

## For Immediate Release

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### **Katten Attorney Alyx Pattison Named July 2012 Volunteer of the Month by Illinois Legal Aid Online**

(CHICAGO) Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP announced that litigation partner Alyx S. Pattison has been named Volunteer of the Month by Illinois Legal Aid Online for the month of July. Pattison was honored for her dedication to pro bono work and for donating her time to help others in need, including a Jordanian woman who risked persecution because of her sexual orientation and transgender inmates in Wisconsin who were being denied care for medical conditions.

“Alyx’s work and commitment to pro bono service is strong and this recognition is well-deserved,” said Vincent A. F. Sergi, Katten’s national managing partner. “She has been unwavering in her efforts to ensure that basic human rights are upheld for her clients and has been very successful.”

Pattison worked on a case for four years where she represented a lesbian woman from Jordan who feared persecution based on her sexual orientation, political opinions and religious beliefs. Homosexual women in Jordan face not only persecution, but also death at the hands of family members when they deviate from conventional sexual roles dictated for women by both religion and custom. Male family members often punish “promiscuous” behavior through honor killing, a barbaric practice condoned by the government in which male family members kill female family members whose behavior is believed to have shamed the family name. Here, the client’s views contradicted the rigorously conservative and strict interpretation of Islam practiced by her family and the community in which they lived.

The case was further complicated by the fact that the client had initially sought legal advice from a fraudulent immigration “attorney” who advised her that in order to file for asylum she could not keep her homosexuality confidential, and that her sexual orientation would be published in newspapers and on the Internet. As a result, the client missed the one-year deadline to apply for asylum because she feared that filing would risk disclosing to her family and the community her sexual orientation.

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Pattison was able to overcome the one-year bar for her client by arguing that the misrepresentations of the fake attorney constituted an “extraordinary circumstance” that excused the failure to apply for asylum within one year.

As a result of Pattison’s legal efforts, the client won asylum and was able to bring two of her three daughters to the United States to live with her. Had her daughters come of age in Jordan, they would have been forced into arranged marriages. The client now lives with her partner and children in the Midwest in a committed and happy lesbian relationship.

Additionally, Pattison worked with a team of attorneys in conjunction with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Lambda Legal to strike down a law that was passed by the state of Wisconsin in 2005 called the “Inmate Sex Change Prevention Act.” The law barred prison doctors from providing transgender people medical care, such as hormone therapy, while incarcerated. The ACLU, the ACLU of Wisconsin and Lambda Legal sued the State of Wisconsin on behalf of transgender inmates, some of whom had been receiving hormone therapy in state prisons for years.

Pattison has also worked as part of the federal court’s settlement assistance project to help a client settle racial and gender discrimination claims against an employer, and has devoted time to support the efforts of the National Immigrant Justice Center in cases involving the intersection of reproductive rights for women seeking asylum in the United States.

Pattison concentrates her practice in litigation matters, with an emphasis on complex commercial litigation and securities and derivative actions. She is an active member of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Bar Foundation. She also serves as a commissioner on the Cook County Commission on Women’s Issues and as a community representative on the Local School Council for her neighborhood elementary school. Pattison received her JD from Northwestern University School of Law and her BA in political science from the University of Utah.

Katten is a full-service law firm with more than 600 attorneys in locations across the United States and in London and Shanghai. Clients seeking sophisticated, high-value legal services turn to us for counsel locally, nationally and internationally. Our core areas of practice are corporate, financial services, insolvency and restructuring, litigation, real estate, environmental, commercial finance, intellectual property and trusts and estates. We represent public and private companies in numerous industries, including a third of the Fortune 100, as well as a number of government and nonprofit organizations and individuals.

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