Proskauer

Proskauer Honors Public Service at the 15th Annual Golden Gavel Awards

Proskauer For Good on **February 16, 2023**

Last week, hundreds of lawyers and staff gathered across Proskauer for the 15th Annual Golden Gavel Awards ceremony to honor those who have made significant contributions to the Firm's pro bono, corporate social responsibility and community building efforts this past year. The evening began with a special guest. Preet Bharara, the former United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, shared insights from his time in office, impressed the importance of public service, and addressed several issues he raised in his best-selling book *Doing Justice: A Prosecutor's Thoughts on Crime, Punishment, and The Rule of Law*. Also of note were remarks from Labor & Employment associate Godfre Blackman who is currently serving as the Firm's NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) Fellow. As part of the Firm's Collaborate for Change initiative, Proskauer created this fellowship for one of our associates to work directly with the LDF on strategic matters focusing on eliminating disparities and achieving racial justice and equality.

PRO BONO

Criminal Justice

SDNY RISE Court

Through the Southern District of New York's "Re-entry through Intensive Supervision and Employment" (RISE) Court, our lawyers provide legal assistance to individuals recently released from federal custody, helping them to successfully re-enter society. Participants often face legal obstacles distinct from their criminal cases that hinder their rehabilitation and personal development, thereby increasing the likelihood of recidivism. We seek to address these hurdles by providing representation on a wide range of collateral civil issues, including housing, public benefits, immigration, and family law. To navigate these challenges, Proskauer works closely with the Court not only in service to those seeking to become productive members of society, but also as a model for other jurisdictions pursuing criminal justice reform. This team is being honored for their ongoing efforts in Family Court on behalf of a participant seeking custody of his daughter.

- ???Alisha Bruce – New York, Law Clerk, Labor
- ???Sydney Juliano – New York, Associate, Labor

Court Reform

The Pandemic Practices Working Group was formed to conduct a thorough evaluation of court practices implemented by New York State Courts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The effort was undertaken with extensive cooperation of the New York Courts, though it is an independent project of The Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts, which was formed in June 2020 to study and make recommendations to improve access to justice. All told, the Working Group heard testimony from more than 300 people and organizations — their insights provide the backbone and primary source material for a compelling report that will be issued soon. Proskauer was one of two law firms spearheading this effort and drafting the report.

- ???Wilderness Castillo-Dobson – New York, Associate, Corporate
- ???Portia Proctor – New York, Associate, Litigation
- ???Nicole Swanson – New York, Associate, Litigation

Estate Planning

Proskauer partnered with Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS) to provide wills, powers of attorney, and other essential life planning documents to 16 residents of a special needs housing and community facility space that serves visually impaired individuals of limited means. The estate planning documents prepared are intended to ensure that the residents' dying wishes will be fulfilled, and enable trusted individuals to make financial and health decisions on their behalf when they are no longer able to make such decisions. This project was particularly rewarding as volunteers helped a vulnerable population with a limited ability to self-advocate and gained insight into the challenges individuals with vision impairment face every day.

- ???Nathaniel Birdsall – New York, Partner, Private Client Services
- ???Kimberly Braun – New York, Partner, Private Client Services
- ???Stephanie Heilborn – New York, Partner, Private Client Services
- ???Henry Leibowitz – New York, Partner, Private Client Services
- ???Emily Lewis – New York, Project Assistant, Private Investment Funds
- ???Ephrat Orgel – New York, Special Trusts and Estates Counsel
- ???Nikhil Sadaranganey – New York, Project Assistant, Labor
- ???Jonathan Schwartz – New York, Associate, Private Client Services
- ???Tara Shecter – New York, Project Assistant, Private Investment Funds
- ???Elias Tsouristakis – New York, Associate, Private Client Services
- ???Peter Tucci – Los Angeles, Associate, Private Client Services
- ???Jacob Wonn – New York, Associate, Private Client Services

Impact Litigation:

Advocating for Visually-Impaired Pedestrians in Chicago

In September 2019, Proskauer filed a class action lawsuit in federal court challenging the City of Chicago's systemic failure to provide accessible crosswalk signals for people with vision impairments. As of February 2022, only about 20 of the City's approximately 2,800 signalized intersections were accessible to pedestrians with visual disabilities. In other words, of the intersections that the City deemed unsafe for pedestrians absent a crossing signal, only about half of one percent are accessible for visually disabled persons. This past year, the team – along with co-counsel Disability Rights Advocates, a nationwide nonprofit disability rights legal center – obtained class certification.

- ???Alyssa Cook – Chicago, Associate, Labor
- ???Natasha Petrov – Chicago, Paralegal, Corporate
- ???Nigel Telman – Chicago, Partner, Labor
- ???Dakota Treece – Chicago, Labor
- ???Edward Young – Chicago, Senior Counsel, Labor

Impact Litigation:

Safe Public Housing

Through enforcement of a court-approved consent decree in *Baez v. NYCHA*, 13 Civ. 8916 (S.D.N.Y.), Proskauer has made substantial progress over the past year in implementing oversight and accountability systems to ensure that the more than 400,000 New Yorkers who live in public housing, particularly those with respiratory illnesses, have thorough and immediate remediation of mold and excessive moisture in their homes.

- ???Julia Alonzo – New York, Senior Counsel, Litigation
- ???Griffin Asnis – New York, Paralegal, Litigation
- ???Godfre Blackman – New York, Associate, Labor
- ???Danielle Brooks – New York, Associate, Corporate
- ???Benjamin Eisenberg – Washington, DC, eDiscovery Staff Attorney, Private Support Resources
- ???Yena Hong – New York, Associate, Litigation
- ???Scott Kamen – New York, Paralegal, Labor
- ???David Picon –New York, Partner, Litigation
- ???Genesis Sanchez Tavarez – Boston, Associate, Litigation

- ???Shanice Smith-Banks – New Orleans, Associate, Labor

Justice for Victim of Elder Abuse

After a three-day bench trial, this team successfully obtained a Judgment from the Orange County California Superior Court in favor of our client whose son used a power of attorney to transfer ownership of the family home to himself without our client's knowledge or consent. At trial, half a dozen family witnesses came forward to testify on behalf of either father or son, with family members deeply divided as a result of this dispute. The Court ruled in favor of our client on all of his claims, finding that his son had committed elder abuse, wrongfully took title to his home, and breached an oral agreement to pay rent while occupying the property. In the Judgment, the Court returned ownership of the disputed residential property to our client.

- ???Anthony Oncidi – Los Angeles, Partner, Labor
- ???Morgan Peterson – Los Angeles, Associate, Labor
- ???Wesley Shelton – Los Angeles, Associate, Labor

Nonprofit Assistance in Brazil

Proskauer serves as pro bono counsel to Instituto Recicleiros (Recicleiros), a Brazilian non-profit organization. Recicleiros identifies communities throughout Brazil that do not have adequate recycling programs but do have a significant number of impoverished individuals who have begun informally acting as waste collectors in order to sell recyclable materials themselves.

Recicleiros incubates recycling cooperatives in these communities and trains the waste collectors to operate the cooperatives, thereby providing technical training and formal jobs to marginalized and vulnerable individuals. These cooperatives act as sorting units for recyclable materials and sell the sorted materials to private companies to reuse in their production processes. Once Recicleiros deems these sorting units economically self-sufficient, Recicleiros donates the units to the members of the cooperative, thereby promoting the social and economic independence of its members.

- ???Antonio Piccirillo – Sao Paulo & New York, Partner, Corporate

Nonprofit Assistance in Paris

Proskauer supports several non-profit organizations in Paris through substantial pro bono work in various areas including labor & employment, data privacy, intellectual property, transactional work, and non-profit governance. These organizations include the following:

- Première Urgence provides assistance to victims of natural disasters, war, and economic collapse. They run more than 20 projects per year, across more than 20 countries.
- Loba supports women who were victims of sexual violence, helping them to rebuild their lives, in particular through dance.
- Passerelles et Compétences connects non-profit organizations expressing specific needs for support with individuals willing to volunteer their skills and know-how.
- Yes Akademia enables underprivileged youth to gain self-confidence and to succeed in school.
- Nicolas Léger – Paris, Partner, Labor
- Mathilde Pépin – Paris, Associate, Labor
- Doriane Shannon – Paris, Associate, Corporate

Pro Bono Spotlight:

The Los Angeles County Bar Association

Counsel for Justice (CFJ) — the pro bono arm of the Los Angeles County Bar Association –provides vitally important civil legal services to the indigent. The recent efforts of Proskauer volunteers, who have provided critical support to CFJ projects for many years, are recognized here.

The CFJ Immigration Project provides legal advice and help preparing work permit renewals, DACA forms, green cards, naturalization and adjustment of status applications, and family petitions. In the past year, the following Proskauer volunteers have been instrumental in helping the immigration project handle the influx of clients relating to the Ukrainian refugee crisis:

- Katrine Magas – Los Angeles, Associate, Tax
- Ekaterina Napalkova – New York, Partner, Tax

CFJ's Domestic Violence Project provides legal information, assists in the preparation of legal documents, and makes referrals to other service providers. In the past year, the following Proskauer volunteers have provided critical help to victims of domestic violence:

- Landon Crawl – Los Angeles, Associate, Corporate
- Susan Goldfarb – Los Angeles, Special Finance Counsel, Corporate
- Emma Lapin – Los Angeles, Associate, Corporate

The Veterans Project helps veterans of limited means with discharge upgrades, clearing outstanding tickets and warrants, reinstating drivers' licenses, expunging criminal records, and removing barriers to housing, employment, healthcare and education. Proskauer has supported the monthly veterans' clinic at Patriotic Hall for the past 10 years. The following Proskauer volunteers have gone above and beyond helping veterans this past year:

- Ariel Brotman – Los Angeles, Associate, Labor
- Colin Cabral – Los Angeles & Boston, Partner, Litigation
- David Gobel – Los Angeles, Associate, Labor
- Alyson Tocicki – Los Angeles, Associate, Litigation

Reproductive Rights

In light of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* finding that the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee a right to abortion, several organizations sought advice from Proskauer concerning risks they might face going forward. The team met with each of the clients individually to understand their operations and to listen to their specific concerns. Team members then reviewed state laws across the country and helped identify appropriate courses of action.

- Alicia Abboud – Los Angeles, Associate, Corporate
- Margaret Dale – New York, Partner, Litigation
- Konstantinos Karamanakis – Boston, Associate, Corporate
- Rachel Kessler – New York, Associate, Labor
- Ekaterina Napalkova – New York, Partner, Tax

- ???Michelle Ovanesian – Los Angeles, Associate, Litigation
- ???Makenzie Way – Boston, Associate, Labor

Pro Bono – Special Recognition

These honorees deserve special recognition and thanks for their roles in increasing the scope and reach of the pro bono program.

- ???Anna Brodskaya – New York, Senior Paralegal, Litigation
- ???Peter Cramer – New York, Associate, Corporate
- ???Shannon McGowan – Washington, DC, Associate, Litigation
- ???Omobolaji Oluwasola – New York, Associate, Litigation

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Education

Proskauer's education programs offer a wide range of activities designed by our corporate social responsibility team and led by our employees in collaboration with our nonprofit and school partners to support academic achievement and prepare students for further education and careers. We are pleased to inform and influence the next generation through our programs on racial justice, immigration, gun safety, voting rights, and criminal justice reform. Our partners in social justice include, but are not limited, to John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League, Bottom Line Boston, Fresh Air Fund and our Adopt-a-School partners in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and New York. Improving educational outcomes and expanding development opportunities for students is the focus of our enrichment programs. These workshops leverage the expertise of our lawyers and staff to successfully help students develop new skills, build relationships, and identify new career paths and passions – inspiring our future leaders to realize their full potential.

- ???Casey Brandenberger – Los Angeles, Associate Director of Legal Recruiting and Professional Development
- ???Bryan Cruz – New York, Associate, Litigation
- ???William Dalsen – Boston, Associate, Litigation
- ???Gilbert Desroches – National, Manager of Client Operations

- ???Yena Hong – New York, Associate, Litigation
- ???Szeman Lam – Boston, Associate, Corporate
- ???Jason Madden – New York, Partner, Corporate
- ???Natasha Marshall – London, Human Resources Specialist
- ???Alexandra Oxyer – Chicago, Associate, Labor
- ???Stephen Pevsner – London, Partner, Tax
- ???Portia Proctor – New York, Associate, Litigation
- ???Elizabeth Proujansky – New York, Legal Director
- ???Jana Ruthberg – New York, Associate, Litigation
- ???Laura Stafford – Boston, Senior Counsel, Litigation
- ???Lindsey Tertan – Boston, Office Administrator
- ???Jason Vives – New York, Director of Conflict Services
- ???Makenzie Way – Boston, Associate, Labor

Corporate Social Responsibility – Special Recognition

The individuals below have greatly expanded the Firm’s capacity to serve vulnerable communities and champion important social justice causes.

- ???Alexander Griffith – London, Partner, Corporate
- ???Colleen Hart – Los Angeles & New York, Partner, Tax
- ???Amanda Nussbaum – New York, Partner, Tax

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Talent Development and Community Building

Awarded to individuals who have demonstrated excellence through their efforts to build our community within the Firm. These recipients’ actions have directly impacted the Firm’s ability to attract, develop, motivate and retain talent. The honorees below have invested significant time, energy and resources into creating our unique and talented mix of lawyers and staff members.

- ???Monica Arora – New York, Partner, Corporate

- Elisabeth Baltay – London, Partner, Corporate
- Steven Burwell – New York, Partner, Corporate
- Robert Chiu – New York, Associate, Corporate
- Michael Ellis – New York, Partner, Corporate
- Camille Higonnet – Boston, Partner, Corporate
- Brittnee Johnson – New York, Project Assistant, Labor
- Jinyoung Joo – New York, Partner, Corporate
- Timothy Karcher – New York, Partner, Corporate
- Paul Lazdowski – Boston, Associate Director of Alumni Relations, Professional Resources
- Nicole Magrini – New York, Senior Manager of Paralegal Services, Professional Resources
- Catherine Sear – London, Partner, Tax
- Nigel Telman – Chicago, Partner, Labor

Advancing Change

Awarded to individuals who have been engaged in significant ways in bettering our community through their actions.

- Tosin Adeyeri – London, Associate, Corporate
- Jennifer Rigterink – New Orleans, Senior Counsel, Labor
- Allison Saltstein – New York, Associate, Corporate
- Robert Shmalo – New York, Partner, Real Estate
- Hannah Silverman – New York, Associate, Litigation

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Fellowship

Godfre Blackman is the Firm’s 2022-2023 NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) Fellow. As part of the Firm’s Collaborate for Change initiative, Proskauer created a fellowship for one of our associates to work directly with the LDF on strategic matters focusing on eliminating disparities and achieving racial justice and equality.

- Godfre Blackman – New York, Associate, Labor

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Award

Awarded to individuals who are actively engaged in fostering an inclusive culture that is free from bias and serve as role models for others. A recipient acts as a sponsor or ally in championing gender equity and works to remove barriers and improve the working experience and engagement levels of women in the Firm.

- ???Lauren Boglivi – New York, Partner, Corporate
- ???Yomarie Habenicht – Washington, DC, Associate, Tax
- ???Lucie Rose – London, Special Funds Counsel, Corporate

Related Professionals

???Alicia M. Abboud
Partner

???Julia D. Alonzo
Litigation Department Legal Director

???Monica Arora
Partner

???Elisabeth I. Baltay
Partner

???Nathaniel W. Birdsall
Partner

???Lauren K. Boglivi
Partner

???Ariel Brotman
Associate

???Colin G. Cabral
Partner

???Robert H. Chiu
Associate

???Peter J. Cramer
Associate

???Margaret A. Dale
Partner

???William D. Dalsen

Partner

???Michael E. Ellis

Partner

???Susan R. Goldfarb

Special Finance Counsel

???Alexander Griffith

Partner

???Yomarie S. Habenicht

Senior Counsel

???Colleen Hart

Partner

???Stephanie E. Heilborn

Partner

???Camille Higonnet

Partner

???Sydney L. Juliano

Associate

???Szeman F. Lam

Partner

???Henry J. Leibowitz

Partner

???Jason S. Madden

Partner

???Shannon D. McGowan

Associate

???Amanda H. Nussbaum

Partner

???Anthony J. Oncidi

Partner

???Michelle M. Ovanesian

Associate

???Antonio N. Piccirillo

Partner

???David A. Picon

Partner

???Portia S. Proctor

Associate

???Elizabeth S. Proujansky

Practice Management Officer

???Jennifer Rigterink

Senior Counsel

???Lucie J. Rose

Partner

???Jana R. Ruthberg

Associate

???Catherine Sear

Partner

???Robert C. Shmalo

Partner

???Hannah G. Silverman

Associate

???William C. Silverman

Pro Bono Partner

???Laura Stafford

Partner

???Genesis G. Sanchez Tavarez

Associate

???Nigel F. Telman

Partner

???Alyson C. Tocicki

Associate

???Jacob E. Wonn

Associate

??Edward C. Young
Senior Counsel