

THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA

A Tribute to  
**Pro Bono**  
**2009**

President's  
Pro Bono  
Service Awards



# President's Pro Bono Service Awards

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The State Bar Board of Governors created the President's Pro Bono Service Awards in 1983 to provide statewide recognition of attorneys for outstanding provision of pro bono legal services to the poor. In 2001, the awards categories were reconfigured to fully ensure that attorneys from a variety of practice settings be recognized for their extraordinary provision of pro bono legal services to low-income persons or organizations whose primary purpose is to serve the poor.

*The following factors are taken into consideration in the selection process:*

- Breadth and impact of nominee's pro bono work
- Nominee's practice setting
- Nature of pro bono program through which the work is done
- Evidence of nominee's commitment to pro bono work
- Nature of services contributed

## Office of Legal Services Center on Access to Justice Staff

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## Honorable Ronald M. George

*Chief Justice of California*

It is once again a privilege to join in celebrating the recipients of the President's Pro Bono Service Awards, the Loren Miller Legal Services Award, and the Jack Berman Award of Achievement. The individuals being honored embody the best of the legal profession: they have used their knowledge, skills, and expertise to assist those who otherwise might be unable to participate in our system of justice.

Legal aid providers perform extraordinary services for those who cannot afford counsel. The Judicial Branch and others have worked to increase funding through the Equal Access Fund, allowing attorneys to contribute to legal services when they pay their bar dues, and expanding opportunities to increase the sums generated by IOLTA accounts. But the need for legal services far outstrips resources. The pro bono contributions made by countless attorneys across California are essential.

Our system of justice must be accessible to all, or justice for each of us is at risk. These awards recognize some of those who have taken an extra step to make a difference such as enabling children to gain stability in their lives, fighting evictions to prevent homelessness, or helping individuals and families escape the cycle of domestic violence.

The combined legal aid and pro bono services provided by California's lawyers make our state a better place. We are indeed fortunate that so many lawyers selflessly step forward. Honoring them helps remind us that as members of the legal profession, each of us is obligated to work not simply for the bottom line, but for the improvement of the administration of justice for all.

On behalf of the entire California judicial branch, I congratulate each of these award recipients. Thank you for inspiring us to do more.



## Holly J. Fujie

*President, The State Bar of California, 2008-2009*

The recipients of the State Bar's 2009 President's Pro Bono Service Awards represent the very best of our legal profession. Now more than ever, public service-minded California lawyers are needed to bridge the "Justice Gap." This year the State Bar honors extraordinary attorneys who have helped to do so by giving their time, talent and passion to those who otherwise could not afford legal services. We congratulate not only the recipients of the 2009 President's

Pro Bono Service Awards, the Loren Miller Legal Services Award, and the Jack Berman Award of Achievement for Distinguished Services to the Profession and Public, but also their friends and families who supported them in this crucial work.

One of the great challenges in our justice system today is that it offers too little justice to too many people. Two-thirds of Californians who need and are entitled to legal services are unable to afford it. Their only hope is that all California lawyers will follow the lead of these honorees, and dedicate themselves to ensuring that our system serves not just paying clients, but every Californian whose rights depend on the State's courts. The lawyers here come from different practice settings – solo, corporate and large law firm. What unites them is their commitment to championing a fair and accessible justice system.

On behalf of the entire State Bar, thank you for setting an example in the profession for us all by reminding us injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Thank you and congratulations.

## Corporate

*Intel Corporation Legal Department, Folsom Campus*



**Left to right:** Kevin Dudek, Darran Flagg, Robb Gordon, Jayne Longueville, Ray Klassen, Jeff Schneider, Tim Dietz, Derek Reynolds, Stephanie St Dennis, and Andrea Zas Andreas

**Not Pictured:** Dianna Cordova, Paul Schelin, Todd Wilson, and Tracy Work

In January 2007, the Folsom Campus of Intel Corporation's Legal Department proactively reached out to the Voluntary Legal Services Program of Northern California (VLSP) to inquire about pro bono opportunities, particularly those that could aid children. According to VLSP, the "timing of their interest was propitious," as VLSP had just lost funding for its court-based Probate Clinic which primarily served probate guardianship clients. Intel, the first corporate legal department to participate with VLSP, partnered with the Sacramento Office of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP to provide representation in Probate Court guardianship proceedings. Intel approaches each case with tremendous enthusiasm and commitment, going above and beyond the call of duty by working individually with clients and the biological parents, not only to complete the guardianship process, but also to obtain other family and social services in order to meet client needs and strengthen support networks. In 2008, hundreds of pro bono hours were contributed by Intel Legal Department volunteers with more than half of those hours devoted to the Guardianship Program. Both attorney and non-attorney members of Intel's Legal Department are active participants in the Guardianship Program. Continuing the highly successful model of combining its volunteers with law firm volunteers, Intel is once again partnering with Orrick to jointly staff VLSP's Bankruptcy Clinic program to assist with Chapter 7 bankruptcy filings.

*Nominated by Voluntary Legal Services Program of Northern California*



**Palo Alto Pro Bono Committee:**

**Left to right, Row 1 (bottom):** Wendy Brenner (Co-Chair), Einat Sandman Clarke

**Row 2:** Kara Hagen, Patty Cheng, Maureen Alger (Firmwide Pro Bono Partner)

**Row 3 (top):** Erik Edwards, Edward Van Gieson, Angela Dunning, Brett White (Co-Chair)

joint pro bono project of The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County (LASSM), Communities Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA) and Bay Area Legal Aid (BayLegal)—and by providing direct representation to dozens of victims of domestic violence. Cooley was also actively involved with LASSM's Guardianship Legal Services Project and BayLegal's Immigration Relief for Domestic Violence Survivors Project. Additionally, in partnership with other legal services organizations located in the San Francisco Bay Area including but not limited to AIDS Legal Referral Panel, Bar

## Large Law Firm

*Cooley Godward Kronish LLP, Palo Alto Office*

The Palo Alto office of Cooley Godward Kronish LLP has been a significant contributor of pro bono legal services in the San Francisco Bay area for many years. In 2008, thirty-eight partners and 102 associates and special counsel in the Palo Alto office contributed over 13,000 hours on more than 175 pro bono matters. Cooley played a particularly valuable role in 2008 by helping to maintain and support a new domestic violence pro bono program, the Domestic Violence Collaborative of San Mateo County—a



## Solo Practitioner

*Yasmine S. Mehmet, San Francisco*

Since being admitted to the State Bar of California in 1998, Yasmine S. Mehmet has been one of the most consistent and dedicated volunteers with the Bar Association of San Francisco's Volunteer Legal Services Program (VLSP). She has successfully integrated a significant amount of pro bono work for both the VLSP and the family law section of the Bar Association of San Francisco into her solo family law practice. In

September of 2008, she became a certified Family Law Specialist and in July of 2009, she also became part of an association of attorneys called Thorn-Seymour-Mehmet. During 2008, Ms. Mehmet contributed more than 200 hours of pro bono representation to individual low-income family law clients. In addition, due to the depth of her family law knowledge and commitment to providing guidance to newer and inexperienced attorneys, she mentored five new pro bono attorneys working on complex family law matters. As someone who goes beyond the call of duty, Ms. Mehmet has come to be one of the attorneys VLSP relies upon the most to work with challenging clients including those who are immigrants, victims of domestic violence, the elderly, and clients with substance abuse issues or mental health illnesses. Many of Ms. Mehmet's pro bono clients also have complicated emotional and violent relationships, or speak English as a second language. VLSP often struggles to find experienced attorneys to provide services in family law and Ms. Mehmet has proven to be one of the best.

*Nominated by Bar Association of San Francisco Volunteer Legal Services Program*

Association of San Francisco Volunteer Legal Services Program, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, and Public Advocates, Cooley handled a variety of other pro bono matters for individuals with limited means and served as co-counsel on significant impact litigation. Cooley attorneys from the Palo Alto office also provided pro bono representation to dozens of non-profit organizations in 2008.

*Jointly nominated by Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County and Bay Area Legal Aid*



# Pro Bono California 2009

## State Bar's Commitment to Pro Bono

Originally adopted by the Board of Governors in December 1989, the State Bar's Pro Bono Resolution encourages all attorneys to contribute at least 50 hours per year of pro bono service, "...to provide or enable the direct delivery of legal services, without expectation of compensation other than reimbursement of expenses, to indigent individuals, or to not-for-profit organizations with a primary purpose of providing services to the poor or on behalf of the poor or disadvantaged, not-for-profit organizations with a purpose of improving the law and the legal system, or increasing access to justice."

In June 2002, the Resolution was amended to reflect an updated and renewed commitment to serving the legal needs of low- and moderate income Californians today, including adding an option to support pro bono through financial contributions. The Resolution in its entirety can be found on the State Bar's website at <http://calbar.ca.gov/calbar/pdfs/accessjustice/2003-Pro-Bono-Res.pdf>.

## California Attorneys Can Make a Difference!

Whether you are newly admitted, retired from the active practice of law, a law firm associate with a deferred start date, practicing in a government, corporate, academic setting or as a solo, you can make a difference in the lives of those who would not otherwise have access to the legal system. If you are interested in doing pro bono work, please go to [www.calbar.org/probonoresources](http://www.calbar.org/probonoresources) for more information, including where you can go to provide assistance to low-income tenants and homeowners in foreclosure-related matters. You also can contact the State Bar of California Office of Legal Services staff at 415.538.2219, 415.538.2267 or [programdevelopment@calbar.ca.gov](mailto:programdevelopment@calbar.ca.gov) for more information about pro bono opportunities.

## Pro Bono Practice Program (formerly known as the Emeritus Attorney Pro Bono Program)

If you are an attorney who is otherwise "retired" from the active practice of law, in a transition period or are taking a sabbatical from the practice of law, please consider enrolling in the State Bar's Pro Bono Practice Program. The Pro Bono Practice Program waives the active status membership fee for eligible attorneys who do pro bono work exclusively with a Qualified Legal Services Program or a State Bar certified lawyer referral service (no fee panel). The nature and scope of the pro bono work varies with each legal services program or LRS. An overview of the Pro Bono Practice Program, FAQs and application materials are available on the State Bar's website at [http://calbar.ca.gov/calbar/pdfs/comcom/PB-Practice-Prog\\_FAQs.pdf](http://calbar.ca.gov/calbar/pdfs/comcom/PB-Practice-Prog_FAQs.pdf). For more information about the Pro Bono Practice Program, contact Mike Dayao at [michael.dayao@calbar.ca.gov](mailto:michael.dayao@calbar.ca.gov) or 415.538.2328.

## Wiley W. Manuel Certificates for Pro Bono Legal Services

This certificate program was created in 1989 to recognize lawyers, law students, paralegals, legal secretaries and other volunteers in California who contribute at least 50 hours of pro bono service in a 12 month period. Pro bono coordinators at legal services programs and law firms can submit an application on behalf of their volunteers. Information about the Wiley Manuel Certificates is available on the State Bar's website at [http://www.calbar.ca.gov/calbar/pdfs/comcom/SCDLS\\_WManuel-Nom-Form.pdf](http://www.calbar.ca.gov/calbar/pdfs/comcom/SCDLS_WManuel-Nom-Form.pdf).

## Contribute to the Justice Gap Fund

The Justice Gap Fund implements AB 2301 (2006) which recognizes that 80 percent of the legal needs of poor Californians are not being met, and authorizes the State Bar to collect contributions from its members to support legal services for low-income Californians. Contributions are voluntary and encouraged from all California lawyers. The suggested contribution of \$100 can be made annually through the State Bar member fee statement or at any time through the State Bar's website at <http://calbar.org/justicegapfund>. More than \$1.5 million has been contributed in 2008 and 2009 combined to help reduce the justice gap.

Contributions are tax-exempt to the full extent of the law and recipients are 501(c)(3) non-profit legal services organizations. Please join your colleagues by making a contribution to the Justice Gap Fund.

## National Pro Bono Celebration, October 25 – 31, 2009

The National Pro Bono Celebration, launched by the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service, is a coordinated national effort to showcase the great difference that pro bono lawyers make and dedicated to the quest for more pro bono volunteers to meet the ever-growing legal needs of the most vulnerable. On May 15, the Board of Governors of the State Bar of California passed a resolution that supports the first National Pro Bono Week Celebration, commends California attorneys for their ongoing pro bono contributions, and reminds all State Bar members that by engaging in pro bono work and providing financial support they can make a positive difference. More information is available at [www.celebrateprobono.org](http://www.celebrateprobono.org).