

CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE TOGETHER
PRO BONO & COMMUNITY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2019



March 24, 2020

Russell C. Silberglied
Mark V. Purpura
Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk

THE POWER OF CARING

Richards, Layton and Finger (“RLF”) attorneys and staff continued to undertake pro bono engagements in large numbers during FY 2019.

During the year:

- RLF attorneys and staff logged almost 6000 hours on pro bono and community service (“PBCS”) matters.
- 72 percent of the firm’s associates recorded PBCS time during the year.
- Approximately 60 percent of our directors spent time on PBCS matters.
- 90 percent of our counsel participated in PBCS.
- Our staff provided administrative support on nearly all PBCS matters.
- The firm opened 23 new PBCS matters during FY 2019.



OUR INITIATIVES

Various initiatives were continued during FY 2019. The Pro Bono and Community Service Committee continues to advance the purposes of the firm's PBCS program, including:

- giving back to the community that we serve;
- enhancing the firm's reputation and the RLF brand;
- associate recruitment, development, and retention;
- community involvement, resulting in relationship building with individuals, public officials, non-profit organizations, and institutions throughout Delaware and beyond;
- relationship building within the firm;
- client development; and
- training for both associates and directors.



PRO BONO 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. The Federal Civil Panel Team is led by **Kelly Farnan**.

Beginning in July 2015, **Kelly Farnan** and **Christine Haynes** were appointed by the Delaware 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 sought 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. Over the past year, **Kelly, Christine, Sara Metzler, Tyler Cragg, Alexandra Ewing**, and the rest of the Federal Civil Panel Team have dedicated a substantial amount of time and effort to this matter.

Continuing their efforts from prior years, members of the team briefed and argued three summary judgment motions and two *Daubert* motions. **Christine, Sara, and Tyler** shared the argument before Judge Andrews on the motions. This representation provided an excellent training opportunity for our associates, who have gained substantial experience in federal court ranging from discovery to arguing before the court. Further, the RLF team continues to enhance the firm's reputation with its high-caliber representation, for which the court has expressed its appreciation.

PRO BONO PROGRAMS

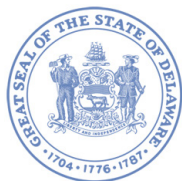


The Non-Profit Team. This team was formed six years ago with the goal of assisting non-profit organizations with various legal projects, including drafting incorporation documents, answering legal questions, and serving on or counseling non-profit boards. It is one of the more popular teams among the firm's attorneys, with 35 members. The Non-Profit Team is led by **Elisa Erlenbach Maas** and **John Mark Zeberkiewicz**.

One of the firm's largest pro bono projects has been our ongoing work on behalf of **Camp Rehoboth**. Camp Rehoboth is "dedicated to creating a positive environment inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities" and "to promote cooperation and understanding among all people, as we work to build a safer community with room for all." In recent years, RLF attorneys have represented Camp Rehoboth in a number of ways, including the implementation of a novel USDA loan financing structure that the firm created to satisfy the USDA loan requirements, thereby allowing the organization to refinance its property. Firm attorneys assisted with a new commercial lease entered into by Camp Rehoboth for a tenant.

Our attorneys have been involved with the organization's strategic planning process, most notably upon the death of its founder and executive director, and have dedicated their time to advising on governance and personnel issues, as well as serving on the board of directors. During the past year, **Mark Purpura**, **Robert Krapf**, **Frederick Mitsdarfer III**, **Katharine Lester Mowery**, **Antonios Roustopoulos**, and **Jane Trueper** contributed pro bono hours to this project.

The Office of the Child Advocate Team. The Office of the Child Advocate ("OCA") Team is led by **Jennifer Jauffret**. Over the course of the year, 20 RLF attorneys represented 36 children in abuse and neglect proceedings, providing a valuable service to the court and our clients, as well as valuable litigation and counseling experiences for our lawyers. Our attorneys dedicated approximately 500 hours to serving as child attorneys in FY 2019. Since the inception of this program over 16 years ago, RLF attorneys have dedicated over 13,000 hours to the representation of well over 200 children in these Family Court proceedings.



Office of the
Child Advocate

PRO BONO PROGRAMS

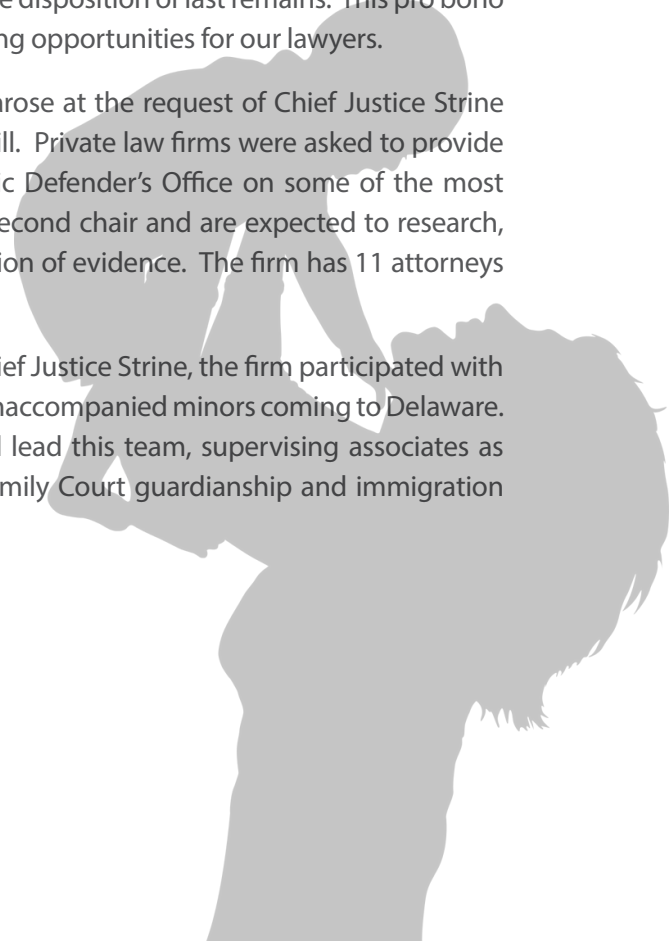
Protection from Abuse Team. The Protection from Abuse (“PFA”) Team consists of 11 attorneys who assist **Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, Inc. (“DVLS”)** with obtaining Protection from Abuse Orders for victims of domestic violence. The PFA Team dedicated over 64 hours to handling protection from abuse proceedings this year. This team was led by interim team leader **Jennifer Jauffret**.

DELAWARE VOLUNTEER LEGAL SERVICES

The Estate Planning Team. This team of 25 attorneys 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 creation of health-care directives, durable powers of attorney, HIPAA authorizations, and planning documents for the disposition of last remains. This pro bono offering affords valuable one-on-one counseling opportunities for our lawyers.

Co-Counsel Project. The Co-Counsel Project arose at the request of Chief Justice Strine and the state’s public defender, Brendan O’Neill. Private law firms were asked to provide pro bono attorneys to partner with the Public Defender’s Office on some of the most serious felony cases. Our attorneys serve as second chair and are expected to research, prepare, and argue motions, such as suppression of evidence. The firm has 11 attorneys on this team.

Unaccompanied Minors. At the request of Chief Justice Strine, the firm participated with other firms in training attorneys to represent unaccompanied minors coming to Delaware. **Marcos Ramos** and **Marisa Terranova Fissel** lead this team, supervising associates as they receive requests for representation in Family Court guardianship and immigration cases.



PRO BONO PROGRAMS



Ad Hoc Projects. All attorneys in the firm are invited to suggest and participate in pro bono and community service projects that reflect their interests. During FY 2019, 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 non-profits, and organizing fundraising efforts to promote various causes. Some of the more significant *ad hoc* PBCS projects in FY 2019 included:

- a. Under the leadership of **Robert Krapf**, the firm dedicated over 230 hours to represent **Central Baptist Community Development Corporation (“CBCDC”)** in connection with its Eastside Rising initiative. CBCDC is an effort to revitalize Wilmington’s Eastside community through housing improvement, workforce development, and economic empowerment. RLF has provided legal representation on a diverse array of matters, including forming, dissolving, and cancelling legal entities; drafting memoranda of understanding involving workforce training programs, low-income housing rehabilitation, and promotion of home ownership among low- and moderate-income families on the Eastside of Wilmington; and drafting real estate purchase and sale documents. The firm also advises CBCDC on corporate governance matters, such as managing risks associated with real property development and ownership. The success of this initiative has improved both the infrastructure and the quality of life in a significant section of our community, only three blocks from our firm. During the past year, **Zachary Kmetz, Robert Krapf, Wendy Manthorpe, Philip Micha, Frederick Mitsdarfer III, Ellen Rosaio, Brendan Schlauch, Stan Stevenson, Susan Stewart, and Jane Trueper**, among others, contributed their time to this project.
- b. Three of the firm’s attorneys, **Renée Mosley Delcollo, Travis Hunter, and Ryan Maerz**, volunteered as a team through the OCA to serve as child attorneys for six minor siblings, the youngest of whom was a newborn. Most of these children were victims of sexual abuse. As a result of the efforts by our attorneys and the Division of Family Services, the Family Court ruled to terminate the parents’ rights over the children and denied the grandmother’s petition for guardianship. The Family Court’s decision was then appealed to the Delaware Supreme Court, with **Renée** preparing the appellate briefing defending the lower court’s ruling. The Delaware Supreme Court affirmed the lower court’s decision, paving the way for the children to be adopted by their foster parents. The OCA affords the firm’s attorneys an opportunity to positively alter the course of children’s lives and to provide them with a healthy and loving family through their pro bono efforts.

PRO BONO PROGRAMS

The Bancroft School Mentoring Team. This past school year, 21 attorneys and staff, as individuals and pairs, served as mentors to 15 children in kindergarten through fifth grade through the **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware's Mentoring Program**. RLF attorneys and staff met with their mentees each week, mentored them in reading and math, and created personal relationships with them. In the fall of this year, the team held a meeting to discuss the upcoming school year and invite new mentors into the program. In late spring, the firm held a carnival for the children to celebrate the end of the school year. The students enjoyed lunch, a sundae bar, a photo booth, carnival games, and visiting their mentors' offices. Many of the children spoke of their appreciation for their mentors and the program. In fact, two RLF attorneys even extended the mentorship beyond the Bancroft program. This incredible team is led by **Lisa Portale**, with help from **Sherry Pittman** and **Ellen Rosaio**. The team's leaders prepare monthly craft projects for mentors and mentees to do together, which are greatly enjoyed by the students. Additionally, a resource center with educational games and activities was created to assist the RLF team members with their weekly mentoring.

The Emmanuel Dining Room Teams. Teams of lawyers and staff continued the firm's longstanding tradition of serving meals each month to the homeless and working poor within our community at the Ministry of Caring's Emmanuel Dining Room. The firm had 63 volunteers who shared the responsibility of serving a total of 36 lunches at the Emmanuel Dining Room during FY 2019.



PRO BONO PROGRAMS

Martin Luther King Day of Service Community Projects: Community service projects were well supported over the course of the year. On Martin Luther King Day, the firm hosts an annual Day of Service to commemorate the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to promote outreach to those in need in our community. In 2019, the firm provided a complete makeover of the recreation room at the **Governor Terry Children's Center**, a shelter operated by the non-profit organization CHILD, Inc. for abused, neglected, and dependent youth.



Twelve attorneys and staff, along with their family members, spent the day at the Governor Terry Children's Center creating a makeover of the recreation room used by the children who are served on location. The Governor Terry Children's Center is a 10-bed facility that provides emergency temporary shelter and counseling for children and youth in the care of the Division of Family Services in Wilmington, Delaware. The makeover included painting the room, supplying and building computer desks, and handling all of the interior decorating needs to create a bright, happy environment for the children who use it.

PRO BONO PROGRAMS

Martin Luther King Day of Service Community Projects (continued): The firm also organized a food drive for **Eisenberg Elementary School's food pantry**, which supplies students and their families with much-needed groceries and household items throughout the school year. Eisenberg Elementary School serves over 500 children, many of whom are ethnically diverse and are either homeless, living in poverty, or at-risk. The firm was invited to participate in the sixth annual food drive for Eisenberg Elementary School by contributing monetary and food donations. **Brigitte Fresco** collected the monetary donations and purchased the necessary items in bulk to be donated on behalf of the firm. Teams of attorneys and staff helped load vehicles and deliver the contributions to the school. In total, the firm donated over \$1800 worth of food and non-food items in 2019. Eisenberg Elementary is truly grateful for the firm's annual donations and the crucial role they play in servicing the basic needs of their students' families.



Working together in teams for such service projects affords attorneys and staff, who may not otherwise have regular contact, valuable opportunities to engage and get to know one another on a personal level. In addition to helping the community and advancing the ethical obligations of the legal profession, these service projects provide the firm with valuable marketing opportunities to enhance its reputation, as well as those of its attorneys and staff, as positive role models within the community.

PRO BONO PROGRAMS

Annual Pro Bono Celebration. On June 20, 2019, our firm hosted its annual pro bono celebration to recognize the outstanding contributions and commitment of our attorneys and staff to our community. **Ms. Naomi Gandia, the executive director of the Mariano Rivera Public Foundation** and our distinguished guest, eloquently spoke of the “gift of giving” and the need for each person to give back to help those less fortunate. Ms. Gandia passionately reminded everyone that while giving from one’s wallet is greatly appreciated, often the best gift is giving of yourself by sharing your talents. The Mariano Rivera Public Foundation strives to “provide youth from impoverished families with an education that will empower them for the future.” On behalf of the firm, **Russell Silberglied, a member of the board of directors and counsel for the Mariano Rivera Public Foundation,** welcomed and applauded the efforts of Ms. Gandia and the non-profit organization she represents.



Russ Silberglied, Mariano Rivera, and Naomi Gandia assemble supply bags in Puerto Rico during their Hurricane Maria Relief Mission.

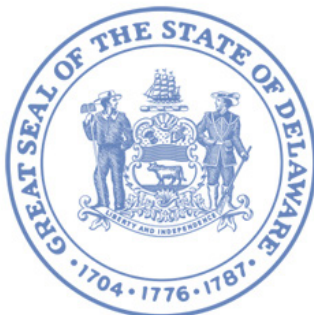
SPONSORSHIPS

On behalf of the Pro Bono Committee, the firm sponsored the following events and activities during FY 2019:

Delaware Volunteer Legal Services 5k. The firm was a Silver sponsor of the 5k run in celebration of the Tenth Annual National Pro Bono Celebration Week.

Delaware State Bar Association. The firm was a Bronze sponsor of the Christopher W. White Distinguished Access to Justice Awards Breakfast.

Office of the Child Advocate. The firm was a Silver sponsor of the OCA's Annual "Jingle Mingle," which raises funds for foster kids to have opportunities and "normal" childhood experiences, such as attending summer camps and school field trips.



Office of the
Child Advocate

& COLLECTIONS, DRIVES & CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

On behalf of the Pro Bono and Community Service Committee, the firm organized food drives and gift collections for those in need throughout the holiday season and in conjunction with the firm's annual MLK Day of Service.

The William E. Proudford Sickle Cell Fund, Inc. Under the leadership of **John Mark Zeberkiewicz**, individuals at the firm have collectively contributed well over \$20,000 to the Sickle Cell Fund, a pro bono client of the firm, through their donations and fundraising efforts in connection with their participation in the annual Delaware Running Festival.

Thanksgiving Food Drive. **Bill McCall**, through the Association of Legal Administrators ("ALA"), organized the firm's participation in the annual **ALA Food Drive** to benefit the hundreds of families receiving Thanksgiving dinner donations from the **Ministry of Caring, Inc.** **Brigitte Fresco** did an excellent job of collecting and managing all monetary and food donations from the firm's attorneys and staff to ensure that the many local families in need could celebrate with a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.



& COLLECTIONS, DRIVES & CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Adopt-A-Child Holiday Gift Drive. In 1999, the firm “adopted” six children from the **Ministry of Caring’s Adopt-A-Child program**; now, the Adopt-A-Child program is a longstanding and much-loved firm tradition. Each year RLF attorneys and staff are matched with homeless and at-risk children in Wilmington and given the children’s holiday wish list, and we have adopted 1,606 local children in need over the past 20 years. **Jennifer Marcolini** spearheads this effort and all of the responsibility and coordinating that goes along with it. Witnessing all of the beautifully wrapped gifts being brought into work during the busy days leading up to the holiday season brightens the spirits of everyone in the firm. The firm’s employees adopted 150 children in FY 2019.

Jeans Days. The firm offers monthly “Jeans Day” opportunities, which allow employees to wear jeans in exchange for a donation to the chosen cause. Each month a different non-profit organization is chosen, and the person who nominated the cause is given an opportunity to highlight to the entire firm why this particular organization’s mission is important to them.



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

RICHARDS
LAYTON &
FINGER

920 North King Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
www.rlf.com