

## For Immediate Release

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Contact: Jason Milch  
312.379.9406  
[jmilch@jaffepr.com](mailto:jmilch@jaffepr.com)

## Katten Announces Recipients of 12th Annual *Pro Bono* Service Awards and Special *Pro Bono* Leadership Award

**CHICAGO** – **Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP** is pleased to announce that it has recognized nine of its attorneys for their outstanding *pro bono* service, and honored the founder of its *pro bono* program with a special *Pro Bono* Leadership Award.

The recipients of the firm's 12<sup>th</sup> annual *Pro Bono* Service Awards in Chicago are Litigation partner **David F. Benson** and Public Finance associate **Chad R. Doobay**. In Chicago, Katten also honored the founder of its *pro bono* program, Tax Planning attorney **Reid A. Mandel**, with a special *Pro Bono* Leadership Award. In New York, **Robert E. Friedman** and associate **Jacqueline Garrod** (honorable mention), both of the Trusts and Estates Practice, and Litigation associate **Jovana Vujovic** received the *Pro Bono* Service Award. Also recognized were Los Angeles Litigation associates **Noah R. Balch** and **Gloria C. Franke**, Washington Corporate associate **Seth M. Messner** and Charlotte Trusts and Estates associate **Diane B. Burks**.

This year's award recipients provided *pro bono* services in a wide range of legal situations, including the following:

- Securing adoptive families for children with special needs;
- Representing a coalition of civil rights organizations in an appellate case strengthening the protections of the Fair Housing Act
- Incorporating and obtaining tax-exempt status for charities providing health care services to low-income, homebound individuals; extending fine arts opportunities to young people in impoverished communities; supporting sustainable development for West African women laborers; funding cancer research; and aiding victims of the Haitian earthquake.
- Securing the First Amendment rights of a nonprofit online message board to protect its members from compelled disclosure of their identities.
- Preparing estate planning documents for first responders, low-income seniors and indigent HIV-positive individuals.
- Winning asylum in the United States for individuals fleeing persecution in Chad, Guatemala, Kazakhstan and Zimbabwe.
- Aiding nature conservancy organizations in acquiring and preserving natural lands;
- Clearing the name of a nursing home attendant who stood to lose her right to practice her Profession.

- Serving by court appointment in pursuing claims by prisoners for violation of their constitutional rights.

This year's *Pro Bono* Service Awards honorees in Katten's Los Angeles office were presented their awards at a June ceremony officiated by The Honorable A. Howard Matz of the United States District Court for the Central District of California. Other honorees will receive their awards during ceremonies in mid-July in their respective office locations. In Chicago, the Honorable James R. Epstein, Justice of the Illinois Appellate Court, will provide remarks, while Sarah Green, Director of Customer Support Services at NYC Business Solutions will present the awards in New York. The Washington, D.C., awards will be presented by Nancie Marzulla, a member of the Maryland Youth Ballet, Inc.'s Board of Directors, and the Honorable Richard D. Boner, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, Mecklenburg County, will present the awards to Charlotte recipients.

"*Pro bono* service is more than just part of the job for the outstanding recipients of our 12th annual *Pro Bono* Service Awards," said Vincent A. F. Sergi, Katten's National Managing Partner. "Not only have these individuals committed their time and legal skill to helping underserved individuals and groups and charitable and nonprofit causes, they also serve as role models for other attorneys to follow, understanding that they have a responsibility to give back to the communities in which they live and work. This year, we are particularly honored to be able to recognize Reid, whose leadership in founding our *pro bono* program helped make this all possible."

Katten's *Pro Bono* Service Awards include a \$1,000 honorarium, which recipients will donate to a charity of their choice.

The following summaries highlight each recipient's *pro bono* work:

**Reid A. Mandel**

Recipient of Katten's first *Pro Bono* Leadership Award, Mr. Mandel created the firm's *pro bono* program and nurtured and sustained it for more than 25 years after joining the firm as a Tax Planning associate in 1981. Currently of counsel to the firm after serving as a partner for more than two decades, Mr. Mandel was instrumental in the firm's hiring of Jonathan Baum as one of the nation's first full-time *pro bono* partners. Mr. Mandel also developed relationships with numerous *pro bono* organizations that continue to provide a stream of *pro bono* opportunities for Katten's attorneys.

Mr. Mandel has devoted thousands of *pro bono* service hours to hundreds of individuals and nonprofit organizations. Among those that have benefited from Mr. Mandel's services over the years are the Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago, the March of Dimes, the Joffrey Ballet, Uptown Center Hull House, providers of disaster relief, community development organizations, immigrant aid societies, job placement services, veterans groups, homeless shelters, animal rescue leagues,

medical research foundations, educational institutions, inner-city micro businesses and fine arts organizations.

Mr. Mandel is donating his honorarium to the Community Economic Development Law Project of the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

**David F. Benson**

Mr. Benson has devoted a significant amount of time to *pro bono* work since joining the firm as a summer associate in 2002. He has represented diverse clients and litigated a wide range of issues, from the recovery of stolen funds to the protection of the First Amendment rights of free association and free speech, to probate and major civil rights matters. As a member of the Chicago Office *Pro Bono* Committee, Mr. Benson also is an active and passionate advocate for others in the firm to do *pro bono* work.

Mr. Benson will donate his honorarium to the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

**Chad R. Doobay**

Since joining Katten in 2006, Mr. Doobay has focused his *pro bono* work on obtaining protective relief for asylum seekers. One such case involved a Zimbabwean man who was beaten and threatened by his government for defending the rights of white farmers whose land was seized by the government and redistributed to non-whites. The client and his family were granted asylum in November 2010. Mr. Doobay has also obtained asylum for refugees fleeing persecution in Chad and Kazakhstan, and advised on several other successful cases.

In addition to his individual *pro bono* cases, Mr. Doobay serves on the Leadership Council of the National Immigrant Justice Center, a Chicago-based organization that coordinates *pro bono* asylum case opportunities for attorneys. Mr. Doobay is donating his honorarium to the National Immigrant Justice Center.

**Jacqueline Garrod**

Ms. Garrod became involved in *pro bono* work at Katten as a first-year associate in 2001 through the South Brooklyn Legal Services Clinic (SBLs), where she assisted HIV-positive individuals in preparing wills, health care proxies, living wills and powers of attorney.

In addition to her ongoing work with SBLs, Ms. Garrod has provided legal advice to the Correspondents' Fund, an organization that provides journalism scholarships to promising students with the mission of improving the quality of the press and preserving its freedom. She also has taken an active role with the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, providing legal advice to the institution regarding its gift campaign policy.

**Robert E. Friedman**

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Since joining the firm as a summer associate in 1974, Mr. Friedman has been a passionate supporter of conservation efforts in the Adirondack Mountains and has devoted his *pro bono* service time to the Adirondack Nature Conservancy, Adirondack Land Trust and the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks. As an original board member of the Natural History Museum, he has been intimately involved in planning, fundraising and overseeing the museum's growth and mission. Mr. Friedman also works with the SBLs HIV Project.

Mr. Friedman is donating his honorarium to the Adirondack Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks.

**Jovana Vujovic**

Ms. Vujovic first became involved in *pro bono* work through Harvard Law School's Immigration and Refugee Clinic and has continued her service work since joining Katten in 2005. She has litigated numerous *pro bono* cases, focusing on the areas of constitutional and prisoners' rights, as well as immigration. Ms. Vujovic has handled a number of asylum cases and currently represents a teenage Guatemalan woman seeking asylum in the United States. This case has personal significance for Ms. Vujovic, who came to the United States from Serbia alone as a teenager to pursue a better life.

Ms. Vujovic will donate her honorarium to Upwardly Global.

**Noah R. Balch**

Mr. Balch has volunteered hundreds of *pro bono* service hours on a wide range of matters during his four years at Katten. In his most memorable case, he defended Dolores Sheen in an action that arose from a family dispute regarding the distribution of her father's trust. The action had threatened to strip the Sheen Educational Foundation (SEF) of its 501(c)(3) status. SEF funds the Sheenway School and Cultural Center, an educational institution that provides enhanced alternative learning opportunities to underprivileged students in Los Angeles. Mr. Balch's defense of Ms. Sheen has allowed for the development of a new high school, the Heritage College Ready Academy, on the Sheenway campus, and has enabled Ms. Sheen to continue her other work on behalf of the disadvantaged youth of Los Angeles.

Mr. Balch is donating his honorarium to the Sheen Educational Foundation.

**Gloria C. Franke**

Actively engaged in the firm's *pro bono* program since she started at Katten as a summer associate in 2005, Ms. Franke currently is representing an inmate in his civil rights case against four Los Angeles police officers. The officers allegedly stopped Ms. Franke's client without probable cause and subsequently planted narcotics on his person in an attempt to charge him with controlled substance offenses.

Ms. Franke's *pro bono* client service work also has involved adoption proceedings through Public Counsel's adoption project and immigration proceedings with the National Center for Refugee

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and Immigrant Children. Ms. Franke first became involved in *pro bono* work while in law school at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law.

Ms. Franke will donate her honorarium to Dress for Success Worldwide – West (Los Angeles).

**Seth M. Messner**

Mr. Messner's *pro bono* work at Katten is an extension of his personal commitment to community service. Prior to joining the firm, he worked as assistant director of a charity serving underprivileged children in Chicago and served in the Peace Corps in Senegal.

Mr. Messner's *pro bono* work at Katten has benefited numerous Washington, D.C.-area nonprofits and charities. In one of his most memorable cases, he advised a ballet company on whether a requirement that a ballerina cover her dreadlocks during a performance was discriminatory. He also has assisted in the formation of a number of nonprofits, including one that provides health care services and public health messages to disadvantaged residents of the District of Columbia. In addition, Mr. Messner has provided guidance to nonprofits regarding corporate governance, the identification of and protection against potential liabilities, compliance with local laws and regulations, and charitable solicitation licenses.

Mr. Messner is donating his honorarium to the Maryland Youth Ballet, Inc.

**Diane B. Burks**

During her four years at Katten, Ms. Burks has assisted in the formation of numerous charitable organizations, including those that provide services supporting sustainable development for female West African laborers, and in raising funds and awareness for cancer research laboratories. Ms. Burks also volunteers with Wills for Heroes, preparing legal documents for first responders, and assists low-income seniors in preparing wills, powers of attorney and health care powers of attorney. In addition, she serves as a supervising attorney at the Charlotte School of Law Wills Clinical Lab, which prepares wills and powers of attorney for Legal Services of Southern Piedmont clients.

Ms. Burks will donate her honorarium to the Paula Takacs Foundation for Sarcoma Research.

Katten has a long-term commitment to helping the poor, the powerless and the disenfranchised obtain first-rate representation without charge. Attorneys and other legal professionals give their time, resources and talent to serve individuals and organizations in need, to engage in important national litigation, and to partner with local legal service providers to ensure access to the justice system. The firm's *pro bono* program includes litigation, both on behalf of individuals and groups, in matters of housing and public accommodations discrimination, civil liberties, immigration, criminal defense, prisoners' rights and consumer matters. Katten attorneys also perform transactional work in such areas as corporate and tax assistance for nonprofit organizations, intellectual property law, employee benefits and international trade law.

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*Founded in Chicago in 1974, Katten is a national law firm with strong and growing global capabilities. The firm's business-savvy professionals provide clients in numerous industries with sophisticated, high-value legal services with a focus on corporate, financial services, litigation, real estate, environmental, commercial finance, public finance, intellectual property, health care and wealth management. For more information, visit [www.kattenlaw.com](http://www.kattenlaw.com).*

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