

Richards, Layton & Finger

Pro Bono and Community Service Committee
Annual Report (FY 2017)

February, 2018

C. Malcolm Cochran IV

Mark V. Purpura

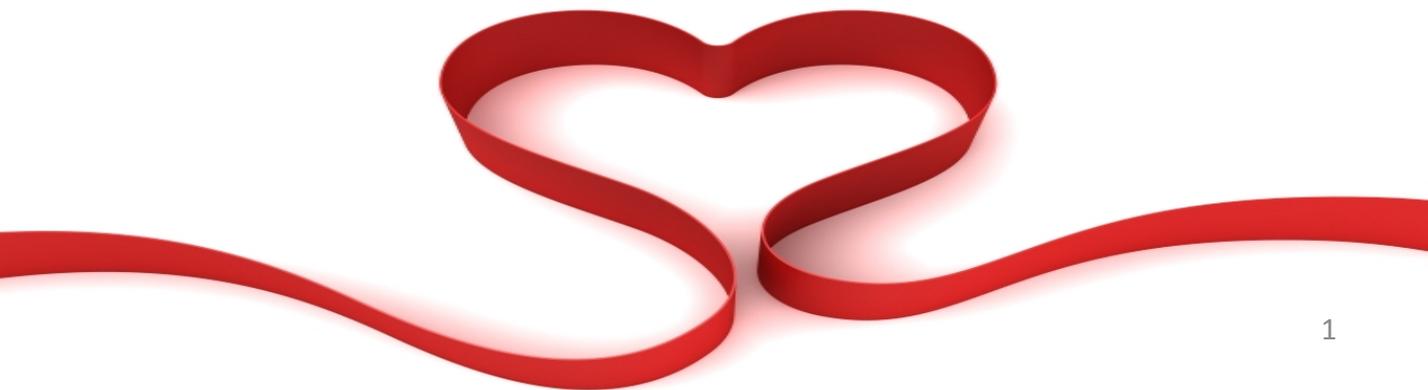
Melanie George Smith

THE POWER^{OF} CARING

Richard, Layton and Finger (“RLF”) attorneys and staff continued to undertake pro bono engagements in large numbers during FY2017.

During the year:

- **RLF attorneys and staff logged over 6400 hours on pro bono and community service (“PBCS”) matters, representing an increase of 100 hours from the previous fiscal year.**
- **Some 82 percent of the Firm’s full-time associates recorded PBCS time during the year.**
- **Approximately 70 percent of our directors spent time on PBCS matters.**
- **63 percent of our counsel participated in PBCS.**
- **Our staff provided administrative support on nearly all PBCS matters.**
- **Some 45 new PBCS matters were opened during FY2017.**



NEW INITIATIVES

Various initiatives were continued during FY2017. The Pro Bono and Community Service Committee continues to advance the purposes of the Firm's PBCS program, including: (i) enhancement of the Firm's reputation, resulting in the continued enhancement of the RLF brand; (ii) associate recruitment, development, and retention; (iii) community involvement, resulting in relationship building with individuals, public officials, organizations, and institutions throughout Delaware and beyond; (iv) relationship building within the Firm; (v) client development; (vi) training for both associates and directors; and, importantly, (vii) satisfaction of the traditional requirement that members of a profession accorded special status give back to the community in which they serve.

We pursued and/or expanded new initiatives during FY2017

Co-Counsel Project. The Co-Counsel Project arose at the request of Chief Justice Strine and the state's public defender, Brendan O'Neill. They asked private law firms to provide pro bono attorneys to partner with the public defender's office on the most serious felonies. Our attorneys serve as second chair and are expected to research, prepare, and argue discrete motions, such as suppression of evidence. The attorneys received a three-hour CLE training last December. **The Firm has 14 attorneys on this team**, roughly half associates and half directors/counsel who mentor and supervise. **Dan DeFranceschi** leads this team. We currently are active on our first two cases.

Vault.com. RLF submitted information regarding its pro bono and community service program to Vault.com for publication in its *2017 Vault Guide to Law Firm Pro Bono Programs*. We received a copy of the book, which highlights the firm's program nicely.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

We continue to experience success with our existing programs

Martin Luther King Day Community Service Projects. Community service projects were well supported over the course of the year. These included two Martin Luther King Day service projects: a food drive for Eisenberg Elementary, and a day of service at the Claymont Boys and Girls Club.

First, the Firm collected and purchased food and non-food items for the food pantry at Eisenberg Elementary School, which serves over 500 children living in poverty, many of whom are homeless. The entire Firm was invited to participate in the donation of food and non-food items, while Brigitte Fresco collected monetary donations and purchased food in bulk. Attorneys and staff helped load vehicles with the donations, while a smaller team of attorneys delivered the food and non-food items to the school. In total, we donated over 935 pounds of food and non-food items. This was the fourth year of our drive for Eisenberg Elementary, and school leaders were extremely grateful for our help.



EXISTING PROGRAMS



Martin Luther King Day Community Service Projects (continued):

Second, over 20 attorneys, staff, and their families went to the Boys and Girls Club for a day of painting, decorating, and furnishing a teen recreation room.

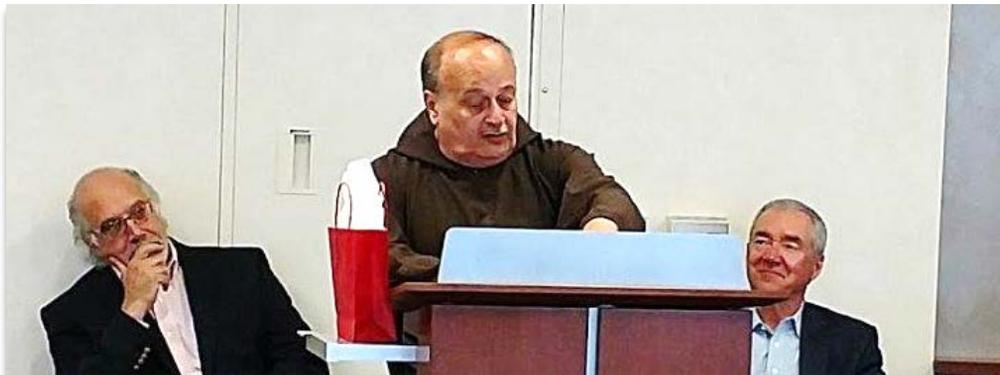


The Claymont Boys and Girls Club is a non-profit organization that serves disadvantaged youth. The RLF team revitalized an old recreation room that the teen club used. The entire Firm pitched in to donate supplies from the Club's wish list, including microphones for recording songs, a PlayStation, books, and other fun materials for youth. On Martin Luther King Day, our attorneys, staff, and their family members helped turn the teen room into a colorful, happy environment. The teens who use the room were speechless when they saw the finished product.

Working together in teams for such service projects affords attorneys and staff who may not otherwise have regular contact valuable opportunities to get to know one another. In addition to helping the community and advancing the profession, these projects provide opportunities for the Firm to enhance its reputation, and help to establish our lawyers and staff as positive role models in the community.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Annual Pro Bono Celebration. In June, the Firm held its annual pro bono reception, which was very well attended by both attorneys and staff. **Brother Ronald Giannone**, of the Ministry of Caring, was the guest speaker. The event served as a reminder of our longstanding commitment to community service and as a celebration of the Firm's culture in this regard.



Pro Bono Committee Intranet Page. With the assistance of **Robert Guerrero**, the Pro Bono Committee created an intranet page that contains helpful resources for attorneys involved in pro bono matters, photos, and a calendar of events.

The Non-Profit Team. This team was formed four years ago with the goal of assisting non-profits in various legal projects, including drafting incorporation documents, preparing 501(c)(3) filings, answering discrete legal questions, and serving on or counseling non-profit boards. It is one of the more popular teams among our attorneys, with 37 members. We held a team meeting and CLE in December 2016, where a CPA taught the 34 attendees how to understand non-profit financials.

EXISTING PROGRAMS



The Office of the Child Advocate Team. The OCA team has 26 attorneys and is led by **Jen Jauffret**. Over the course of the year, 23 RLF attorneys represented 48 children in abuse and neglect proceedings, providing a valuable service to the Court and our clients, as well as valuable training in both litigation and counseling for our lawyers. The number of active attorneys on the team increased over the prior year, and there was also a one-third increase in the number of children served. The team held five meetings this year, all five of which carried CLE credit. The first was the team’s annual meeting with the summer associates. This is a great opportunity each year to share experiences and stories with the Firm’s summer associates, affording them insight into our pro bono commitment and opportunities. Chief Judge Mike Newell of Family Court was the guest speaker. Further, in July and October, respectively, the team held two trainings by the Office of the Child Advocate on “Nuts and Bolts” and “The Nature of Child Abuse in Delaware.”



In January 2017 the team received Stewards of Children training, which teaches how to recognize child abuse. Finally, in May 2017, Tania Culley, the State’s Child Advocate, taught a CLE on the new child welfare laws adopted by the state.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Bancroft Elementary. This past school year, 25 attorneys and staff paired up to work with 18 children in grades kindergarten through fifth, tutoring them every week in reading and math. This represents the largest recruitment of new volunteers among all participating organizations volunteering with Big Brothers Big Sisters. The school continues to face scrutiny due to the low test scores of its at-risk student population. The team held a training program in September 2016 to prepare for the upcoming school year. An end-of-year celebration was held at the Firm, and the children enjoyed lunch, games, face painting, and visiting their mentors' offices. Many of the students spoke of their appreciation for their mentors and how glad they were to be in the program. The mentors and mentees did a joint craft project, which was on display in the RLF library for a couple of months and then was moved to Bancroft's mentoring room. **Rachel Horn** has been the team leader for the past four years and is doing an outstanding job. She established a resource center in our library to provide educational games and activities for the mentors to use with their mentees, which was well received by team members.



EXISTING PROGRAMS

DVLS - Protection from Abuse Team. This team of 21 attorneys assists DVLS with obtaining protection from abuse orders for victims of domestic violence. The team took on 10 cases this year, plus an additional PFA ancillary case. This represents a significant increase (1000%) over the number of cases handled last year. Although the team is without a permanent leader, **Jen Jauffret** is volunteering as interim team leader, and a permanent leader is actively being sought. In November 2016, the firm hosted DVLS for a Nuts and Bolts PFA training.

The Estate Planning Team. This team of 28 members is headed by **Monica Ayres** and offers services, through DVLS, to indigent clients with estate planning and related needs. In addition to the preparation of wills, the team offers various other estate planning options, such as the health care directive, durable power of attorney, the HIPAA authorization form, and planning documents for the disposition of last remains. This pro bono offering affords valuable one-on-one counseling opportunities for our lawyers. During FY2017, four attorneys served four clients through this program. In November 2016, **Rob Krapf** and **Don Sparks** conducted a CLE training for the team. Rob gave a property law refresher, and Don provided an interactive training of the question and intake process of a wills client.

DELAWARE

VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES

EXISTING PROGRAMS

The Federal Civil Panel. The Firm participates in the Federal Civil Panel under the auspices of the United States District Court for the District of Delaware. Through this program, the Firm receives referrals from the Federal District Court of cases filed by indigent plaintiffs. The cases typically involve alleged civil rights violations. Through this program, it is intended that attorneys will have the opportunity to first-chair active litigation matters in the Delaware District Court.

Beginning in July 2015, **Kelly Farnan** and **Christine Haynes** were appointed by the District Court to represent four inmates in the Delaware correctional system in actions filed against pharmaceutical companies alleging personal injuries sustained from taking prescription medication. The clients are seeking compensatory and punitive damages for negligence, negligent misrepresentation, breach of warranty, breach of implied warranty of merchantability, breach of implied warranty of fitness for a particular purpose, breach of express warranty, and fraud by concealment. The cases are still active.



EXISTING PROGRAMS

The Emmanuel Dining Room (EDR). Teams of lawyers and staff continued the Firm's tradition of service at the EDR during FY2017. The responsibility for serving EDR was shared by 87 volunteers on 36 days over the fiscal year, representing over double the number of volunteers in prior years. RLF benefits in this regard from the longstanding relationship that **Greg Varallo** has maintained with the Ministry of Caring, which runs the EDR. Greg's leadership of our efforts with the Ministry of Caring has been of central importance to our ability to continue to offer this program, which has been particularly popular among our staff.

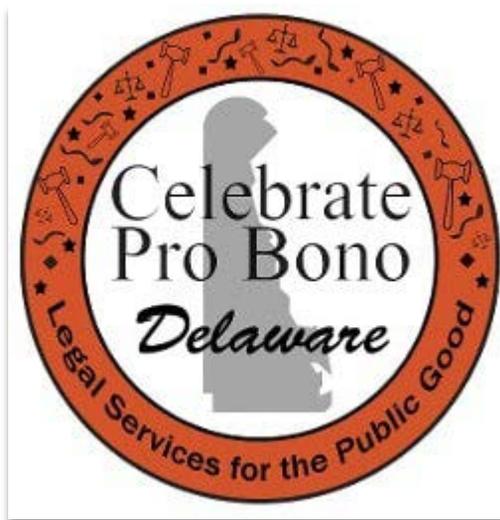
Unaccompanied Minors. At the request of Chief Justice Strine, the Firm jointly participated with other firms in training attorneys to represent unaccompanied minors coming to Delaware. **Marcos Ramos** and **Marisa Terranova Fissel** lead this team, and they continue to supervise four associates in their representation in Family Court guardianships of two immigrant children.

Ad Hoc Projects. Any attorney in the Firm who does not wish to participate with our established teams is invited to suggest a project of his or her interest. During FY2017, RLF attorneys were engaged in a variety of *ad hoc* PBCS projects, including serving on boards and committees, setting up new non-profit organizations, researching issues of law for various non-profits, and organizing running/walking teams to promote various causes.

SPONSORSHIPS

On behalf of the Pro Bono Committee, the Firm sponsored the following events and activities during FY2017:

Delaware Volunteer Legal Services 5K. The Firm was a gold sponsor of the October 2016 5K run in celebration of the seventh annual National Pro Bono Celebration Week.



Delaware State Bar Association Race Judicata. The Firm was once again a bronze sponsor of the 2017 Art Connolly Race Judicata, benefitting the Delaware Law Related Education Center.



COLLECTIONS DRIVES & AWARDS



On behalf of the Pro Bono Committee, RLF organized several collections and drives in addition to the food drives we do every year for the holidays and for MLK Day.

Stubbs Elementary School. This fall, for the third year in a row, individuals at the Firm donated backpacks and back-to-school supplies for the entire third grade—80 students—at Stubbs Elementary School, raising over \$1000 and many boxes of in-kind donations.

The William E. Proudford Sickle Cell Fund, Inc. Individuals at the Firm collectively contributed \$3,100 to the Sickle Cell Fund, a pro bono client of the Firm. Over the past five years, Firm individuals have collectively raised more than \$16,000 for the Sickle Cell Fund in the annual Delaware Marathon fundraiser.

Adopt-a-Child Holiday Gift Drive. In 1999, RLF adopted six children for the Ministry of Caring’s Adopt a Child program, which matches people with needy children for holiday gift giving. We have continued the program annually, and to date we have adopted 1,296 children. Linda Anderson spearheaded this program for years, and Jennifer Marcolini has taken over responsibility for coordinating this effort. The Firm adopted 151 children in FY2017.

Jeans Days. The Firm offers monthly “Jeans Day” opportunities for employees to contribute five dollars to a specific non-profit or cause and be able to wear jeans on a given Friday. Each cause we support has a special connection to one or more of our employees.

Through these and other projects, our attorneys are encouraged to continue to develop their skills and contacts, while giving back to the community in which they serve.