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Proskauer Secures Discharge Status Upgrade for Veteran After Nearly 50 Years

Proskauer For Good on **June 27, 2024**

Since 2018, Proskauer has acted as pro bono legal counsel for a veteran who experienced racial discrimination during his service in the U.S. Marine Corps. Our client was stationed at Camp Pendleton in the mid-1970s. At that time, members of the Ku Klux Klan ("KKK") served openly and actively at Camp Pendleton. Our client faced a pattern of severe harassment, beatings and threats of sexual harm and death by his immediate superior and others on his base, many of whom were active members of the KKK. In fear for his life and safety, he eventually went absent without leave, causing him to be unfavorably discharged from service.

After decades of suffering from undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder ("PTSD") stemming from the racial abuse he suffered at Camp Pendleton, the veteran connected with Proskauer through partner Colleen Hart. He sought Proskauer's assistance to upgrade the characterization of his service in recognition of the racial abuse he faced and the PTSD he experienced during his service (and continues to deal with today).

Proskauer attorneys filed for a discharge status upgrade through the appropriate federal agency and pursued litigation in federal court after the initial upgrade request was denied. At the same time, the Proskauer team petitioned the agency to reconsider its decision in light of additional evidence procured after the filing of the initial request. The team successfully obtained a discharge status upgrade for the veteran last month. Following this good news, our client wrote the following: "It is evidently a labor of love to bring justice to those who have lost all hope of being heard. In my case, you gave me something I lost at the age of 22 years old . . . which, was my good name."

The Proskauer team includes partners Colleen Hart and Colin Cabral, as well as associates Alyson Tocicki and David Gobel.

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