



IN THIS ISSUE:

STB Pro Bono Participation Rate in 2013 Nears All-time High

Simpson Thacher Awards Public Service Fellowship in 2014

NY Office Launches New Clinic Focused on Homeless Youth

Simpson Thacher Drafts Reports on Discrimination in Voting in South Carolina and Alabama for The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights

Simpson Thacher Files Mandamus in the EDNY to Compel Asylum Interviews for Five LGBT Clients

NY Office Hosts Clinic for Young Immigrants

Recent Pro Bono Achievements Awards

Simpson Thacher Attorneys' Pro Bono Participation Rate in 2013 Nears All-time High, from Pro Bono Counsel Harlene Katzman



Harlene Katzman

Throughout our very busy 2013, Simpson Thacher lawyers' participation in pro bono projects neared an *all-time high*. Last year, more attorneys did pro bono work than almost any other year in our Firm's history. I'm not one for putting stock in statistics alone, but this one makes the Pro Bono Committee and me very proud. This past month in a number of Simpson Thacher offices, we celebrated that accomplishment and honored attorneys and legal assistants for their dedication to pro bono work. You can see pictures from those events at the end of this newsletter.

Throughout its history, our Firm has embraced the goal of providing pro bono legal services to those in need. Those of you who were honored this month have demonstrated leadership, compassion, justice and a dedication to your community. You have done your part to make New York, Washington, D.C., the Bay Area, Los Angeles, the United Kingdom and other communities more equitable for all members. Thank you.

Simpson Thacher Awards Public Service Fellowship in 2014

The Firm is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2014 Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP Public Service Fellowship. Palo Alto litigation associate **Paloma Wu '12** will spend the year working with the ACLU of Pennsylvania, where she will litigate a range of constitutional challenges on issues such as anti-immigrant legislation, voter identification laws, providing constitutionally adequate representation of indigent criminal defendants and the state's refusal to marry same-sex couples or recognize out-of-state same-sex marriages.

NY Office Launches New Clinic Focused on Homeless Youth

In December, the New York office, in partnership with The Door, a youth development organization, launched a new legal clinic for homeless youth



in Lower Manhattan. Part of an unprecedented collaboration that involves seven law firms, Covenant House, Urban Justice Center and the NYC Department of Homeless Services, homeless youth clinics have been launched in both private and public shelters at four sites in New York City, and will expand to six in the next few months. Simpson Thacher attorneys were instrumental in helping to develop the clinic training manual, and the core clinic volunteers were trained alongside attorneys from around the city.

At the Simpson Thacher clinic, homeless youth who are part of The Door's Homeless and Runaway Youth Program are seen monthly for counsel on a broad range of issues, including identity and name changes, access to education, benefits, personal credit/debt, foster care and transit offenses. The Simpson Thacher team includes associates **Elizabeth Warnick, Makiko Harunari, Jeannie Chung, Deborah Frankel, Danielle Kantor**, retired partner **Jamie Gamble**, and legal assistant **Priyanka Bose**.

This is the first project of its kind in NYC to involve law firms, legal services groups, private agencies and the Department of Homeless Services.

Simpson Thacher Drafts Reports on Discrimination in Voting in South Carolina and Alabama for The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights

Representing a multi-office, multi-department effort, Simpson Thacher drafted and produced two reports on voting rights enforcement and compliance as part of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law's response to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby v. Holder*, which

struck down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). Our reports focused on South Carolina and Alabama, two states with extensive and complex histories related to voting rights discrimination.

From 1965 to 2013, thousands of voting changes determined to have the purpose and/or effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race were blocked before they could be implemented due to a "pre-clearance" requirement under Section 5 of the VRA. While Section 5 remains valid, the Court in *Shelby* struck down the coverage formula for determining which jurisdictions were required to pre-clear any voting change. The Lawyers' Committee is gathering information about past discrimination in voting at the state and local level to be incorporated into a comprehensive report issued by the National Commission on the Voting Rights Act. These reports will be supplemented by state/regional hearings taking place across the country.

The Simpson Thacher team included associates from New York, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and Palo Alto: **Matthew Cave, Samuel Charlton, Jonathan Nussbaum, Laura Safdie, Ravi Sharma, Andrew Winerman, Robert Woodward** and **Lisa Zhang**. The reports were both edited and supervised by litigation counsel **Janet Gochman**.

Simpson Thacher Files Mandamus in the EDNY to Compel Asylum Interviews for Five LGBT Clients

Simpson Thacher filed a mandamus action on behalf of five gay or transgender individuals seeking asylum in the United States. The clients hail from Guyana, Russia, Guatemala, Jamaica and Mexico, and each faced persecution in their home country based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.



Although all of these clients applied for asylum in 2012, each was placed on “permanent backlog” by the Rosedale Asylum Office, which, for unexplained reasons, stopped issuing interview dates for about 10% of applicants, thereby putting them in permanent limbo with regard to their status.

Frustrated by the unresponsiveness of the Rosedale Asylum Office to their requests for information, during their nearly two-year delay, some clients made numerous calls and visits to the asylum office to seek information about their interview, only to be met with silence. Absent pro bono counsel, it appears these clients would have had no recourse, forced to wait indefinitely for the Rosedale Asylum Office to schedule their interviews and later still to have their applications adjudicated.

The Simpson Thacher team filed the mandamus action in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, and sought to compel the Rosedale Asylum Office to immediately schedule interviews and adjudicate the asylum applications of the five clients as soon as possible. In December 2013, the Assistant United States Attorney informed the team that in response to the suit, the Rosedale Asylum Office had scheduled interviews for each of

the clients in March 2014. The clients have renewed energy and hope about their statuses in this country, and we hope that the Firm’s advocacy will encourage the Rosedale Asylum Office to expedite the issuance of asylum interviews for other asylum seekers. The team included associates **Chris Hultman** and **Elisa Lee**, and partner **Joe Tringali**.

New York Office Holds Second Legal Clinic for Immigrant Childhood Arrivals

On February 20th, the New York office hosted its second clinic to assist young immigrants with applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). DACA does not provide a pathway to citizenship, but grants work authorization, protection from deportation and limited healthcare for two years. This status change brings students greater certainty about their future and allows them to continue their education or find a job to help support their families. **Deborah Frankel**, **Marissa Cohen**, **Eric Schulman**, **Kathrine McLendon** and **Andrew Yong** assisted the students, alongside several Columbia Law School



Deborah Frankel, Marissa Cohen, Eric Schulman, Kathrine McLendon, Andrew Yong, Hilary Chadwick and Maria Gonzalez assist students with their DACA applications.



students. **Maria Gonzalez** and **Hilary Chadwick** provided crucial Spanish translation between parents and attorneys. At the conclusion of the evening, we assisted ten students from Bushwick High School, the location of our long-time, school-based legal clinic. This clinic was done in partnership with Volunteers of Legal Services attorney **Elizabeta Markuci**.



Eric Schulman works with VOLS immigration specialist Elizabeta Markuci.



Andrew Yong and Columbia Law student assist DACA applicant.



Marissa Cohen assists Bushwick student applying for DACA.

Recent Pro Bono Achievements

Simpson Thacher Helps Veteran Obtain Benefits Related to PTSD

In 2011, after several Simpson Thacher lawyers attended a Veterans Legal Clinic at the City Bar Justice Center in New York, the Firm agreed to represent a female veteran of the United States Army who had been sexually assaulted and harassed by her direct supervisor while deployed to a NATO outpost in Germany. As a result, she was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) arising from the repeated assaults, and has received years of psychiatric treatment at a local Veterans Administration (VA) facility. The VA, however, denied her claims for a service-connected injury relating to the PTSD because of a lack of direct proof of the assaults.

Simpson Thacher lawyers represented this client before the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with appealing the VA's rejection of her claims for PTSD. After compiling and submitting materials to corroborate the client's account of the facts, the Board of Veterans' Appeals found that our client had in fact suffered a "personal assault" while serving in the military, and that her PTSD was attributable to that assault. Our client is now permitted to seek compensation and benefits related to her injury. The team included **Elisa Alcabes**, **John Pitts**, **Jonathan Stradling**, **Christopher Freeman** and **Christina Hoffman**.

Simpson Thacher Obtains SIJS and Permanent Residency for Client from Burkina Faso

Simpson Thacher attorneys in New York, including **Alicia Washington**, **Caroline Gross** and **Medora Akers**, with assistance from paralegal



Maria Gonzalez, successfully represented a 21-year-old woman from Burkina Faso who was threatened with female genital mutilation and forced marriage. The client, who had been abused by her father and abandoned by her mother, escaped to the United States and was granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and legal permanent residency. The client is now living in safety with her sister and attending school. The case was supervised by partner **Joe Tringali**.



L to R: Eve Stotland from The Door Legal Services, Medora Akers, Alicia Washington, our client, Caroline Gross and Maria Gonzales.

Simpson Thacher Secures Child and Spousal Support for Indigent and Disabled Single Mother in Queens

Simpson Thacher successfully represented an indigent and disabled single mother in child and spousal support actions before the Queens Family Court. The team negotiated an agreement for payments and benefits to the client over the next five years. The agreement, entered into and ordered by the Magistrate, provides for child support, spousal support, back payments for insufficient prior assistance, healthcare support, and an agreement to split, with the father, the college costs of their daughter, who is a senior in high school and president of her class. The matter was referred by Her Justice. The STB team included associates

Jillian de Chavez-Lau and **Matthew Kopko**, and was supervised by **George Wang**.

Simpson Thacher Small Business Clinic Assists New York City-Based Entrepreneurs

The Firm's weekly Small Business Clinic entered its ninth year in 2014, continuing to provide an opportunity for attorneys to assist entrepreneurs with discrete legal issues that can be addressed in a one-hour clinic setting. From entity selection, to advice on operating agreements, intellectual property, tax and employment, attorneys in the New York office continue to provide low-income entrepreneurs with the legal advice necessary to start or grow their businesses. So far this year the clinic has advised 27 entrepreneurs whose business endeavors range from a pet fashion outfitter to a small film production company to a producer of all-natural snacks for athletes. The clinic is led by associates **Sam Warfield**, **Jeff Lieberman** and **Matt Farrell**, and overseen by **Todd Crider** and **Andy Smith**. The following associates have participated in the clinic this year: **Wenli Cai**, **Andrew Yong**, **Scott Farmer**, **Ray Kim**, **David Daniels**, **Joe Tootle**, **Jennifer Gaudette**, **Kevin Boroumand**, **Kathryn Altomonte**, **Paul Sirkis**, **Maria Carolina Gonzalez Diaz**, **Julie Lee**, **John O'Connell**, **Kara Sharkey**, **Angela McCray**, **Doug Tang**, **Dan Avezbaki**, **Michael Goldberg**, **Zara Ohiorhenuan**, **Ryan Song**, **Jodie Sopher Pimentel**, **Matt Gabbard** and **Matt Kopko**.

Simpson Thacher Client Becomes U.S. Citizen Six Years After Asylum Grant

Despite an initial refusal by the Immigration Court to grant asylum for our client, Simpson Thacher was successful in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals



and at the hearing on remand to the Immigration Court in New York. Our client was finally granted asylum in 2008, and last month became a citizen of the United States. The team also obtained derivative asylum for our client's two daughters, who are expected to become U.S. citizens next year. The team included counsel **Janet Whittaker** and associate **Heather Shaffer**.



Our client with her citizenship papers

Simpson Thacher Secures Approval of Self-Petition and Permanent Residency for Client under the Violence Against Women Act

Simpson Thacher successfully represented a pro bono client from Mexico in her self-petition and application to gain permanent residency pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Enacted in 1994, VAWA provides victims of domestic violence an avenue by which to gain lawful status without having to rely on their abusive spouses to start and complete the United States immigration process. The matter was referred to the Firm by Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto. The Simpson Thacher team included associate **Emiko Kurotsu** and legal assistant **Veronica Inocencio**, and was supervised by **Alexis Coll-Very**.

Simpson Thacher Obtains Permanent Residence for Client under VAWA

Attorneys in the New York office successfully represented a pro bono client from Libya in her application to gain permanent residency pursuant to VAWA. The matter was referred to the firm by Her Justice. The team included associates **Elizabeth Gudis** and **Aditya Basrur**, and was supervised by **Mary Elizabeth McGarry**.

AWARDS

Simpson Thacher Holds Pro Bono Recognition Events Throughout Its U.S. Offices

In February 2014, Simpson Thacher celebrated the Firm's 2013 pro bono contributions with office receptions honoring 11 partners, 3 senior counsel, 10 counsel, 80 associates and 6 legal assistants who devoted 100 or more hours to pro bono service, and recognizing an additional 14 partners, 1 senior counsel, 8 counsel and 118 associates who devoted between 25 and 100 hours. Our deepest appreciation goes out to the lawyers, legal assistants and staff who represented the many low-income clients, organizations that serve them and others needing our assistance.



New York Office Reception: Luis Pellerano, Adeeb Fadil, Laura Safdie and Mitchell Ryan



Los Angeles Office Reception: Jonathan Weiss, Michelle Kallen, Jessica Marek, Joshua Neiman and Michael Freedman



New York Office Reception: Kevin Roe, Jennifer Franklin, Maura Whelan, John Bennett and Dave Shevlin



D.C. Office Reception: (Front row) Janet Whittaker, Sarah Magen, Karen Horvitz, Diana Wielocha, Karen Gift, Hilary Mintz and Harlene Katzman. (Back row) Enno Ahlenstiel, Preston Miller, Andrew Winerman, John Goheen, Elliot Weingarten, Jonathan Porter, Bashiri Wilson and Ravi Sharma



New York Office Reception: Caroline Gross and Jordan Botjer



New York Office Reception: Will Pilon and Randy Moonan



Palo Alto Office Reception: (L to R) Dena Acevedo, Melissa Schmidt, Chris James, Paloma Wu, Toni Wong, Kerry Konrad, Kevin Kennedy, Valerie Kahn, Lee Brand, Buzz Frahn and Cara Walsh



New York Office Reception: Liz Warnick and Danielle Kantor



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