

## For Immediate Release

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### Katten Announces Recipients of Ninth Annual *Pro Bono* Service Awards

CHICAGO – Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP is pleased to announce that it has selected eight attorneys to receive its top honor for *pro bono* service. This year's recipients of the firm's ninth annual *Pro Bono* Service Awards are Chicago-based Environmental partner [Laura A. O'Connell](#) and Litigation and Dispute Resolution associates [Jeffrey Jamison](#), [Brian J. Poronsky](#) and [Cara A. Roecker](#); New York-based Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate [Brian L. Muldrew](#) and Intellectual Property associate [Keely L. Herrick](#); Washington-based Antitrust associate [David J. Gonen](#); and Los Angeles-based Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate [Marisa Gayle Westervelt](#). Also receiving honorable mention recognition in this year's *Pro Bono* Service Awards are [Steven Shiffman](#), a New York-based Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner, and **Gail M. Robertson**, a word processing supervisor in Katten's Los Angeles office.

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

- Revolutionizing local housing court practices to ensure that low-income tenants cannot be evicted from their homes without due process of law.
- Securing anti-pollution measures to protect the health and property of citizens threatened by environmental hazards in their communities.
- Saving millions of dollars for a nonprofit developer of affordable housing for low-income families in a construction dispute.
- Winning civil rights damages for an immigrant victim of police discrimination and brutality.
- Securing protection for the intellectual property of poets, playwrights, musicians and sculptors.
- Preventing a mentally disabled woman from being defrauded out of her home.
- Cultivating future leaders through a mock trial program at an inner-city high school.

This year's *Pro Bono* Service Awards are being presented during ceremonies in each recipient's office location between July 30 and August 13. Three distinguished jurists will present the awards: in Chicago, the Honorable Abner J. Mikva, a former federal judge, U.S. Representative and University of Chicago Law School professor; in New York, William J. Dean, executive director of Volunteers of Legal Service; and in Los Angeles, the Honorable Judge Tricia Ann Bigelow of the California Court of Appeal. In addition, Roger P. Furey, managing partner of Katten's Washington office, will present the award in that location.

“The 2008 *Pro Bono* Service Award recipients that we are honoring have made valuable contributions to charitable and nonprofit causes across the country,” said [Vincent A. F. Sergi](#), Katten’s National Managing Partner. “These individuals embody Katten’s long-standing commitment to helping the poor, the powerless and the disenfranchised obtain first-rate representation without charge.”

The *Pro Bono* Service Awards include a \$1,000 honorarium, which recipients will donate to a charity of their choice. The following summaries highlight the recipients’ *pro bono* work:

**Jeffrey Jamison, Associate, Litigation and Dispute Resolution – Chicago**

Jeffrey Jamison has been with Katten since September 2006 and has logged more than 400 hours of *pro bono* service in less than two years. His passion for service to the community has been evident since high school, when he began working on public interest and social justice issues, and Mr. Jamison notes that *pro bono* work is a natural extension of his work in those areas, which allows him to meld those interests with his professional work.

Mr. Jamison labels *Circle Management v. Olivier* and *Rotheimer v. Arana-Rivera* as two of his most important matters. These cases challenged a practice in Cook County’s housing courts that contravened Illinois law and caused tenants to be evicted without due process. Katten attorneys were successful on appeal in *Circle Management* and a decision from the appellate court in *Rotheimer* is currently pending.

Mr. Jamison will donate his honorarium to the Uptown People’s Law Center.

**Brian J. Poronsky, Associate, Litigation and Dispute Resolution – Chicago**

Brian Poronsky’s *pro bono* service began in law school, where he worked for two years at the Northwestern Law Clinic representing low-income clients in a wide range of civil matters. From that experience, he set a goal to continue devoting time to similar *pro bono* matters after graduation. Since joining the firm in September 2006, he has completed 300 hours of service on matters ranging from housing issues to civil rights.

Like Mr. Jamison, Mr. Poronsky says that the *Arana-Rivera* case is among the most important on which he has worked.

Mr. Poronsky is donating his honorarium to the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill – Metro Suburban Chapter.

**Cara A. Roecker, Associate, Litigation and Dispute Resolution – Chicago**

Cara Roecker was a summer associate at Katten before joining the firm full-time in 2005 after finishing law school. She has worked on a variety of *pro bono* matters since then, including a juvenile delinquency case, an asylum merits hearing, a citizenship matter, and a landlord/tenant case. Ms. Roecker has also served on the Board of Directors for the Lawyers Committee for Better Housing (LCBH), a Chicago tenant rights organization that Katten sponsors.

Ms. Roecker says that all of the *pro bono* cases she has worked on have had unforgettable moments and have shaped her experience as an attorney. She estimates her *pro bono* service to be in the area of 500 hours and says that she has chosen to perform *pro bono* work because all of the cases were interesting legally and contained facts and conduct that were egregious in nature. She became involved with LCBH as a summer associate and was eventually asked to join the board as a first-year associate.

Ms. Roecker will donate her honorarium to LCBH.

**Brian L. Muldrew, Associate, Litigation and Dispute Resolution – New York**

Brian Muldrew joined Katten in 2005 and, since then, has devoted nearly 650 hours of his time to *pro bono* service. Matters he has worked on have ranged from a dispute over real property to a wrongful death action. Mr. Muldrew has also given his time to work with a local high school's firm-sponsored moot court and mock trial teams.

Like many others, Mr. Muldrew began doing *pro bono* work while in law school, working with Greater Boston Legal Services to represent indigent clients in a variety of matters, including employment and housing disputes. His first work at Katten, which he feels has been his most important case, still continues today—representing the mentally and psychologically disabled owner of a brownstone in Brooklyn Heights who was defrauded into selling her property for an unconscionably low price.

Mr. Muldrew also currently represents the City of New York and two individually named police officers in a wrongful death action brought by the estate of a person who was killed when shot by police after he seized control of one of the officer's firearms.

Mr. Muldrew is donating his honorarium to the Red Cross and the David Dawes Nee II Foundation.

**Keely L. Herrick, Associate, Intellectual Property – New York**

Keely Herrick has been with Katten since 2002 and was also a summer associate with the firm in 2001. As a first-year associate, she sought out Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (VLA) and began helping artists with trademark filings and attended clinics to counsel clients. Through VLA, she has obtained U.S. trademark registrations for singer Emerald Ice and sculptor Milton Sherrill; assisted playwright James Asher in a dispute over rights in a play he co-authored; and assisted heirs and friends of the poet Jesus Melendez in a dispute over his works and possessions.

In addition to her work with VLA, Ms. Herrick has done *pro bono* work for the New York Philharmonic, the American Cancer Society, the TWIG Society and Rising Phoenix Theatre, among others. Her work has included conducting research on copyright protection and patent disputes; preparing cease and desist letters regarding trademark infringement matters; and advising clients regarding potential trademark filings. She has also assisted Katten partner Karen Artz Ash in conducting research for several *pro bono* mediations.

Her most memorable case this year involved working to obtain copyright licenses for songs performed by Peggy Lee which were used in a ballet performance by Dances Patrelle. The licenses were issued on a most favored nations basis, which required extensive negotiation with music publishers for each song.

Ms. Herrick has participated in the AIDS Walk New York for approximately 10 years and is donating her honorarium to the sponsor of the walk, the Gay Men's Health Crisis.

**David J. Gonen, Associate, Intellectual Property – Washington, D.C.**

David Gonen has been with Katten since joining the firm as a summer associate in 2004. In addition to his work on antitrust and intellectual property matters, he completed 370 hours of *pro bono* work in 2008 alone on a civil rights case against the District of Columbia police department.

The police brutality and race discrimination suit was brought by a Lebanese individual against the District of Columbia, a number of its police officers, a nightclub, and several of its employees. Katten represented the plaintiff in conjunction with the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights. They filed suit in January 2006 and went to trial in April 2008, obtaining a jury verdict in favor of their client on several claims.

Mr. Gonen will donate his honorarium to the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs.

**Marisa Gayle Westervelt, Associate, Litigation and Dispute Resolution – Los Angeles**

Marisa Westervelt's *pro bono* work includes representation of indigent clients and nonprofit corporations in litigation and settlement negotiations, including unlawful detainer/eviction litigation, construction defect actions and divorce proceedings, and in administrative proceedings relating to government benefits. Since she joined Katten's Los Angeles office two years ago, she also has participated in legal education and outreach programs through the Los Angeles office's *Pro Bono* Committee and outside organizations.

Ms. Westervelt recently worked with Katten partner Kristin Holland and others to successfully resolve and settle a long-running construction dispute on behalf of East LA Community Corporation (ELACC), a nonprofit community development corporation that provides affordable housing for low-income families. The general contractor for ELACC's 49-unit, \$14.3 million apartment complex had disputed its fees for the project. Representing ELACC on a *pro bono* basis, Katten was able to avoid a lawsuit and negotiate a settlement under which the general contractor agreed to reduce its demand and ELACC's liability by more than \$1 million.

Ms. Westervelt's involvement with *pro bono* work began during her second year of law school, when she obtained a position on the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. Her goal is to complete at least 75-100 hours of *pro bono* work each year, regardless of how busy her schedule becomes.

Ms. Westervelt is donating her honorarium to the Los Angeles Mission.

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.

Katten's *pro bono* program is particularly noteworthy for the breadth of services it offers. This includes litigation, both on behalf of individuals and groups, in matters of housing and public accommodations discrimination, civil liberties, immigration, criminal defense and prisoners' rights, and consumer matters. Katten also handles transactional *pro bono* work in such areas as corporate and tax assistance to not-for-profit organizations, intellectual property law, employee benefits and international trade law.

*Founded in 1974, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP is a full-service law firm with more than 650 attorneys in locations across the United States and an affiliate in London. 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, commercial finance, intellectual property and trusts and estates. Among our clients are a wide range of public and private companies, including nearly a third of the Fortune 100, as well as a number of government and nonprofit organizations and individuals. For additional information, visit [www.kattenlaw.com](http://www.kattenlaw.com).*