

For Immediate Release

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Katten Muchin Rosenman Announces Recipients of Eighth Annual *Pro Bono* Service Awards

CHICAGO – Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP is pleased to announce that it has selected seven attorneys to receive its top honor for *pro bono* service. This year's recipients of the Firm's eighth annual *Pro Bono* Service Awards are Chicago-based Litigation and Dispute Resolution partner, [Michael J. Summerhill](#), and associate [Heather Kuhn O' Toole](#); New York-based Private Equity partner [Mark A. Limardo](#), and Bankruptcy, Reorganization and Creditors' Rights associate [Merritt A. Pardini](#); Los Angeles-based Litigation and Dispute Resolution associate [Tiffany Hofeldt](#), and Trusts and Estates associate [Boryana V. Zeitz](#); and Washington-based Real Estate associate, [Sandra Z. Paik](#). In addition, New York-based Real Estate associate [Michal Kushnir](#) and secretary, Vivien E. Lewis will receive honorable mention for their commitment to *pro bono* service.

This year's *Pro Bono* Service Awards will be presented during ceremonies in each recipient's office location between July 19 and July 25. Three distinguished jurists will present the awards: In Chicago, the Honorable Milton I. Shadur of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois; in New York, the Honorable Harold Baer, Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York; and in Los Angeles, the Honorable Aviva K. Bobb of the Los Angeles County Superior Court. In addition, [Brian H. Corcoran](#), *Pro Bono* Committee chair of Katten's Washington office, will present the award in that location.

"The 2007 recipients we are honoring have made valuable contributions to charitable and non-profit causes across the country," said [Vincent A. F. Sergi](#), Katten's National Managing Partner. "Each recipient embodies the Firm's long-standing commitment to provide first-rate representation without charge to those who otherwise wouldn't be able to obtain legal services."

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

Michael J. Summerhill, Partner, Litigation and Dispute Resolution – Chicago

Michael J. Summerhill joined the Firm in 2003 and has rendered over 200 hours of *pro bono* service since April 2006 and 105 hours in 2007 alone. Among numerous *pro bono* contributions, he achieved a successful victory for a Firm client who was arrested for "endangering the life of a child" when he left his four year-old son in his car while he went into a store. The client was a legal resident alien, but federal law provides that any legal resident who is convicted of "any crime involving a child" can be deported. Mr. Summerhill and his team convinced the prosecutor that the client was a good father, who works two jobs, owns a home and is otherwise a productive member of society. The prosecutor agreed to drop all charges if the client attended parenting classes.

Mr. Summerhill will donate his honorarium to The Our Lady of Mercy Legal Clinic operated by Chicago Volunteer Legal Services.

Heather Kuhn O' Toole, Associate, Litigation and Dispute Resolution – Chicago

When Heather Kuhn O'Toole arrived at the Firm nearly five years ago, she immediately took on an asylum case, representing a Togolese man who had come to the United States to avoid politically motivated imprisonment, torture and murder. Since then, she has been involved in myriad *pro bono* cases, rendering over 700 hours of service. Ms. O'Toole's most memorable *pro bono* case was her representation of a mother in a case in which she was wrongfully accused of hiding her child from his father and fleeing the country to avoid a custody hearing. Following an evidentiary hearing, the Court resolved all credibility issues in her client's favor and repeatedly noted that the father's testimony was not credible. The Court dismissed the father's petition and entered judgment in favor of her client.

Ms. O'Toole will donate her honorarium to the American Diabetes Association.

Merritt A. Pardini, Associate, Bankruptcy, Reorganization and Creditors' Rights – New York

Merritt A. Pardini has been with the Firm since October of 2001 and has rendered more than 300 hours of *pro bono* service. Since 2004, Mr. Pardini has worked with the Moot Court/Mock Trial Team of Townsend Harris High School in Queens, NY and has served as head coach for two years. Each fall, he works with other Katten associates to teach the students how to read a reported opinion, structure legal arguments and respond to questions posed by a panel of three judges. Each spring, the team competes against other high schools in a moot court competition sponsored by the New York State Bar Association. Mr. Pardini also supervises the Firm's participation in the New York Lawyers' Division of the Anti-Defamation League Summer Associates Legal Research Program.

Mr. Pardini has chosen to donate his honorarium to The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Mark A. Limardo, Partner, Tax Planning and Private Equity – New York

In his two years at Katten, Mark A. Limardo's *pro bono* efforts have focused on his work with The TWIG of Westchester County, New York Inc. TWIG was formerly the fundraising arm for a local hospital that has since gone bankrupt. Though the hospital ceased to exist, TWIG members wanted to continue to raise money for health-related causes. To this end, Mr. Limardo and his team helped establish TWIG as an independent tax-exempt organization, initially securing its tax-exempt status and drafting all of their organizational documents. He has also assisted TWIG with a wide range of issues typical of a regular business, including negotiating a new lease for the store, reviewing their insurance coverage, complying with sales tax collection rules, and filing required statements with the New York State charities bureau.

Mr. Limardo will donate his honorarium to the American Cancer Society.

Tiffany Hofeldt, Associate, Litigation and Dispute Resolution – Los Angeles

Tiffany Hofeldt is a member of the Firm's Los Angeles *Pro Bono* Committee and has participated in the Public Counsel adoption project at the Firm. She has also worked on several of the civil rights cases assigned by the Central District's *Pro Bono* Civil Rights Panel, the most significant being her representation of an inmate who alleged deliberate indifference to a risk to his safety. The inmate alleged he suffered injuries resulting from a failure to properly restrain his wheelchair during transportation. After completing discovery and the pre-trial filings, the county agreed to settle the matter with Ms. Hofeldt's client, days before the Final Status Conference.

Ms. Hofeldt is donating her honorarium to Inside Out Community Arts, a not-for-profit organization in Los Angeles that provides after-school arts programs and visual and performing arts workshops to at-risk and underserved middle-school youth.

Boryana V. Zeitz, Associate, Trusts and Estates – Los Angeles

In her three years at Katten, Boryana V. Zeitz has worked on several adoptions, and assisted a Hurricane Katrina victim in resolving a number of legal and tax issues, enabling her to begin to rebuild a normal life. Ms. Zeitz has also formed and tax qualified a cat rescue charity, and advised low income individuals on special needs trusts. Ms. Zeitz is currently acting as a guardian ad litem for four siblings who are in foster care and who are suing people who have harmed them.

She will donate her honorarium to the International Medical Corps.

Sandra Z. Paik, Associate, Real Estate – Washington, D.C.

Sandra Z. Paik has been with the Firm for two years and has represented a non-profit community development corporation in its efforts to develop affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families in Washington's Ward 8.

Ms. Paik will donate her honorarium to the East of the River Community Development Corporation.

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.

Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP (www.kattenlaw.com) is a full-service law firm with offices in the nation's largest centers of business, government, finance and technology and an affiliated entity in London. With over 650 attorneys in more than 40 areas of practice, Katten provides timely and cost-effective counsel to clients in numerous industries. Katten provides advice for a wide range of public and private companies – from entrepreneurial, emerging-growth, and middle market firms to global Fortune 100 corporations – as well as government entities, institutions of higher learning, museums and a host of other charitable and cultural organizations.

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