

Watch Your Mail for the Save the Date Card for the 2007 Pro Bono Institute Annual Gala

The 2007 Pro Bono Institute Annual Gala will be held at Gotham Hall in midtown New York on the evening of Tuesday, November 6th. The Gala's co-chairs include James B. Buda, Vice President, Secretary, and General Counsel, Caterpillar, Inc., Brad Smith, Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of Microsoft Corporation, and Robert G. Abrams, Co-Chair of the Global Litigation Practice of Howrey LLP. This groundbreaking, seminal event was sold out last year. At this year's event - celebrating pro bono partnerships - the Pro Bono Institute will highlight the extraordinary pro bono achievements of major law firms and corporate legal departments during the past year. **[FULL STORY]**

Salary Wars And Pro Bono: Round Two

In December, 1999, an announcement by one California-based law firm that it was increasing its compensation package for starting associates to a \$125,000 base salary plus a \$20,000 assured bonus for first-years was the catalyst for a wide-ranging upgrade in associate compensation among large law firms. Within three months of the initial decision by Gunderson, Dettmer, the ripple effect became apparent, as dozens of other law firms in major markets around the nation announced substantial increases in first year associate salaries (with comparable increases for more senior associates), typically also at the \$125,000 level, but with variations based on location and other factors. If the scenario outlined above seems familiar, it is because the "salary wars" are once again being waged at major law firms. While there have been interim increases in associate compensation, Simpson Thatcher's recent decision to increase starting associate salaries to \$160,000 was the compensation shot heard round the world. In very short order, many, though not all, law firms in several markets - New York, Washington, DC, and San Francisco - followed suit.

Since decisions about compensation are still pending at many firms, while others that have formally adopted salary increases are now engaged in an analysis of the impact of those decisions, this article focuses on ensuring that, whatever action major law firms take, they protect their firms' commitment to *pro bono*. *Pro bono*, which has, for years, been widely recognized as a critical factor in the recruitment and retention of talented young lawyers, will become even more important in light of the increasingly competitive hiring market and robust legal economy that prompted the salary increases. In the first round of the salary wars, firm practices with respect to *pro bono* varied widely. This article provides guidance, based on the lessons learned from that experience, regarding methods to insure that the financial and psychological aspects of the salary wars do not negatively impact the *pro bono* culture and performance that so many firms have worked so hard to develop. **[FULL STORY]**

Bank of America Launches Pro Bono Initiative at Meeting in New York

On June 20, 2007, Bank of America Corporation's Legal Department launched a pro bono initiative in New York, focusing on unmet local legal needs, and expanding company-wide pro bono efforts initiated in 2005. Showing support for the effort at the highest levels of the company's legal leadership, Timothy J. Mayopoulos, Bank of America's General Counsel, and Todd Baskin, Managing Director and Associate General Counsel and Chair of the New York Pro Bono Committee, spoke at the event, as did Pro Bono Institute President and CEO, Esther F. Lardent. The New York initiative has also received support from Bank of America's top management.

Tim Mayopoulos noted that the company, a Charter Signatory to the Corporate Pro Bono ChallengeSM, had taken "a new approach designed to drive volunteerism at all levels of the department." Todd Baskin related his own experiences in family court as an example of both the benefits of pro bono and the great need for representation. Esther Lardent discussed the Corporate Pro Bono ChallengeSM, a series of voluntary benchmarks issued by Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO), a partnership project of the Association of Corporate Counsel and the Pro Bono Institute, and noted the recent surge in interest and participation in pro bono work in legal departments. The company's New York pro bono initiative, following a model that has been particularly successful of late, involves partnerships with several law firms and public interest organizations, including: Greenberg Traurig, LLP, the New York City Family Court Legal Services Project, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Project, Davis Polk & Wardwell, Volunteers of Legal Service, Shearman & Sterling, Sanctuary for Families, and Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. **[FULL STORY]**

Law Firm Pro Bono Project Launches "House Calls" Initiative in the Twin Cities

During the week of June 18th, the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Project launched a new technical assistance tool for Member law firms. Law Firm Pro Bono Project Director, Tammy Taylor, and Assistant Director, Reena Glazer, visited six Minneapolis law firms, meeting with firm leaders, partners, and pro bono coordinators to discuss national trends in pro bono and to learn about innovative pro bono projects currently underway in the Minneapolis area, including a multi-firm effort among the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (an NGO), the Minnesota Liberian community, and law firms

participating in the Minnesota Law Firm Pro Bono Consortium. Firms participating in the "House Calls" program included: Dorsey & Whitney LLP, Maslon Edelman Borman & Brand, LLP, Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P., Lindquist & Vennum PLLP, Leonard, Street and Deinard P.A., Faegre & Benson, LLP, and Fredrikson & Byron, P.A. Candee Goodman at Lindquist & Vennum, PLLP, who issued the invitation on behalf of the Minneapolis coordinators, was instrumental in organizing the busy round of meetings. Thanks are also due to Faegre & Benson, particularly Dianne Heins, who invited Ms. Glazer and Ms. Taylor to attend the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights dinner. The time commitment made by busy managing partners, pro bono partners and coordinators and committee members at individual firms, who took time to meet with PBI staff, was impressive, as is their level of commitment to pro bono, their innovative ideas and their hospitality. If you are interested in a "House Call" in your community, please contact Tammy Taylor at ttaylor@probonoinst.org. Read the full story for more details of the recent Minneapolis "House Call." **[FULL STORY]**

Stunning New Development May Limit Attorneys' Ability to Provide Pro Bono Representation to Veterans

In the most recent regulations proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, "agents and attorneys" would be required to pass a written examination administered by the VA before being allowed to represent veterans regarding claims for benefits. While the regulation is intended to ensure that claimants receive qualified representation, omitting an exemption for those who are willing to provide free representation to claimants will have the unfortunate result of deterring pro bono attorneys from providing such representation. The National Veterans Legal Services Program, The American Legion, United Spinal, the Homeless Advocacy Project of Philadelphia, and the American Bar Association have all opposed a testing requirement for pro bono attorneys. The chief counsel of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, Dahlia Melendrez, has agreed that the regulations were not intended to discourage pro bono representation of veterans, and the committee is weighing whether to lobby the VA on this issue. Those willing to weigh in on this critical access to justice issue can do so by contacting, as soon as possible:

U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs

412 Russell

Senate Office Building

Washington D.C. 20510

Democratic Staff (202) 224-9126

Republican Staff (202) 224-2074

Or

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

335 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

(202) 225-9756

Or (although the official period for comment has closed)

Mr. Robert McFetridge, Director

Office of Regulations Management (00Reg1), Rm. 1068

Department of Veterans Affairs

810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20420

Re: Accreditation of Agents and Attorneys

Agent and Attorney Fees (RIN 2900-AM62)

[FULL STORY]

Phase Two of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative

The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative meeting, held at the D.C. Bar Conference Center on June 19, 2007, was not a standard breakfast panel gathering. Speaking before a standing-room only crowd, James Sandman, outgoing President of the D.C. Bar and Senior Partner at Arnold & Porter, LLP, introduced an array of remarkable individuals to discuss pro bono work in an effort to induce those in attendance to sign on to the D.C. Pro Bono Initiative and enrolling in the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono ChallengeSM. Building on the success of the first phase of the D.C. Bar's Initiative, which enrolled most of the District's 50 largest firms, the recent gathering focused on strengthening pro bono at firm's 51 to 100. The panel presentation included three firm leaders: Amy L. Bess, DC Managing Partner of Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal, LLP, Michael E. Nannes, Chairman, Dickstein Shapiro LLP and Elizabeth B. Sandza, Pro Bono Partner, LeBoeuf Lamb Greene & Macrae LLP. Attendees also received strong encouragement to participate from the District Court's four Chief Judges: Honorable Eric T. Washington, Chief Judge, District of Columbia Court of Appeals, the Honorable Douglas H. Ginsberg, Chief Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, the Honorable Thomas F. Hogan, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and the Honorable Rufus G. King III, Chief Judge, Superior Court of the District of Columbia. For more information regarding the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative, contact Maureen Syracuse at msyracuse@dcbar.org. The Pro Bono Institute can assist you in designing a pro bono initiative in your community. For more information, contact Esther Lardent at elardent@probonoinst.org. **[FULL STORY]**

Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO), Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, Legal Aid Society, Columbus, Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease, LLP and Nationwide Insurance Provide Free Legal Advice To Ohio Non-Profits

On June 21, 2007, Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO, a joint project of the Association of Corporate Counsel and the Pro Bono Institute, along with the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, and the Legal Aid Society of Columbus, partnered with the law firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease, LLP and volunteer attorneys from Nationwide Insurance, American Electric Power Company, Inc., and Cardinal Health, Inc. to conduct "Clinic in a BoxSM". The Clinic, the first such program conducted in the State of Ohio, was held at the Franklin County Courthouse and provided vital pro bono legal services to fifteen public interest organizations. **[FULL STORY]**

The Tennessee Bar Association, TBA Corporate Counsel Section, and the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) held Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Initiative Reception and Dinner on June 12th

The Tennessee Bar Association (TBA) Access to Justice Committee is working in partnership with the TBA Corporate Counsel Section and the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) to help foster a coordinated approach to pro bono work and support for the access to justice community by corporate and in-house legal departments in Tennessee. A working group, formed by the TBA and consisting of in-house corporate counsel and law firm representatives who work with corporations held a Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Initiative Reception and Dinner on Tuesday, June 12th at the Music City Sheraton in conjunction with the June 2007 TBA Convention. **[FULL STORY]**

Law Firm Pro Bono Project Member Benefit - Pro Bono Informational Programs for Summers and New Associates

Pro bono has become a significant part of the summer associate experience at most law firms. This summer, Law Firm Pro Bono Project staff members have spoken at a variety of firm events for summer associates. These have included informational programs, during which Law Firm Pro Bono Project Assistant Director, Reena Glazer, along with firm associates, partners, and pro bono committee members, discussed a wide variety of pro bono-related topics, including: the relationship of pro bono to professional development; national trends in pro bono; new "hot" areas in pro bono; and the particular operations of the firm's pro bono program. Such programs can be important representations of a firm's commitment to pro bono and a useful tool for orienting and engaging your newest attorneys. If you are interested in scheduling a meeting at your firm as part of your summer associate program (it's not too late for this summer!) or orientation program for new associates in the Fall, please contact Reena at rglazer@probonoinst.org. **[FULL STORY]**