

Federal Bar Association Lauds Four White Collar Attorneys for Pro Bono Work

May 2, 2023

The Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association (FBA) recognized four Katten attorneys for their pro bono work in the Northern District of Illinois. The attorneys were recognized during the FBA's 23rd Annual Pro Bono and Public Interest Award ceremony on May 1, during which Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer and Noelle Brennan, president of FBA's Chicago chapter, delivered remarks.

The following White Collar and Internal Investigations attorneys were selected to receive Awards for Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service:

Partner Daniel J. Collins was recognized for taking on the case of an Illinois prisoner who was serving two 50-year sentences. Dan filed a habeas petition on his behalf, which was granted. The case was sent back to Cook County Circuit Court, where Dan was able to negotiate a plea (for both cases, even though only one was subject of the habeas petition). The plea resulted in the client's release based on time served. US District Judge Matthew Kennelly nominated Dan for the award and, at the ceremony, introduced Dan and his work.

Partner Sheldon Zenner and associates Lari Dierks and Ian Vitalis negotiated a voluntary dismissal of a high-profile criminal fraud indictment on the eve of trial, something that US District Judge Thomas Durkin, who presented the award to the Katten team, said he had not seen in 40 of practicing criminal law in the federal court. The case involved Arjun Dhillon, who had been indicted on two counts of federal wire fraud in Chicago for a scheme where he purportedly represented himself as being affiliated with the Trump White House and with celebrity musician Kanye West when he was allegedly neither. While assisting Dhillon's CJA panel attorney Gabrielle Sansonetti, the Katten team dug into the facts and evidence, met with Dhillon and his wife and other witnesses, and discovered extraordinary facts and evidence to be missing from the government's case. Just weeks before the trial was to begin, the team took a strategic stand and presented their evidence not to the jury, but to the US Attorney's Office. The presentation led to a dismissal of the indictment following an agreed six months of good conduct.

CONTACTS

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