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Update on the 2008 Pro Bono Institute Seminar and Forum

Based on the evaluations of participants and other post-event feedback, the 2008 Seminar/Forum was a great success, bringing together record numbers of attendees from law firms, corporate legal departments, and public interest organizations to address pervasive and recurring issues in law firm and corporate pro bono as well as cutting-edge innovations and trends emerging from today's newspaper headlines. Be sure to mark your calendars now and register early for the 2009 Seminar/Forum scheduled for March 5, 6, and 7. A detailed and substantive recap of the highlights of the 2008 event will be featured in the next issue of the Wire, but certain themes are worth noting immediately.

[\[FULL STORY\]](#)**New Guidelines for Pro Bono Immigration Practitioners**

On March 10, 2008, the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge at the Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review issued new guidelines for pro bono attorneys. Entitled [Operating Policies and Procedures Memorandum 08-01: Guidelines for Facilitating Pro Bono Legal Services](#), the document details methods by which immigration courts may encourage pro bono immigration representation. The guidelines contain several points of interest, including comments by the Chief Immigration Judge specifically noting the value of pro bono representation, both to the represented and to the court, as well as best practices for immigration courts seeking to take specific steps to facilitate pro bono representation.

[\[FULL STORY\]](#)**Facing the Challenges of Citizenship: Election-Related Pro Bono Opportunities**

Late November 2007

December 2007

Early January 2008

Late January 2008

Early February 2008

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Every four years, elections become a particularly hot topic at the national level. Coinciding with the presidential election cycles, attention focuses on the magnitude of the obstacles faced by underrepresented and disenfranchised people and communities during these important national elections. Yet, problems with elections at a national level are generally representative of wider and pervasive systemic legal issues throughout the United States at the state and local level. Pro bono lawyers are at the forefront of legal efforts during and in-between major national election cycles to cure legal flaws in the election system which threaten the accuracy, legitimacy, and fairness of the voting process.

Elections and the legal issues that surround them are fertile ground for lawyers and law firms looking to develop or expand their pro bono practice. Lawyers have roles to play at all levels of the election protection and reform processes on Election Day and year-round – crafting legislation, enforcing voting laws, researching legal developments, monitoring the election process for unlawful behavior, interfacing between public interest groups and government officials on legal issues, representing eligible individual voters, and aiding local, state, and national organizations in bringing impact litigation to challenge unfair election laws. The following monograph, prepared by the Pro Bono Institute's Law Firm Pro Bono Project, details some of the many potential election-related pro bono opportunities.

Many pro bono lawyers partner with civil liberties organizations to protect the First Amendment rights of protesters and ensure lawful policing of protests outside political conventions. Others volunteer their office space and telephone lines for the use of election protection hotlines, staffed by lawyers (and sometimes other staff) and coordinate with lawyers on the ground in each state to respond to questions, offer legal advice, assist with litigation efforts, or interface with elections officials. Read the full story to discover additional methods to participate in the protection of our most vital civic process.

[FULL STORY](#)

Corporate Pro Bono Launches 2008 ACC Chapter Competition

From March 3, 2008 through September 30, 2008, Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO), a partnership project of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) and the Pro Bono Institute, will sponsor the Corporate Pro Bono ChallengeSM Competition. Open to all ACC Chapters, this Competition is designed to

promote pro bono culture within legal departments by encouraging Chief Legal Officers to sign the Corporate Pro Bono ChallengeSM. The winner of the Competition, the Chapter that recruits the most Corporate Pro Bono ChallengeSM Signatories, will be announced at the 2008 ACC Annual Meeting in Seattle.

[\[FULL STORY\]](#)

The Pro Bono Institute is Pleased to Announce Grants Available to Fund Second ActsSM Pilot Projects for Transitioning and Retired Pro Bono Attorneys

Through a competitive Request for Proposals process closing on May 16, 2008, the Pro Bono Institute will grant multiple nonprofit organizations a total approximately \$160,000 in annual funding. The Institute will provide each individual organization an amount ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000 annually over three years to launch innovative pro bono projects that engage transitional or retired lawyers from large firms and/or in-house legal departments. The Institute will also provide support, training, and technical assistance to grantee organizations over the three year grant period. Strong, workable models that emerge from the demonstration projects will be publicized nationally, with the support of the Institute, to encourage replication.

[\[FULL STORY\]](#)

Corporate Spotlight: LEGO GC Committed to Children

Support from leadership is an important aspect of any successful in-house pro bono program. There can be no stronger or more visible support for corporate pro bono service than a general counsel who spends two business days a week dedicated to serving the unmet needs of his community. For the past 15 years, Peter Arakas, General Counsel of LEGO Systems Inc., has devoted his legal skill to families in Connecticut. Starting at Aetna, Inc., Arakas began by committing 10 percent of his time to pro bono work. Now at LEGO, he spends two business days a week representing parents and children in child welfare, abuse and neglect, and custody cases serving as counsel, guardian ad litem, and mediator. Arakas also began a Truancy Intervention Project in New Britain, CT that provides opportunities to corporate lawyers hesitant to take on litigation-based pro bono matters. Read the full story for the details of a general counsel who really "walks the walk."

[\[FULL STORY\]](#)

Hildebrandt Handbook of Law Firm Management Includes Pro Bono

The Hildebrandt Handbook of Law Firm Management is one of the most widely read and highly respected publications addressing key management issues and leadership challenges facing law firm management in today's rapidly changing market environment and providing insight on the central issues and trends at law firms. It is a strong statement of the value and meaning of pro bono that the Hildebrandt Handbook of Law Firm Management has included a chapter on pro bono for the past two years.

The pro bono chapter - authored by the Pro Bono Institute's Esther Lardent - addresses some of the most immediate issues, innovative solutions, and strategic methods for maximizing the benefits of pro bono at law firms. The chapter serves as a guide for creating and maintaining an effective and vibrant pro bono program by addressing topics such as: the transformation and institutionalization of law firm pro bono; partnering with corporate clients; the business case for pro bono; innovations in pro bono programming; global pro bono; aligning pro bono with key firm goals and functions; and many more.

[\[FULL STORY\]](#)

Reminder: Law Firm Pro Bono Project 2007 ChallengeSM Reports Due Soon

Please note that the Law Firm Pro Bono Project 2007 ChallengeSM Reports **are due on Monday, March 31**. Links to the reporting form in Word and PDF formats are included for your convenience.

The Law Firm Pro Bono Project would like to thank the ChallengeSM Signatories who have already returned their reports. Please do not hesitate to contact [Tammy Taylor](#), the Law Firm Pro Bono Project Director, if you have any questions or need assistance in responding.

[Law Firm Pro Bono Project 2007 ChallengeSM Report - Word format](#)

[Law Firm Pro Bono Project 2007 ChallengeSM Report - PDF format](#)

[\[FULL STORY\]](#)

Pro Bono Victory: Zuckerman Spaeder Obtains Wages for Laborers Who Had Not Been Paid for Clean-Up and Recovery Work Following Hurricane Katrina

Megafirms aren't the only law firms that can support successful pro bono programs. [Zuckerman Spaeder LLP](#), a 100-lawyer litigation boutique law firm, in partnership with [CASA of Maryland, Inc.](#), recently secured a favorable settlement for 46 day laborers from Maryland who had not been paid for their work in the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina. Read below for details of the case, which is reported to have been the first case in the country to secure relief for mistreated Hurricane Katrina clean-up workers.

[\[FULL STORY\]](#)

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