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Katten Associate Named “Young Lawyer of the Year” for Fighting Unfair Housing Practices

(CHICAGO) Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP announced today that Kyle T. Finnegan was awarded the “Young Lawyer of the Year” honor by Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights for his pro bono work in handling housing discrimination matters.

“We’re so proud of the pro bono work Kyle has done in helping fight against widespread discrimination grounded in stereotypes,” said Jonathan Baum, Katten’s Pro Bono Services Director. “Kyle is representing clients who need financial assistance in securing homes through use of a federal subsidy and have been wrongly turned away by rental agents and landlords. This is not only illegal in Chicago but also can have a ripple effect in continuing segregation in the city and limiting access to neighborhoods with better schools and other services.”

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee presented the award on Tuesday to Finnegan, a Litigation associate at Katten, during the organization’s annual benefit “Bring Justice Home.” The event, held at the Theater on the Lake, commemorated the 50th anniversary of the federal Fair Housing Act and this year featured former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro as the keynote speaker.

Pro bono is a core value at Katten. The firm partners with Chicago Lawyers’ Committee among other organizations and receives client referrals for pro bono legal representation.

Finnegan recently represented two housing choice voucher holders who were refused housing based on their source of income in three separate matters before the Chicago Commission on Human Relations. The Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance prohibits discrimination against people who use a housing choice voucher as a source of income to support the rental or purchase of a housing unit in Chicago.

In each case, a single mother with a housing voucher was turned away from applying to rent an apartment unit by a real estate agent. While both women were able to find other places to live, Finnegan successfully negotiated financial settlements for twice to triple the amount of the average award for damages in housing discrimination cases in Chicago, and secured agreements

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for the rental agencies to specify in online rental ads that vouchers are accepted and for rental agents to undergo training on housing voucher rules.

“Kyle was able to secure impressive settlements due to his hard work researching the issue, his remarkable negotiation skills and effective litigation style,” said Barbara Barreno-Paschall, senior staff attorney with Chicago Lawyers’ Committee’s Housing Opportunity Project, which investigates complaints of housing discrimination throughout the Chicago metropolitan area, among other matters. “His empathy for his clients’ situations combined with his amazing can-do attitude, energy and positivity make it a joy to work with him.”

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 Katten for counsel locally, nationally and internationally. The firm’s core areas of practice include corporate, financial services, insolvency and restructuring, litigation, real estate, environmental and workplace safety, commercial finance, intellectual property, structured finance and securitization, and trusts and estates. Katten represents 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. For more information, visit www.kattenlaw.com.

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