursework during his time away from campus. Wiley Rein secured a settlement against the university in favor of our client.
- **Success for charter school in federal grant dispute.** Associate Kendra P. Norwood negotiated a favorable settlement on behalf of a Washington, DC public charter school in a grant dispute with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The matter stems from an Inspector General's report that had identified funding irregularities within a DOL grant program and named the school as one of the offending grantees. As a result of the findings, the DOL retroactively disallowed, and demanded repayment for, more than \$100,000 of the grant funds the school had received. This presented a significant financial burden for our client, given its status as a public charter school that operates on a tight, constrained budget. Ms. Norwood was instrumental in developing the legal positions advanced on the client's behalf, negotiating with DOL attorneys, and preparing all the written submissions to the DOL and the appeals board. Ms. Norwood ultimately secured a settlement

with \$2,700 owed by the charter school to the DOL – less than 3% of the amount initially demanded.

- **The Barker Adoption Foundation.** Partner Kathryn Bucher provides general legal advice – including more than 116 pro bono hours in 2019 – to The Barker Adoption Foundation, a nonprofit adoption agency licensed in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. Ms. Bucher also serves on the board of trustees for the Foundation, which provides comprehensive adoption-related programs and services and is built on the fundamental belief that all children deserve safe, loving, and permanent families.
- **Commitment to client in criminal court proceedings.** Partner Ralph J. Caccia, chair of the firm’s White Collar Defense & Government Investigations Practice, took over the court-appointed representation of a client a few years ago in a criminal case involving the possession and sale of illegal fireworks. Mr. Caccia was recognized this year for his ongoing fidelity, persistence, and successful negotiations on behalf of the client, whom he continues to represent.
- **Representing child in immigration proceeding** – Project assistant Eden Hankin, legal assistant Christina Lucas, project assistant Maggie Cole, and partner Karen L. Toto. Wiley Rein is seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status on behalf of a child who was born in El Salvador and is currently living in Maryland. As part of this multi-step process, our team persuaded a court to award custody of the child to his mother and aunt and entered an order of factual findings that will support the child’s application to U.S. Customs and Immigration Services.
- **Child custody matter** – Of counsel Keith A. Matthews and project assistant Eden Hankin. Mr. Matthews represents a pro bono client in a child custody matter being litigated in District of Columbia Superior Court. Ms. Hankin has provided critical support by preparing the initial drafts of discovery requests, drafting the initial deposition outline, and conducting useful investigative work.
- **Ninth Circuit appeal for prison inmate.** Associates Tatiana Sainati and Krystal B. Swendsboe handled a pro bono appeal for an inmate in California state prison who alleged that he had been improperly designated as a gang member and sent to maximum security prison in retaliation for exercising his First Amendment rights while incarcerated.

Wiley Rein also recognized three individuals for their overall commitment to the firm’s pro bono program:

- Grace Caroline Mahan – Ms. Mahan, an associate, was recognized for dedicating a significant number of hours to pro bono efforts this year, making valuable contributions on a host of appellate matters.
- Kay Tatum – Ms. Tatum, partner and chair of the firm’s Exempt Organizations Practice, provides ongoing support to numerous pro bono clients, including the Malta Conferences Foundation, a group of scientists promoting international cooperation through academic discussion. She spends many hours a year ensuring these scientists can continue their important work and navigate the legal challenges of a small international organization.
- Wheknown Jasper-Booker – Ms. Jasper-Booker, senior legal assistant, was recognized for her extraordinary commitment to the firm’s Pro Bono Program. A perennial pro bono stalwart, she contributed her time and talents to an amazing 20 different pro bono matters this year.