

Chief Judges of the D.C. Courts Publish Inaugural “Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll”

Over 3000 attorneys performed over 50 hours of pro bono service in 2011; over 2000 provided over 100 hours.

The Chief Judges of the D.C. Court of Appeals and the D.C. Superior Court jointly published the inaugural “Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll” which recognizes attorneys who provide vital pro bono service to those who cannot afford counsel. Through a self-nomination process, over three thousand D.C. Bar members and others authorized to perform pro bono work in the District reported providing over fifty hours or more of pro bono service in 2011; over two thousand of those attorneys reported providing over one hundred hours or more of service, thereby qualifying for the “High Honor Roll.”

In a joint letter published today, the Chief Judges of the D.C. Courts wrote, “We salute the commitment shown by the attorneys listed on the Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll. The Courts greatly value the enormous benefit these attorneys provide in individual cases and also to the administration of justice overall. Their contributions are invaluable to closing our city’s justice gap.” Added Dan Bruner, Director of Whitman-Walker Health’s Legal Department and Co-Chair of the Consortium of Legal Services Providers, “Although D.C. has extraordinary attorneys who provide free legal services as their full-time work, the network urgently needs pro bono attorneys to help address the tremendous unmet need for legal services among indigent residents. We are lucky to be working in a city where the tradition and practice of providing pro bono service continues to thrive.”

The Honor Roll includes attorneys from over eighty D.C. law firms as well as lawyers representing all segments of the Bar. Peter Edelman, Chair of the D.C. Access to Justice Commission noted, “It is deeply gratifying to see attorneys on this list from across the D.C. legal community. We often focus on the tremendous pro bono contributions of large firms. This list also lauds the many small and mid-sized firm attorneys, solo practitioners, and federal government attorneys who are helping those most in need.” Added Jim Sandman, Chair of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Committee and President of the Legal Services Corporation, “The list includes Bar representatives at all levels of experience – from our newest to our most senior attorneys. Even those in retirement are making invaluable contributions to closing the justice gap.” Mr. Sandman’s former firm, Arnold & Porter, had over two hundred attorneys qualify for the Honor Roll.

The District has long been viewed as having one of the most robust pro bono cultures in the nation. Paul Friedman, Managing Partner of Dechert LLP, stated “I know I speak for many of my colleagues when I say that providing pro bono service is not simply a matter of ethical obligation. We are committed as a matter of principle to helping those who are most vulnerable in our society.” Because the Honor Roll relies on self-reporting, it is likely that only a fraction of those performing pro bono service are represented. D.C. Bar President Darrell Mottley noted, “Though we are very impressed with the number of attorneys listed on the Honor Roll, we are certain this is just the tip of the iceberg of the enormous amount of pro bono service that is

provided by D.C. Bar Members each year. The Bar looks forward to disseminating information about the Honor Roll so that we can elicit even greater participation in future years.”

The Capital Pro Bono Roll is the first local initiative to recognize the pro bono contributions of individual attorneys. Through the “40 at 50” initiative, the D.C. Federal Courts have, since 2003, recognized law firms that provide pro bono contributions at benchmark levels. In addition, the D.C. Access to Justice Commission’s Raising the Bar in D.C. Campaign recognizes firms that contribute a benchmark percentage of revenue to support D.C. legal services providers.

The Capital Pro Bono and High Honor Rolls are available on the courts website [at xxx](#).