

For Immediate Release

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Katten Team Named Recipients of Pro Bono Awards

(CHICAGO) Katten announced today that Partner Nancy Rich and Counsel Janet Widmaier received the Awards for Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service from the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, in conjunction with the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, for their dedication to pro bono service.

“Nancy’s and Jan’s dedication to representing clients facing difficult circumstances speaks to the heart of why pro bono service is core to our culture at Katten. As lawyers, we have a professional responsibility to uphold the rule of law and ensure access to justice is not determined by a person’s resources,” said Jonathan Baum, the firm’s Director of Pro Bono Services. “We’re incredibly proud of their commitment to this impactful work and the difference it makes to their clients.”

The 26th annual awards honor attorneys for their contributions in helping people most in need of assistance before the court. Rich and Widmaier together devoted nearly 150 hours to the pro bono representation of a man in an employment discrimination case. As a member of the federal trial bar, Rich was appointed as counsel in 2024 by Chief Judge Virginia Kendall and quickly partnered with Widmaier on the matter, which was closed in September 2025.

“I’m pleased to be recognized, but we’re just doing our jobs, doing our best for our client. The real satisfaction is knowing we helped our client reach a favorable settlement,” said Widmaier, who focuses her practice on employment litigation and counseling. She drew on her experience representing corporate employers to provide counsel and negotiate a resolution to what had been a deeply personal and emotional ordeal for their client.

The civil lawsuit, filed in 2022 by their client as a pro se litigant, claimed that his employer, a trucking company, treated him unfairly, made scheduling errors that prevented him from working and being paid, and failed to post positions properly, consider him for a promotion due to his race and notify him of COVID exposure, among other issues.

Rich, a former environmental prosecutor with the Illinois Attorney General’s Office, and Widmaier worked collaboratively with Magistrate Judge Young Kim through mediation to secure a successful outcome for their client.

“Pro bono work is about using our legal skills to help clients who don’t have the resources to navigate the legal system on their own,” Rich said. “We were glad to see this matter through to a resolution that our client said provided him with a measure of justice.”

Katten is a full-service law firm with nearly 650 attorneys in locations across the United States and in London and Shanghai. Clients seeking sophisticated, high-value legal services turn to Katten for counsel locally, nationally and internationally. The firm’s core areas of practice include corporate, financial markets and funds, intellectual property, litigation, real estate, restructuring, structured finance and securitization, transactional tax planning, private credit and private wealth. Katten represents public and private companies in numerous industries, as well as a number of government and nonprofit organizations and individuals. For more information, visit katten.com.

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