



MARCH 2015

# PRO BONO

INSIDE

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## Welcome from the Pro Bono Committee



GRANT S. PALMER

KATHY E. OCHROCH

**It's an exciting time for the pro bono program at Blank Rome.** For the first time in our Firm's history, pro bono is mandatory for our attorneys and paralegals; every attorney and paralegal is required to do at least 25 hours of pro bono service annually. Also, in an effort to encourage our attorneys and paralegals to take on more substantial pro bono matters, the Firm has increased the billable-hour credit given for pro bono time to 100 hours. The Firm has committed to taking on meaningful and significant representations that involve large, systemic issues.

As a result of these changes in our Firm's Pro Bono Policy, we have seen dramatic increases in our pro bono participation and involvement. In 2014, our pro bono participation soared to 99%, a significant increase from 59% participation in 2013. In addition, our average pro bono hours per attorney rose dramatically in 2014 to 36 pro bono hours per attorney, up from 26 hours in 2013.

Through this newsletter, we hope to spread the word about the inspirational work that is being done every day at Blank Rome on behalf of our pro bono clients, which include the homeless, the disabled, veterans, immigrants seeking asylum, Holocaust survivors, domestic violence victims, abused and neglected children, low-income senior citizens, and nonprofit organizations. We are very proud of our pro bono work and the contributions that our Firm is making to the communities in which we live and work, and we hope that you will enjoy learning more about the great work that Blank Rome is undertaking.

**Grant S. Palmer**  
Chair of Pro Bono Committee

**Kathy E. Ochroch**  
Director of Pro Bono Services

## Pro Bono Service Soars at Blank Rome with New Policy

On September 1, 2014, Blank Rome implemented its most significant change to the Firm's Pro Bono Policy since first passing a formal policy in 2001: pro bono service at Blank Rome became mandatory. Attorneys and paralegals are now required to perform at least 25 hours of pro bono work per year, with a prorated requirement of 6 hours in 2014 due to the implementation of the Policy mid-year.

In addition to the new mandatory pro bono requirement, the revised Pro Bono Policy also increased the amount of billable-hour credit for pro bono work from 65 hours to 100 hours, while still allowing associates to request additional billable-hour credit for more than 100 pro bono hours in extraordinary circumstances. The goal of this increased billable-hour credit is to encourage attorneys and paralegals to take on more substantial matters and pro bono commitments.

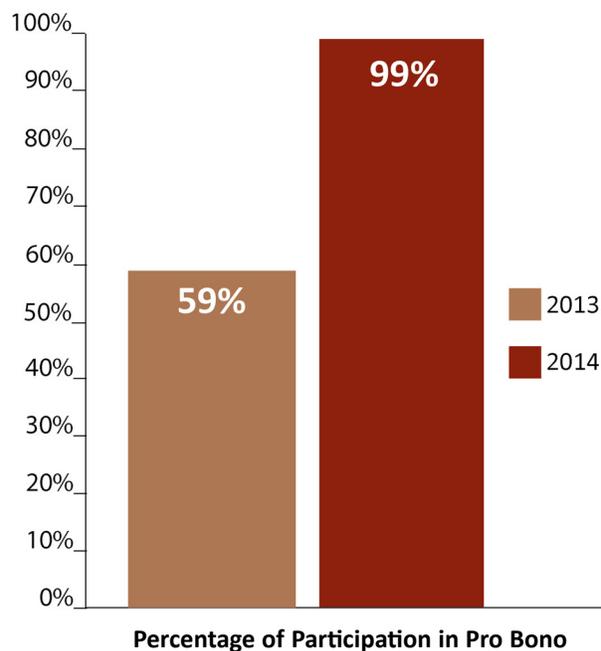
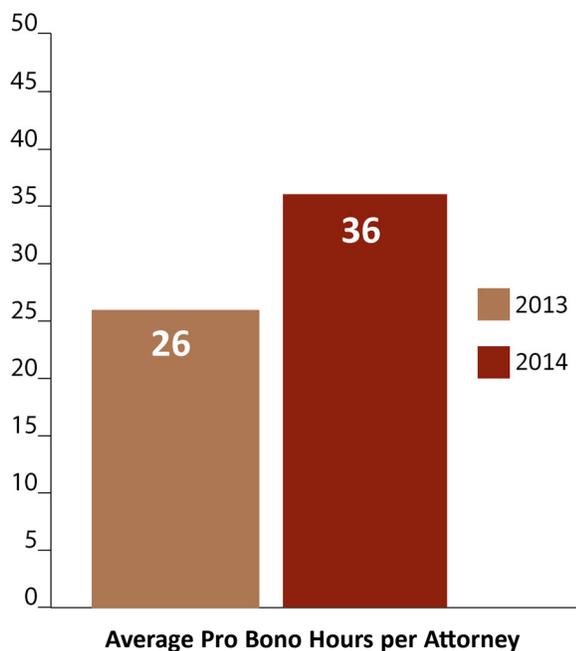
Importantly, the revised Pro Bono Policy makes clear that, although 25 hours is a minimum requirement, the Firm continues to encourage attorneys and paralegals to strive to provide at least 65 hours of pro bono service per year. This 65-hour goal, which was adopted in honor of the

Firm's 65th Anniversary, is in line with the expectations of the American Bar Association, and encourages our attorneys to give back to the community through meaningful and significant pro bono contributions.

Now, after only several months with the new Pro Bono Policy in place, it is clear that the new Policy is making a dramatic impact on the Firm's pro bono program. In 2014, the Firm logged over 18,000 pro bono hours, representing a 41 percent increase from the pro bono hours recorded in 2013. The average number of pro bono hours per attorney soared from 26 hours in 2013 to 36 hours in 2014. Perhaps most tellingly, the percentage of attorneys participating in pro bono service rocketed to 99 percent—the highest percentage since Blank Rome instituted a formal pro bono program—from only 59 percent the previous year.

We are proud of the Firm's pro bono accomplishments in 2014, and we expect that the program will continue to grow, thrive, and flourish in 2015.

### Pro Bono Increases from 2013–2014



## Blank Rome Launches New Pro Bono Signature Project: The Clemency Project

In Fall 2014, Blank Rome launched a new Pro Bono Signature Project, the Clemency Project. The Clemency Project is one of the largest pro bono projects in the Firm's history, with over 80 Blank Rome attorneys and paralegals volunteering for the project. Volunteers for the Clemency Project include representatives from all of the Firm's practice groups, and almost every Blank Rome office. [Ariel Glasner](#) in Washington, D.C., is coordinating this major pro bono initiative, and [Joseph Poluka](#) in Philadelphia is providing substantive support and guidance. This project has provided a great opportunity to work together across offices and practice groups to provide assistance on an important pro bono initiative.

The Clemency Project was started by the United States Department of Justice to provide relief to nonviolent inmates serving disproportionately long sentences, typically due to the disparity in sentencing for certain types of drug crimes. In order to qualify for clemency, inmates must have demonstrated good prison conduct, have no history of violence or a lengthy criminal record, and must have served at least 10 years of their sentence.



ARIEL S. GLASNER

***“The Clemency Project offers a valuable opportunity to engage in critical legal work on behalf of a population that is greatly in need of representation. I’m thrilled with our Firm’s level of participation in this initiative, and with the extraordinary amount of time and effort that our attorneys and legal staff have contributed thus far.”***

— Ariel S. Glasner



Our volunteers evaluate an inmate's potential for involvement with the Project, and, if the inmate is determined to qualify, the volunteers draft and submit the clemency petition. Through this pro bono service, our volunteers are helping nonviolent inmates return to their families and communities.

**If you would like more information about the Clemency Project, please visit [www.clemencyproject2014.org](http://www.clemencyproject2014.org). If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer for the Clemency Project, please contact Ariel Glasner ([AGlasner@BlankRome.com](mailto:AGlasner@BlankRome.com)) or Kathy Ochroch ([Ochroch@BlankRome.com](mailto:Ochroch@BlankRome.com)).**

## Seeking Nominations: Edwin P. Rome Pro Bono Achievement Award

The Pro Bono Committee is now accepting nominations for this year's Edwin P. Rome Pro Bono Achievement Award. This award was created to recognize dedication to pro bono service and to honor those who are committed to seeking equal access to justice for all.

Last year's winner was [Mike Joseph](#), who was recognized for his dedication to pro bono, and more specifically, for his commitment to representing asylum-seekers who are fleeing their home countries to escape persecution based on race, ethnicity, religion, or membership in a particular social group. Mike has successfully represented asylum-seekers from all over the world, including Afghanistan, Cameroon, China, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Honduras, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Serbia, and Syria. Mike was applauded not only for his tenacious advocacy and his record of success, but also for his compassion and empathy for his refugee clients.



MICHAEL JOSEPH

to escape persecution based on race, ethnicity, religion, or membership in a particular social group. Mike has successfully represented asylum-seekers from all over the world, including Afghanistan, Cameroon, China, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Honduras, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Serbia, and Syria. Mike was

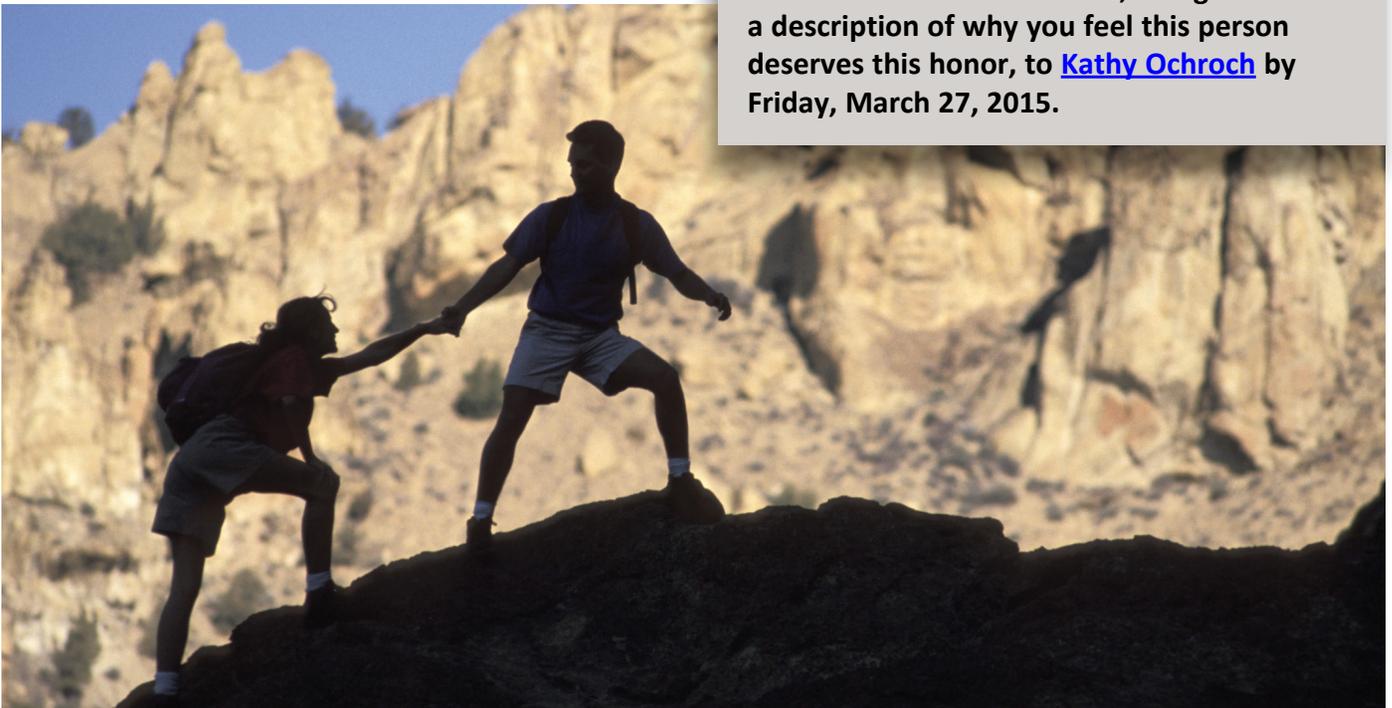
### Edwin P. Rome's Legacy of Pro Bono Service:

Blank Rome's tradition of pro bono service dates back to Edwin P. Rome, one of the Firm's founding partners. Mr. Rome served as court-appointed counsel for Aaron "Treetop" Turner, an African-American laborer accused of beating to death a factory employee. Mr. Rome defended Mr. Turner over 11 years and through five separate trials during which he was convicted of murder five times and sentenced to die four times.

In the concurring opinion to the decision that freed Mr. Turner following the fifth trial, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Michael Musmanno wrote, "I cannot help but express a renewed and continuing admiration for lawyers" who carry on despite seeming failure "in the search for the priceless jewel of truth."

We are pleased to present the Firm's annual pro bono award in honor of the commitment and dedication to pro bono service demonstrated by Edwin P. Rome.

**To nominate an individual for the Edwin P. Rome Pro Bono Achievement Award, please submit the nominee's name, along with a description of why you feel this person deserves this honor, to [Kathy Ochroch](#) by Friday, March 27, 2015.**



## Spotlight on a Volunteer: Jason Miller

[Jason Miller](#) has been a leader in the Firm's pro bono program for many years. Jason serves on the New York Pro Bono Coordinating Committee and his varied pro bono projects provide a great example of the different types of transactional pro bono work available to attorneys at Blank Rome.

Recently, Jason organized a diverse team of attorneys from several of the Firm's offices and practice groups to advise a brand new cancer charity, [Fabulous & Fighting, Inc.](#), which works with the fashion industry to provide donated clothing and accessories to cancer patients. The goal of Fabulous & Fighting is to improve the self-confidence of cancer patients and help them to maintain a positive outlook, while also easing some of the financial burden associated with cancer. With Jason at the helm, the Blank Rome team assisted this great charity with issues relating to its formation, strategic planning, federal and state tax-exemption applications, contract negotiations, and initial fundraising efforts.

In addition to providing these much-needed legal skills, Jason also introduced Fabulous & Fighting to many of its first sponsors and donors. Through Jason's efforts, Fabulous & Fighting was connected with the fashion company that would become one of its main donors of clothing; a finance company based in Manhattan's Fashion District and lender to many leading fashion brands that donated funds and connected the charity to fashion industry contacts; and a film production company that agreed to film and photograph all of the charity's future fundraisers and clothing donation events.

Speaking to [Forbes](#) and [Women's Health](#) about her journey in forming Fabulous & Fighting, Bethany Heinrich, the charity's founder and executive director, praised Blank Rome's efforts, stating "[a] key factor was to find a great legal team, and I was very fortunate to have been introduced to Jason Miller at Blank Rome LLP. Jason and his team have been beyond incredible in guiding us through the process of building a nonprofit and making sure we avoided potential pitfalls."



JASON I. MILLER

***"As Blank Rome attorneys, we have wide-ranging legal talent and resources at our fingertips to make a real difference, and I think it is our responsibility to do so. I am proud to be part of a firm that embraces that responsibility and supports pro bono and community service at every level of the Firm."***

— Jason I. Miller

As for Jason, he reports that his involvement with Fabulous & Fighting has been one of the most rewarding of his legal career: "To be a part of building something so positive and impactful in our community is personally gratifying and one of the reasons why I love being a transactional attorney."

Jason's recent pro bono efforts have also included representing an award-winning and nationally-acclaimed fine artist who is returning to the art field after a multi-year hiatus. Together with the help of friends and colleagues in our Corporate, M&A and Securities and Intellectual Property and Technology groups, Jason advised the client in connection with entity formation and various copyright and trademark

issues in anticipation of the re-launch and marketing of her business and several new bodies of work.

Additionally, when one of Jason's clients told him about a Catholic charity, [The St. Francis House](#) in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, that was in need of restructuring and in danger of dissolving, Jason volunteered to help.

The St. Francis House, which was featured in the award-winning documentary [The Human Experience](#), is dedicated to providing a safe haven and structured home environment for young men who are looking for a new start in life. The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal founded and funded the St. Francis House for decades, but no longer had the funds to support the organization. Unsure about how to begin making the necessary changes and anxious about the future, the St. Francis House came to Jason for crucial transactional advice in restructuring its board of directors, amending its bylaws, renting a new location across the street, and negotiating the terms of a joint venture designed to help raise new funds. Over the next few months, Jason worked with the charity to achieve its goals. Now, one year later, the St. Francis House is fully-funded, guided by an experienced and dedicated board, and back to doing what it does best: serving the local community.

## Celebrating the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King through Pro Bono Service

**On Monday, January 19, 2015**, in honor of **Martin Luther King Day**, the Firm sponsored its largest SeniorLAW Center legal clinic ever. Working together with attorneys from SeniorLAW Center, over 65 attorneys, paralegals, and staff from Blank Rome’s Philadelphia office generously made MLK Day 2015 a “Day of Service” by volunteering to draft and execute wills, living wills, and powers of attorney for low-income senior citizens.

Volunteers from our corporate clients, PNC Bank and PECO/Exelon, also joined our Blank Rome volunteers for this exciting and meaningful pro bono project. Working together, we helped a record number of senior citizen clients, including many in wheelchairs, on walkers or with canes, and with vision and other impairments, to plan for their future and to express their end-of-life decisions with clarity and dignity.



**Alan Hoffman and Mark Gittelman, Chief Practice Counsel in Asset Recovery at PNC Bank, with their client.**



**Kim Fahrner, Senior Counsel at PNC Bank, and Ethan Simon with their SeniorLAW Center client.**

Erica Wechsler,  
Tracey Shellhammer,  
and Gina Natale  
serving as notaries  
and witnesses  
for our volunteer  
attorney teams.



A client from  
SeniorLAW Center,  
Tim Pecsénye, and  
Anna Stockman.



## Thank You to Our Pro Bono Committees

**Blank Rome's pro bono program could not survive,** much less thrive and grow, without the help and support of our Firm-wide Pro Bono Committee, chaired by Grant Palmer, and the Pro Bono Coordinating Committees located in each of the Firm's offices. Our Pro Bono Committee members meet regularly to discuss issues regarding the pro bono program, and share ideas regarding new pro bono opportunities and ways to increase participation. Committee members are also available to answer questions about the program, and to help identify appropriate pro bono opportunities.

### Pro Bono Committees

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Susan L. Bickley  
David A. Dorey  
Michael J. Feinman  
Alan M. Freeman  
Kathy E. Ochroch

#### BOCA RATON

Ronald W. Warner

#### HOUSTON

Barry Abrams, Chair  
Susan L. Bickley  
Jeremy A. Herschaft  
Marquel S. Jordan  
Lance Leisure

#### LOS ANGELES

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Elizabeth B. Kim

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Andrew B. Eckstein  
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Inbal Paz Garrity  
Emma C. Jones  
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Morgan Fraser Mouchette  
Heidi A. Tallentire  
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Kierstan L. Carlson  
Megan A. Christensen  
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Ariel S. Glasner  
Albert B. Krachman  
Susan Leahy  
Jamie Bertha Tesfazion

#### WILMINGTON

David A. Dorey, Chair  
Victoria A. Guilfoyle  
Adam V. Orlacchio



## 2014 Blank Rome Pro Bono Award

“You make a living by what you get,  
you make a life by what you give.”

– WINSTON CHURCHILL



### 2014 Pro Bono Honor Roll

Congratulations to all of our attorneys and paralegals who met, or exceeded, the Firm’s goal of providing 65 hours of pro bono service in 2014, and will receive a 2014 Pro Bono Award:

Barry Abrams  
Louis D. Abrams  
Rither Alabre  
Lawrence J. Beaser  
Beth A. Bernstein  
Thomas E. Biron  
Joan M. Bondareff  
Antonio J. Burrell  
Kierstan L. Carlson  
Melanie S. Carter  
Cheryl S. Chang  
Thomas A. Chapman  
Adam J. Chelminiak  
Megan A. Christensen  
Michael K. Clare  
Melvin A. Cobb  
Bradford C. Craig  
Molly Crane  
Robert W. Crane  
Francis X. Crowley  
Jared M. DeBona  
Lana M. Donahue  
James B. Ellis  
Michael Feinman  
Stephen C. Fierro

Lauren M. Fitzgerald  
Rachel J. Gallagher  
Ariel S. Glasner  
Mark S. Greenfield  
Jaret N. Gronczewski  
Angela M. Guarino  
Terry M. Henry  
Joshua A. Huber  
Sydney V. Jones  
Michael Joseph  
Harrison H. Kang  
Adam E. Laver  
Susan Leahy  
Lance Leisure  
Frederick D. Lipman  
John E. Lucian  
Naki M. Margolis  
Rosemary McKenna  
Stephen P. McSweeney  
David G. Meyer  
Jason I. Miller  
Anthony A. Mingione  
Daniel S. Morris  
Morgan M. Fraser Mouchette  
Melissa F. Murphy  
Michael T. Murphy

Kathy E. Ochroch  
James E. Odell  
Adam V. Orlacchio  
Stephen M. Orlofsky  
Grant S. Palmer  
Charmaine R. Pinckney  
Joseph G. Poluka  
James J. Quinlan  
Mark I. Rabinowitz  
Nicky S. Rho  
Jeffrey N. Rosenfeld  
Will J. Rosenzweig  
Marc Rothenberg  
Stefanos N. Roulakis  
Lewis W. Schlossberg  
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Raymond L. Shapiro  
Ethan M. Simon  
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Mackenzie W. Smith  
Heather Sonnenberg  
Heidi A. Tallentire  
Alex E. Wallin  
Dior T. Watanabe  
John P. Wixted

BLANK  ROME <sup>LLP</sup>  
COUNSELORS AT LAW