



## The District of Columbia Access to Justice Commission

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#### CONTACT:

Jess Rosenbaum  
Executive Director  
D.C. Access to Justice Commission  
(202) 344-4441

### **Access to Justice Commission Honors Firms that Qualified for the 2012 Raising the Bar in D.C. Leadership Circle**

*Participating firms donated nearly \$3.6 million to local legal services providers,  
over eight hundred thirty thousand dollar increase from previous giving.*

Washington, D.C. – April 29, 2013

On April 30, 2013, the D.C. Access to Justice Commission will be joined by The Honorable David S. Tatel, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, and Mayor Vincent Gray to honor the thirty-six firms that participated in the Raising the Bar in D.C. Campaign in 2012. Honorees each donated a benchmark percentage of revenue to local legal services providers last year. Together they donated nearly \$3.6 million to organizations that serve indigent District residents with urgent legal issues. This represents an \$838,501 cumulative increase for all participating firms since they joined the Campaign.

“We deeply appreciate the extraordinary generosity and leadership of these firms,” said Peter Edelman, Chair of the D.C. Access to Justice Commission and a professor at Georgetown University Law Center. “These funds are pivotal to ensuring that thousands of vulnerable District residents have counsel when they are facing legal crises.” The level of giving in 2012 is roughly equal to the local District government appropriation for legal services. “That is a powerful statement that the law firm community is strongly committed to equal access to justice,” said Access to Justice Commissioner Andrew Marks who is one of the architects of the Campaign. “Ensuring that all individuals, regardless of income, have access to the courts requires this type of robust partnership between the government and the private bar.”

These funds are urgently needed by the legal services network. Many crucial funding streams have not recovered from the economic downturn. The IOLTA Program, which has traditionally been a major source of funding for legal services has decreased 80% since 2008 and will not recover until interest rates rebound. That alone accounts for over a million dollars each year in lost revenues.

For the second year in a row, firms of all sizes responded enthusiastically to the Campaign. The total number of participating firms increased by 50% in the Campaign's second year, with many small and mid-sized firms joining for the first time. Thomas Williamson, President of the District of Columbia Bar and senior counsel at Covington & Burling LLP, which is being honored at the gold level for the second year in a row, commented, "Our Bar is broadly committed to closing the justice gap. It is gratifying to see such a broad range of firms embrace this Campaign, particularly in this time of continuing economic uncertainty." Added Gregory Shumaker, Partner in Charge of the Washington Office of Jones Day, which is hosting the event, "We all know that this infusion of funds is vital. The private bar must be front and center in shoring up the legal services network in the communities where we practice." Jones Day will be honored at the Platinum level for the second year in a row.

Access to Justice Commissioner Eric Angel, Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of D.C. commented, "These donations are critical. Every day our attorneys help residents to stave off wrongful foreclosures and evictions, seek remediation of egregious housing code violations, secure legal protection from family violence, and receive the safety net benefits to which they are legally entitled." Added Judith Sandalow, Executive Director of the Children's Law Center, "These funds are making a pivotal difference in our ability to serve those most in need. There is no doubt that the generosity of these firms is averting tragic outcomes in countless cases."

The Campaign, which is led by the D.C. Access to Justice Commission and endorsed by the D.C. Bar and the D.C. Bar Foundation, recognizes firms at three different levels – Platinum, Gold and Silver – for donating .11%, .09%, or .075% of D.C. office revenue, respectively. At the April 30<sup>th</sup> event, twenty firms will be honored at the Platinum Level, six firms will be honored at the Gold Level, and ten will be honored at the Silver Level. The list of firms and their levels is attached.



# **Raising the Bar in D.C. A Funding Campaign for Legal Services**

**Sponsored by the District of Columbia Access to Justice Commission**

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## **\*\* Leadership Circle 2012 \*\***

### **PLATINUM LEVEL DONORS**

Benach Ragland LLP  
BuckleySandler LLP  
Delaney McKinney, LLP  
Gilbert LLP  
Jones Day  
Kirkland & Ellis, LLP  
Klein Hornig LLP  
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Morrison & Foerster Foundation  
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### **GOLD LEVEL DONORS**

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### **SILVER LEVEL DONORS**

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