

For Immediate Release

October 28, 2020

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Katten Attorneys Honored for Their Sustained Commitment to Pro Bono Service Including COVID-Related Work

(CHICAGO) Katten announced today that 14 firm attorneys received Katten Pro Bono Service Awards for their outstanding contributions, particularly for volunteering to assist on COVID-19-related matters.

“For years, our attorneys have engaged in numerous pro bono efforts, helping a wide range of individuals, underserved communities and nonprofit organizations in obtaining asylum for refugees, protection for domestic violence victims, justice for the wrongfully convicted, and more,” said Jonathan Baum, Katten’s Director of Pro Bono Services. “This year, these awards recognize not only our attorneys’ unwavering and sustained commitment to all these kinds of pro bono work, but also how they have stepped up their dedication during the pandemic to serve low-income individuals, marginalized groups and small businesses most in-need in this challenging time.”

So far this year, Katten attorneys have provided more than 22,000 hours of pro bono service, and the majority of those hours was focused on offering assistance to those impacted by COVID-19 in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Retired Judge Ann Claire Williams of the US Court of Appeals served as guest speaker at the virtual ceremony for Katten’s 21st annual Pro Bono Service Awards. Judge Williams observed: “Mel Katten more than 46 years ago with his commitment to pro bono and community service said yes to courage, yes to judgment, yes to integrity, and yes to dedication. And your firm has embraced that commitment of saying yes and doing remarkable work over the years, just as your 14 pro bono service awardees honored today have said yes in so many arenas, yes to helping veterans, yes to helping deal with the consequences of COVID-19, yes to helping the wrongfully convicted, victims of domestic violence, children, members of the LGBTQ community and consumers needing protection.” Judge Williams also commended Katten for being a founding member of the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance to help identify and dismantle systemic racism both within the legal profession and in the larger society.

The attorneys honored, who each received a \$1,000 honorarium to donate to a charity and are based in offices throughout the firm, included:

- **Alexandra R. Caleca**, associate, Intellectual Property, New York, who participated in the Small Business Legal Relief Alliance, consulting with small businesses affected by COVID-19 shutdowns in New York.
- **Craig A. Convissar**, associate, Litigation, New York, who represented a gay man from El Salvador at a merits hearing before an immigration judge and successfully secured asylum for his client, despite facing a number of legal and procedural obstacles over the course of a three-year-long representation.
- **Timothy S. Cross**, associate, Real Estate, Chicago, who participated in the Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights' COVID-19 Remote Brief Advice Clinic, reviewing and modifying leases, exploring rent abatements or other possible solutions for struggling small businesses, as well as in the Public Interest Law Initiative's Illinois Free Legal Answers program helping answer questions related to financial assistance for small businesses and unemployment benefits.
- **Scott C. Cutrow**, associate, Entertainment and Media Transactions, Los Angeles, who spearheaded Katten's involvement with LA Represents, a legal assistance initiative to help individuals facing extreme hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and help small businesses confront new workplace regulations, renegotiate commercial leases, apply for government relief programs and navigate compliance with emergency health and safety orders.
- **Charles A. DeVore**, partner, Litigation, Chicago, who coordinated Katten's participation in Operation Break Glass, a nationwide project in which attorneys represent medically vulnerable inmates requesting compassionate release due to COVID-19.
- **Janella T. Gholian**, special counsel, Litigation, Los Angeles, who continues her longstanding service with the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Domestic Violence Legal Services Project, assisting domestic violence victims in obtaining restraining orders against their abusers, and has assisted the Feminist Majority Foundation by helping to revise their employee handbook and draft employment-related agreements.
- **Terry Green**, partner, Commercial Finance, London, who worked to create the St. Paul's Cathedral online book of remembrance for COVID-19 victims in the United Kingdom, and helped raise funds for KIDS, a charity that supports disabled children and their families who have been particularly impacted during the pandemic.

- **David Luger**, partner, Litigation, Chicago, who worked with the American Civil Liberties Union to seek the release of medically vulnerable inmates at the Oakdale federal prison in Louisiana, which was one of the prisons hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic.
- **Julia L. Mazur**, associate, Intellectual Property, Chicago, who volunteered with a remote clinic hosted by the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, providing counsel to a local nonprofit about protecting its name and how to deal with potential infringers.
- **William C. Pericak**, partner, White Collar and Internal Investigations, Washington, DC, who handled two cases in conjunction with the National Veterans Legal Services Program, which helps veterans who are pursuing claims for compensation for service-connected disabilities.
- **Judge Jorge A. Solis**, special counsel, Litigation, Dallas, who represented two Honduran families seeking asylum in the United States and worked with his church and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to provide them with funds to purchase school supplies.
- **Max Swindle**, associate, Structured Finance and Securitization, Charlotte, who served a three-month secondment with the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, helping individuals remove criminal charges and convictions from their records through expunctions.
- **Miran Vila**, associate, Corporate, Washington, DC, who helped the United States International Council on Disabilities with corporate governance matters, and Washington Parks & People, a nonprofit focused on greenspace revitalization, renegotiate contracts and reschedule events under difficult circumstances.

Additionally, **Carl E. Kennedy**, who is a partner in the Financial Markets and Funds practice in New York, received an honorable mention for his role in launching immigration clinics at the firm and advising the nonprofit, Safe Bike Chicago, which provides bicycles to Black Lives Matter and other social justice protesters who have had their bicycles confiscated by police, on various corporate issues.

Katten is a full-service law firm with nearly 700 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 commercial finance, corporate, financial markets and funds, insolvency and restructuring, intellectual property, litigation, real estate, structured finance and securitization, transactional tax planning, and trusts and estates. 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](https://www.katten.com).

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