

# A Tribute to Pro Bono 2004



Anthony P. Capozzi  
President, The State Bar  
of California, 2003-2004

*As State Bar President*, it is my honor to acknowledge and congratulate the recipients of the 2004 President's Pro Bono Service Awards, Jack Berman Award of Achievement for Distinguished Services to the Profession and Public, and the Loren Miller Legal Services Award. Each of these attorneys is being recognized for making significant contributions to improving the lives of others. Their efforts are particularly noteworthy as the state faces challenging economic times.

The recipients of the President's Pro Bono Service Awards who come from a variety of practice settings and represent rural and urban geographic areas provided much needed pro bono services to those who would not otherwise have access to the legal system.

The Jack Berman Award recipient changed the lives of low-income children and their families in the area of special education law and the Loren Miller Award recipient is recognized for his ongoing dedication and commitment to ensuring the provision of legal services to the poor in California.

On behalf of the State Bar of California, my heartfelt thanks to the awardees — each of whom represent the noblest of our profession and deserve our gratitude, admiration and respect.



Honorable  
Ronald M. George  
Chief Justice of California

*My sincere congratulations* and appreciation go to this year's recipients of the State Bar President's Pro Bono Service Awards, Jack Berman Award and Loren Miller Legal Services Award. I commend these professionals for taking seriously their ethical responsibility as lawyers. Those honored have dedicated their time and resources to provide meaningful access to justice. They have recognized that there are clients who lack resources but have legitimate needs not being adequately addressed. Although pro bono work is not — and cannot be — legally required, it is an essential element in achieving the goal of establishing a legal system that is not reserved just for a small class of paying clients. The assistance provided by these attorneys serves not only the individuals whom they assist, but all Californians. The accomplishments of these outstanding recipients demonstrate that an attorney need not specialize in a specific practice in order to contribute the skills necessary to positively affect people's lives. I thank the truly deserving individuals whom we honor for reminding us of our profession's commitment to ensuring a fair and accessible justice system.

## President's Pro Bono Service Awards

The State Bar Board of Governors established 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. Awards categories beginning 2001 were reconfigured to fully ensure that lawyers from a wide scope of settings be recognized for their

extraordinary provision of pro bono legal services to low income individuals or organizations whose primary purpose is to serve the poor.

These awards are given for pro bono contributions provided during 2003.

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

- \* breadth and impact of nominee's 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

# 2004 President's Pro Bono Service Awards Recipients



## Corporate

*Natividad Chavira, Santa Ana*

*Natividad Chavira* served as Deputy General Counsel for the Unocal Corporation and was a member of the Law Department for 24 years before relocating to the Santa Ana law firm of Howard, Loveder, Strickroth & Parker where he is Of Counsel. During 2003, Mr. Chavira's pro

bono work included assisting grandparents seeking custody of three grandchildren all under the age of 8; representing a father seeking custody from a drug addicted mother; and representing a teenage girl wrongly accused of theft. Mr. Chavira also has a long history of providing pro bono service to non-profit organizations. He is a member of the Association of Corporate Counsel America.



## Small Law Firm

*Alan Yee, Oakland*

A named partner in the five-attorney firm Siegel & Yee, *Alan Yee* was lead pro bono counsel and the key organizer and strategist on a complex and high impact affordable housing case in Oakland Chinatown that affected low-income elderly and limited English speaking Asian

immigrant tenants. He also negotiated a settlement agreement for the Oakland Chinatown Coalition in an environmental justice lawsuit to ensure the health and safety of the low-income children and seniors in Chinatown, as well as the overall community. His contribution of hundreds of hours of pro bono service in 2003 benefited more than 12,000 individuals.



## Government

*Brian Wolf, Placerville*

*Brian Wolf* is a Senior Judicial Staff Attorney and Judge Pro Tem at the El Dorado County Superior Court. His pro bono work is as a non-paid Judge Advocate General (JAG) Colonel in the California State Military Reserve, serving as the Deputy Command Judge Advocate of the

49th Combat Support Command in Fairfield. The Reserve is the non-federal portion of the California National Guard and is a volunteer organization. In 2003, Mr. Wolf provided hundreds of hours of legal advice and assistance to more than 2,500 National Guard members deployed to Iraq, Kuwait, Bosnia and Kosovo. He also recruited, trained and supervised ten volunteer attorneys to support the 49th Combat Support Command.

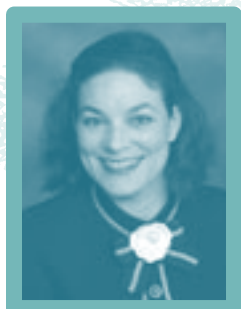


*From left to right:  
Mark Parnes  
Peter LaBoskey  
Leo Cunningham*

## Large Law Firm

*Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati,  
Palo Alto and San Francisco Offices*

*Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati* is a full-service national law firm with a strong commitment to pro bono. In 2003, attorneys from the Palo Alto and San Francisco offices. contributed thousands of pro bono hours. Their contributions included: supporting, recruiting and taking cases for representation for the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County's CareGivers Network; staffing the Stanford Community Law Clinic's monthly East Palo Alto Pro Bono Clinics for guardianships and consumer issues; co-counseling with the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund to obtain a modified consent decree for disabled kids of color to receive appropriate education; representing asylum seekers and assisting low-income entrepreneurs with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area.



## Solo Practitioner

*Jennifer Aragon, Los Angeles*

*Jennifer Aragon* has been a sole practitioner in the area of bankruptcy since 1995. She has been a volunteer with Public Counsel's Debtor Assistance Project (DAP) for more than four years. During 2003, Ms. Aragon contributed more than 400 hours providing representation to low-income

debtors in Chapter 7 bankruptcy cases and adversary proceedings. She also donated time each month to provide counsel and advice to debtors at reaffirmation hearings. Being bilingual in Spanish, she is able to assist particularly vulnerable consumers who speak little or no English.



From left to right:  
Karis Chi  
Benjamin Gluck  
Dorothy Wolpert  
David Leshner  
Jennifer Coon  
John McCoy  
Gary Lincenberg  
Terry Bird  
Ekwan Rhow  
Tom Reichert  
Paul Chan  
Mark Dooks

## Medium Law Firm

*Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert, Nessim, Dooks & Lincenberg, Los Angeles*

*Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert, Nessim, Dooks & Lincenberg* is a 20-attorney litigation firm in Los Angeles that has consistently dedicated much-needed pro bono services to improve working conditions in the garment industry. In 2003, the firm co-counseled with the Asian Pacific American Legal Center on two challenging impact cases against popular women's clothing retailers. Both cases resulted in important victories for low wage garment workers to seek retailer accountability for workplace violations. BMBW also co-counseled with Bet Tzedek Legal Services on a case that resulted in a landmark settlement for garment workers. Hundreds of hours of litigation support at both the trial and appellate levels plus other resources were contributed on these cases.



## Recently Admitted

*Gabriella Navarro-Busch, Ventura*

Admitted to the State Bar in September 2001, *Gabriella Navarro-Busch* is a sole practitioner in the area of immigration law and currently is the president of the Mexican American Bar Association of Ventura County. Prior to becoming an attorney, she worked as a dispatcher for

the Oxnard Police Department. Ms. Navarro-Busch provides legal advice and coordination for the monthly Oxnard Free Legal Clinic that assists Spanish-speaking immigrants. In addition, she provides pro bono representation on immigration cases that result in family reunification and increased opportunities for children and their parents. In 2003, she contributed more than 700 pro bono hours.



Top row, L-R:  
Sheree Swetin  
Jennifer Duncan  
Jerry Carmody  
Rebecca Sigrist  
Carl Poirot  
  
Bottom row L-R:  
Russell Kohn  
Clare Maudsley  
Thomas Buchenau  
Erika Hiramatsu

## Distinguished Pro Bono Service

*San Diego County Disaster Relief Coalition*

During the fall of 2003, a coalition of more than 20 local bar related organizations and law firms recruited and trained more than 300 attorneys to provide thousands of hours of pro bono legal services to hundreds of victims of the San Diego County fires. Headed by the San Diego County Bar Association, the *San Diego County Disaster Relief Coalition* utilized three existing legal services delivery structures, the Lawyer Information and Referral Service, the Legal Aid Society of San Diego, and the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program. In addition, Morrison & Foerster provided almost 200 hours of direct services and developed and printed a booklet with legal information and resources for fire victims.

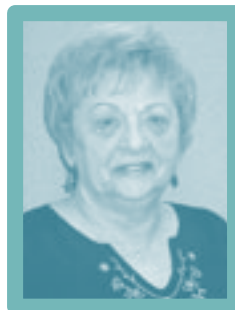


*Florence Rosenberg*

## Emeritus or Limited Active Practice

*Florence Rosenberg and Pearl Vogel, Van Nuys*

*Florence Rosenberg and Pearl Vogel* practiced family law for more than 30 years each before retiring. Ms. Rosenberg and Ms. Vogel have been committed and devoted volunteers at the Van Nuys Self-Help Legal Access Center since it opened in November 2000, explaining legal rights and obligations in different areas of family law. As an added benefit, Ms. Vogel who was born in Uruguay often uses her bilingual skills to assist Spanish speakers. The Center is a collaboration between Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLS), the San Fernando Valley Bar Association and the Los Angeles County Courts. Both have participated in NLS's Domestic Violence Clinic and also are members of the State Bar's Emeritus Attorney Pro Bono Program.



*Pearl Vogel*

# Pro Bono Highlights 2004

## The 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. 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. The revisions strengthen the original resolution by

- \* acknowledging judicial support for pro bono
- \* urging law schools to promote and encourage law student pro bono participation and
- \* adding an option to support pro bono through financial contributions.

The resolution also references California Business and Professions Code Section 6068 (h) that establishes the duty of a lawyer "Never to reject, for any consideration personal to himself or herself, the cause of the defenseless or the oppressed."

Local bar associations are encouraged to revisit their commitment to pro bono and to adopt similar resolutions. For a copy of the Pro Bono Resolution or for more information from the State Bar's Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services (SCDLS) about how to develop or enhance pro bono activities at the local level, contact Sharon Ngim at 415.538.2267 or [Sharon.Ngim@calbar.ca.gov](mailto:Sharon.Ngim@calbar.ca.gov).

## You Can Make a Difference!

*You possess the power to make a difference and the power to recognize those volunteers who are making that difference. For more information about pro bono opportunities in your community, contact your local bar association or the State Bar of California Office of Legal Services, Access & Fairness Programs, Program Development Unit.*

## Office Of Legal Services, Access & Fairness Programs

### Program Development Unit

Patricia D. Lee, Director, OLSAFP  
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Kimberly Warmsley,  
Administrative Assistant II  
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## Emeritus Attorney Pro Bono Program

Qualified Legal Services Programs and State Bar certified lawyer referral services (no fee panels) are in need of volunteers with experience. This is where attorneys who are otherwise "retired" from the active practice of law can provide valuable service, putting years of legal experience to good use. Work with staff attorneys and pro bono managers to provide legal services to those in need and the State Bar will waive the active status fee. Stay involved and make a difference! For more information about the Emeritus Attorney Pro Bono Program, contact Betty Barker at 415-538-2328, email: [betty.barker@calbar.ca.gov](mailto:betty.barker@calbar.ca.gov). To see the application, go to: <http://calbar.ca.gov/calbar/pdfs/comcom/2003-Emeritus-App.pdf>.



Office of Legal Services,  
Access & Fairness Programs

*The mission of the Program Development Unit is to develop and support efforts on a statewide basis that enhance and improve the delivery of legal services to low and moderate income Californians.*

## The State Bar of California

Office of Legal Services,  
Access & Fairness Programs

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