Proskauer

Introducing Julia Bihary, Pro Bono Counsel

Proskauer For Good on **October 17, 2024**

Julia Bihary has recently joined Proskauer's pro bono team in London. She has practiced as a litigator for six years (three of which were spent at Proskauer) prior to this move, specializing in complex commercial litigation and arbitration matters. She is also a solicitor advocate with Higher Rights of Audience, which enables her to appear in the higher courts of England and Wales. In this short interview, Julia explains more about her passion for pro bono and the transition to this new role.

Why did you decide to pursue this role?

I have always felt very strongly about the importance of public service and have been actively involved in various pro bono and corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects as an associate. I worked on a variety of different pro bono cases, volunteered extensively, and was also heavily involved in the origination and day-to-day management of a number of these projects for our London office. I found the work challenging and meaningful. Pursuing pro bono work full time is aligned with my values and I am so excited to get started and to continue to build and expand Proskauer's pro bono and CSR offerings in our European offices.

Why is pro bono important?

I think there are two prongs to answering this question. First, pro bono is inherently important and valuable – through pro bono we as a firm and as individual lawyers are able to provide much needed legal advice to individuals and non-profits in need, who would otherwise not be able to access legal advice due to a lack of funds. Pro bono bridges a significant gap in access to justice. Second, pro bono is also important for the development of our lawyers. Working on pro bono matters creates opportunities for our lawyers to get involved in matters that are both challenging and rewarding and which make a real difference to our clients, while also helping them develop crucial technical legal skills.

What are your main priorities in this new role?

One of my areas of focus will be to expand engagement in pro bono and CSR projects in our London and Paris offices and to help foster a culture of pro bono and CSR in these offices. I would like our lawyer population to understand the immense value of participating in pro bono and CSR projects and for that participation to become part of "the job" in the same way as fee earning work is.

I would also like to expand the roster of pro bono opportunities available to our people by developing new relationships with non-profits and setting up the relevant systems and training for Proskauer to be able to provide meaningful assistance and a positive experience for our volunteers.

What issues or causes are you most concerned about?

One issue that has always impacted me deeply is homelessness. Due to the high cost of living and housing crisis (amongst other contributing factors), homelessness has been sharply increasing in the UK. I have seen a visible increase in the homeless population in my local area and through volunteering at the Soup Kitchen (one of our firm's fantastic CSR partners). In my new role, I look forward to expanding Proskauer's efforts in this area, whether through pro bono work or CSR projects, so that we can make a positive impact on the lives of people in great need.

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- **Julia Bihary**
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