

Reexamining the Law Firm Pro Bono ChallengeSM

Since its inception in 1993, the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono ChallengeSM has served as a consistent guidepost to assist law firms in increasing their contributions to pro bono legal services. The ChallengeSM Statement of Principles and Commentary, which have withstood the test of time and have indeed become the industry standard among major law firms, were carefully crafted by the Advisory Committee of PBI's Law Firm Pro Bono Project to provide meaningful guidance to peer firms to facilitate their pro bono efforts. Recently, the Advisory Committee had long and thoughtful discussions regarding the nature and definition of pro bono legal services, specifically: (1) cases that involve awards of attorneys' fees and (2) the eligibility of nonprofits, governmental entities, small businesses, and other for-profit entities for pro bono services. The memorandum detailing the Law Firm Pro Bono Project Advisory Committee's considerations and the changes to the Commentary in these areas was mailed to every ChallengeSM Signatory firm and is now posted on the PBI website. **[FULL STORY]**

Southeast Regional Mini-Seminar, Third in a Series, Held May 14, 2007

The Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Project held a Regional Mini-Seminar, the third in a series of such events, at the Atlanta offices of Troutman Sanders LLP, on May 14th, 2007 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Attendees at this informative and exciting program - entitled "Everything You Wanted to Know about Partnering with Clients but Were Afraid to Ask" and hosted by Troutman Sanders - included multiple representatives, including several managing partners, from fifteen law firms in Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, and Florida. **[FULL STORY]**

Two Recent Mixed Rulings on Pro Bono Attorneys' Fees Stir Controversy

A ruling in a Voting Rights Act case by the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has potentially troubling implications for firms engaging in extensive or complicated pro bono matters. On April 24, 2007, in *Arbor Hill Concerned Citizens Neighborhood Association v. County of Albany*, the 2nd Circuit held that a "reasonable hourly rate is the rate a paying client would be willing to pay." Subsequently, however, a lower court in another matter acknowledged the complex issues faced by litigating attorneys in its determination that their hourly rate was reasonable. **[FULL STORY]**

New Publications Available: New Coordinator Packet and 2007 Seminar/Forum Materials

The Pro Bono Institute has added new publications to its extensive library of materials on law firm and corporate pro bono. Due to the continuing influx of new pro bono leaders and administrators, PBI offers a new coordinator packet to those firms and legal departments that have a new pro bono partner, committee member, or coordinator. This material is available free of charge to Member law firms and legal departments. For those who were unable to attend the 2007 PBI Annual Seminar/Forum, the materials that were distributed at the training programs may now be purchased via the PBI website. **[FULL STORY]**

Corporate Perspectives on Pro Bono

In recognition of the growing interest in pro bono among corporate in-house leaders, the Wire will periodically feature the voices of corporate pro bono supporters. The second of these pieces was adapted from the remarks made by Brad Smith, Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of Microsoft Corporation at the 2006 Pro Bono Institute Gala. **[FULL STORY]**

Corporate Social Responsibility and the Mainstreaming of Pro Bono

Lately, there has been a surge of interest in the topic of corporate social responsibility, and that interest has also attracted attention to corporate pro bono efforts. The mainstreaming of pro bono is exemplified by the highlighting of pro bono efforts in corporate annual reports. For example, Abbott, the global health-care company, has a segment on the pro bono performed by its legal department in its 2006 Global Citizenship Report. **[FULL STORY]**

Challenges and Growth of Corporate Pro Bono Efforts Noted in Memphis Business Journal Article

An article in the Memphis Business Journal details the traditional challenges in finding pro bono work that is appropriate for the in-house practitioner. The article also details efforts to address those challenges and the growing popularity of corporate pro bono. **[FULL STORY]**

Global Pro Bono: Australian Firm Launches Pro Bono Fellowship

Although charitable pro bono fellowships - defined as multi-year full-time opportunities at public interest programs paid for by law firms or legal departments - have become widespread in the United States, they are new to Australia. Australian law firm, Clayton Utz, has provided funding for a two year graduate solicitor position at Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centres (LCCLC) with the "Clayton Utz Foundation Fellow." The new fellowship will improve the capacity of LCCLC to work with local pro bono providers and is an example of how cooperative regional pro bono can occur. **[FULL STORY]**

PBI Law Firm Pro Bono Project Mails ChallengeSM Poster to Law Schools

Just in time for interview season, the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Project has mailed its annual ChallengeSM poster to the placement offices of all ABA-accredited law schools. As competition becomes more intense for talented, first-rate law students, the poster allows the best and the brightest to identify those law firms that value pro bono the most. As law students become more interested in pro bono as a distinguishing feature for legal employers, PBI encourages law firms to include information about their participation in the Law Firm Pro Bono ChallengeSM in their recruitment materials and literature. In this way, ChallengeSM Signatory Firms are able to differentiate themselves in a manner that attracts top talent. **[FULL STORY]**