



September 2015

For the Public Good

Pro Bono Newsletter

SHOOK
HARDY & BACON

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Matt Keenan
Chair

Pro Bono Committee

“Society is judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members—the last, the least, the littlest.” Variations of that statement have been pronounced by religious leaders, politicians, academics, historians. Nelson Mandela perhaps said it best: “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

It is equally true that most vulnerable populations also deserve the best advocates—qualified, trained, smart, determined voices—to understand their plight and then push for a fair and appropriate adjudication. I am proud to say that our law firm is brimming with men and women who fight for kids every single day. Whether it is meeting with kids for the first time at the detention docket, taking their cause as a guardian ad litem, partnering with representatives from CASA, representing unaccompanied minors in immigration cases, or navigating the labyrinth of the foster care system to help find them a permanent home, our attorneys are recognized as some of the best child advocates in the country. Finding a way, making a way, building a way to ensure our weakest neighbors have the strongest voice.

“

Through summer 2015,
we have placed 1,158 children
in permanent, safe and
loving homes.

”

The need is acute. This year we expect to receive up to 180 new court appointments from Jackson County Family Court. Firm-wide we have nearly 600 active pro bono matters. Most of these cases involve a child or a family at-risk in need of advocacy.

One significant piece of this mission is our Forever Home adoption and guardianship program. Through summer 2015, we have placed 1,158 children in permanent, safe and loving homes. The fees generated by these cases have resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars for our Lawyers 4 Kids, Kansas Foster and Adoption Scholarship, and Missouri Foster and Adoption Scholarship programs.

KIND: Kids in Need of Defense is another important component of our mission. In a joint venture with Microsoft, Shook lawyers provide representation for unaccompanied minors in immigration cases. As a result, Shook has received several positive commendations and thanks from Microsoft for our work.

In addition to Microsoft, the Pro Bono Division is creating new pro bono partnerships with Shook clients and working to aggressively market the firm’s pro bono accomplishments as part of our business development and recruiting efforts.

Our Partners in Education project continues to provide advice to parents and guardians of special needs children. Shook lawyers advise clients of their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and when necessary, represent the family in negotiations with local school districts to ensure that every child gets the education they deserve.

As our expertise grows, the opportunities—and challenges—continue to grow. I believe the legacy of this firm is being shaped by how we treat the children most at risk in our society, some of whom become our clients. This newsletter will shine a light on a few of these successes.

All Stars 2014

100+ Hours

Hal Arteaga
Gene Balloun
John Barkett
Dawn Blanche
Brittany Boswell
Matt Broaddus
Zach Chaffee-McClure
Kenneth Chase
Charles Cooper

Tristan Duncan
Scott DuPree
Brent Dwerlkotte
Jennifer Ferguson
Edd Gaus
Michael Holt
Jason Howard
Jolie Justus
Matt Keenan

Iain Kennedy
Tiffany Lim
Timothy Moore
Edwards Muñiz
Bill Northrip
Tiffany Raush
Dan Rogers
Megan Roth
Bill Sampson

Stephanie Sankar
Russell Shankland
Rachael Smith
Joy Springfield
Christopher Warren
Kate Wolf

20+ Hours

Rob Adams
Steve Aliber
Scott Anderson
Tony Andrade
Christopher Appel
Jennifer Artman
Raz Axente
Mike Barnett
Jane Bartley
Marty Bax
Chad Beashore
Sean Becker
Jordan Bergsten
Brad Bodamer
Eric Boos
Ed Bullard
Kristi Burmeister
Rachel Canfield
Mike Cappo
Jennifer Cascio
Kevin Corlew
Zac Crowell
Mark Cowing
Amy Crouch
Kelly Dawson
Stacey Deere

Matt DePaz
James Devaney
Tony Diab
Alicia Donahue
Megan Egli
Mark Ellison
Bart Eppenauer
Alison Erickson
Jeff Fields
Cory Fisher
Megan Flatt
Ruth French-Hodson
Alex Garnick
Katie Gates Calderon
Jon Gray
Susan Green
Tom Grever
Brandon Gutshall
Randy Haimovici
Monty Hamilton
Aaron Hankel
Ashley Harrison
Madison Hatten
Beth Heine
Eric Hobbs
Geri Howell

Jeanne Janchar
Chris Johnson
Dale Johnson
Cathy Kamm
Naoki Kaneko
Matt Keane
Scott Kaiser
Peter Knops
Sarah Lynn Baltzell
Kerry Manning
Bill Martucci
Kirk Marty
Katherine Mastrucci
John Mattox
Elena McFarland
Jessie McKinney
Jim Muehlberger
Amir Nassihi
George Ngengwe
Clint Newton
Alexandra Nieves
Sergio Pagliery
Adriana Paris
Terri Parker
Melissa Plunkett
Erica Ramsey

Harley Ratliff
Paul Reid
Clark Richardson
Amanda Robinson
Erick Roeder
Devin Ross
Connor Sears
Rachel Simek
Justin Smith
Mareta Smith
Steve Soden
Gabe Spooner
Scott Strohm
Matt Stucky
Ashley Sturgeon
David Swaney
Amanda Tamayo
Mark Tatum
Camila Tobón
Kris Verra
Erin Vaughn
Mike Walden
Ben Walther
Jason Ward
Anthony Wingrove
Greg Wu

Area lawyer marks 1,000th foster child adoption case

BY DONALD BRADLEY
The Kansas City Star

The judge paused as she looked out over a hushed, crowded courtroom.

Then came words rarely heard, if ever, in a division that hears a lot of talk about abused and neglected children.

"I order everyone here to give a standing ovation to Mr. Balloun," Johnson County District Judge Kathleen Sloan said in the same tone she would use to send someone to jail.

And as if they'd heard "All rise," people stood and clapped.

The judge smiled. Moments earlier, she had dried her eyes.

So who is J. Eugene Balloun and what makes him so special?

Well, let's see — after growing up in a house crowded with displaced cousins during the 1930s, he helped pay for college with three Holsteins. Now he's got a 15th-floor corner office with a spectacular view of downtown as a partner in one of Kansas City's most prominent law firms.

But Monday's court hearing wasn't about any of that.

Balloun, 85, was there to complete his 1,000th adoption of children in foster care. He hasn't pocketed a dime for any of them. Instead, he and his firm, Shook, Hardy & Bacon, put those state fees in a scholarship fund to help send those kids to college someday.

So far, the fund has provided \$625,000 to nearly 500 students.

Correction: The hearing in Division 10 was billed as Balloun's 1,000th adoption — that's wrong, sort of. The case involved two children. So that's 1,001 children taken from parents for often heartbreaking reasons and given new homes and new starts. And love.

Lori Ross, chief executive officer of the Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association, said of Balloun: "He is an amazing, energetic and passionate man who basically gave the second part of his



DAVID EULITT | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Gene Balloun got a hug Monday from former colleague Melissa Taylor Standridge, a judge on the Kansas Court of Appeals.

life to helping kids who had been abused and neglected.

"He has changed the world."

Sloan began Monday's court hearing by telling Balloun: "It is an honor for me to be sitting here today."

At one point, Balloun, who specializes in commercial litigation, asked Sloan for permission to turn his back and address the gallery.

She granted the request with a smile, and Balloun spoke of the children in his life — the ones in the adoptions and the ones in his home. He thanked judges, clerks, other attorneys, his firm, social workers and his legal assistant for helping him help them.

Mainly, he thanked his wife, Sheila Womble, for doing most of the work for the 29 foster children they took in over the years.

Hannah, 16, the last of those 29 and one of two the couple adopted, sat in a corner of the courtroom, at one point holding a hand over her mouth.

"They have brought joy and meaning to our lives," Balloun said, his voice breaking.

"Thanks, guys."

■ ■ ■

Just inside the door to Balloun's office high in the Shook, Hardy & Bacon office tower south of Crown Center is a plaque that says something about how much money he brought to the firm in a recent year. Lots of zeros.

The plaque sits on the floor, leaning against the wall beneath where he hangs his coat.

He would much rather talk about the thousand kids who each required 10 or so hours of work and whose cases didn't bring in a dime.

Photos of those children cover the cubicle walls of longtime assistant Kathy Hoffman, whom Balloun credits with doing much of the legwork on the adoptions. On a recent day, the two of them looked at the pictures and remembered the stories.



DAVID EULITT | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Attorney Gene Balloun spoke with Lexie Hicks on Monday in a Johnson County courtroom after she adopted Will and McKenna, the 1,000th and 1,001st adoptions Balloun has handled pro bono. He and his firm, Shook, Hardy & Bacon, donate the state fee to a fund he and his wife started to send those children to college.

Like the woman who decided at the last minute that she was 1/32nd Native American, nearly sending the case into Oklahoma tribal court. That one, Hoffman said, took more than 10 hours.

The pictures? Row after row of happy faces of beautiful children.

"This tells you why we do it," Hoffman said.

She describes Balloun as a friendly, humble man who drives a 2011 Volkswagen Jetta and might keep a jacket 30 years. In all their time together, she's heard him curse once. That was a "hell" for which he apologized.

Photos of Balloun's own children line a shelf in his office.

"How many lawyers my age have a 16-year-old daughter who looks like this?" he asked, lifting up a photo of Hannah, a sophomore at Shawnee Mission West.

He smiled a daddy's smile: "She plays the violin."

Past the photo, the bright window framed a view of Kansas to the west. He asked for that. Kansas, way out there, is home.

His grandparents came from eastern Europe as a young married couple and

started life in America dirt poor. His father attended a business college and landed a job as a bookkeeper for a small oil company in Russell.

He insisted that his five children get an education. Four cousins came to live with them during the Great Depression because their father could not find work. That made nine children in the house on the edge of town with several acres of land. The children milked cows, raised hogs and worked gardens.

Balloun had a paper route. He drove a tractor and worked at a flour mill.

In high school he learned he had a knack for debate, taking on classmate Arlen Specter, who went on to a long career as a U.S. senator from Pennsylvania.

The local Rotary Club gave Balloun a Holstein calf to raise and by the time he graduated his herd had grown to three, which he sold to help pay for college at the University of Kansas.

After law school and a stint in the Air Force, he returned home to Russell in 1954 and faced off a few times in court with a county attorney by the name of Bob Dole.

Balloun arrived at what is now Shook, Hardy & Bacon about 30 years ago. That's about the time he and Sheila decided to become foster parents.

She called one day while he was in federal court in Topeka.

"They want to know if we'll take a baby," she told him.

They had wanted to skip the baby stage, but they decided to go for it. By the time Balloun got home, his assistants had secured a baby bed and diapers.

The baby arrived Nov. 20, 1987, and Balloun took him to the doctor the next day.

"Are you new parents?" the doctor asked.

"Got him yesterday," Balloun told him.

"Well, you got the diaper on backwards," the doctor said.

That baby is now their 28-year-old son, David.

■ ■ ■

Balloun and his wife joined a support group for foster parents, and that's how the whole adoption thing started. The others asked questions — he was a lawyer, after all.

He was soon handling their adoptions, but he declined the fee for handling cases of children in state custody. Balloun's wife suggested the scholarship fund.

So over the years, Shook Hardy has donated the fees. The fund is managed by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. Current balance: about \$200,000. Depending on the school, amounts to students typically range from \$750 to \$3,000 a year.

But Balloun didn't stop at adoptions. He challenged Missouri over foster care subsidies and Kansas over the educational rights of children of undocumented workers.

Nor did he stop there. In the mid-1990s, he and another lawyer, David Waxse, on a pro bono basis, represented students and parents in the Olathe School District in a challenge to the school board's decision to ban "Annie on My Mind," a book about two teenage girls who fall in love.

During questioning by Balloun in federal court, a school board member testified that he believed homosexuality is wrong.

"I believe in what the Bible says about homosexuality," the man said. "It is a sin."

The plaintiffs won. The judge awarded Balloun and Waxse, now a federal judge, \$170,000 in legal fees. Balloun remained a

"You came in here happy today and I get to have you leave even happier. A judge doesn't get to do that often."

JOHNSON COUNTY DISTRICT JUDGE KATHLEEN SLOAN

friend of the book's author, Nancy Garden, until she died last summer.

But it is the adoptions of children in foster care that Balloun will be known for. Matthew Keenan, who heads up Shook, Hardy & Bacon's pro bono program, said the effort's focus is to help children.

"And Gene's work is the centerpiece of that."

■ ■ ■

Lexie Hicks was losing hope.

The 31-year-old Shawnee woman had been caring for two children, a boy, 12, and a girl, 10, as a foster parent. She wanted to adopt both, but she kept running into a wall. Then she heard about Gene Balloun and left a message for him to call.

"He called me back that evening, on his cellphone," she remembered. "He told me what he could do. I knew then I wanted him to be my lawyer."

Monday's adoption hearing in Olathe was for Hicks and those kids, Will and McKenna.

"You came in here happy today and I get to have you leave even happier," Sloan told the three from the bench. "A judge doesn't get to do that often."

Most people in the courtroom were friends, former colleagues and family of Balloun. His sister, Betty Boxberger, came from Russell. She remembered that first Holstein calf. She knows how far Balloun has come.

"We're all real proud of him," she said.

Except for cookies on a table, it was a regular day in court. A witness was sworn, testimony heard, petitions granted and the lives of two children changed forever.

Melissa Taylor Standridge, a judge on the Kansas Court of Appeals, sat in the gallery with a tissue ready. She met Balloun in 1992 when she started at Shook, Hardy & Bacon. Because of him, she became a foster parent and adopted four children.

"He is my idol," she said. "Look at all he's done to repair the world."

Balloun's wife, Sheila, took it all in. This part is what keeps her husband going.

"I would like to think it was me, but I suspect it is his love of the law," she said.

Balloun says he'll keep at it until he gets Hannah, his youngest, through college.

"Then I'll think about going part time."

To reach Donald Bradley, call 816-234-4182 or send email to dbradley@kcstar.com.

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Forever Home

Shook Partner **Gene Balloun**'s 1000th adoption is part of the firm's Forever Home adoption and guardianship program. When combined with Gene's adoption work in Kansas, Shook has provided permanent, safe and loving homes for 1,158 children and counting. Through scholarship funds in Missouri and Kansas, Shook has donated more than \$846,000 to foster and adoptive children. If you are interested in volunteering for the Forever Home program, please contact **Jolie Justus** at extension 15037 or jjustus@shb.com.

1,158

children adopted into permanent, loving homes

\$846,000

children granted permanent guardianships with friends and relatives



Spotlight

Tucked away on the southwest corner of the 15th floor in the Kansas City office is one of the busiest litigation teams at Shook, Hardy & Bacon. The team brings in an average of 180 new clients each year, handles almost 200 trials during that same period and maintains a court docket that includes approximately 20 hearings per week.

Established more than 25 years ago to handle mandatory appointments from Jackson County Family Court, the firm's Pro Bono Division represents parents and children in the abuse and neglect docket, as well as juveniles facing delinquency charges. The court maintains an alphabetical list of all lawyers holding a Missouri bar license—when your name comes up, you receive an e-mail or a fax with your client's name and the general facts of the case. There was a time when it took the court over three years to make it through the list of local lawyers, but because of a massive increase in the number of children under the jurisdiction of the court, lawyers can expect a new appointment about every 13 months.

Megan Roth and **David Suroff**, two skilled and seasoned litigators, handle the vast majority of these cases. This is a fast-paced docket with high stakes. Parents face possible termination of parental rights, and children are charged with delinquencies that have severe and lasting consequences. State and federal laws require that hearings and trials happen within very tight time standards. Most of the cases require that the parties reach a stipulation or adjudicate the case in less than 30 days from when the firm gets notice of the appointment.

Fortunately for Shook's clients, Megan and Dave lead a talented team of paralegals and staff who

quickly assess the case, meet with the clients and witnesses, conduct discovery, and prepare for adjudication. The clients are all living below the poverty level and many face multiple issues relating to addiction, mental illness and domestic violence. It is the court's responsibility to reunify the families when appropriate and when that is not an option, to make sure that the children gain permanency through guardianship or adoption.

Megan came to Shook in 2010 after seven years with the Missouri Public Defender System. As a public defender, she tried more than 50 cases and successfully resolved more than 1,000 cases involving juvenile delinquencies, misdemeanors and felonies, including first-degree murder. Dave came to Shook after 19 years with the Missouri Public Defender System, where he handled over 10,000 cases in nine different counties. The collective experience of Megan and Dave make them uniquely suited to handle this demanding and difficult representation.

Megan and Dave are supported by a professional team that helps work up the cases, which typically take anywhere from 90 days to two years to reach conclusion. Kylene Campbell, Berna Cosner, Rhonda Hoffman, Shawna Johnson and Deserae Rogers



Megan Roth
Staff Attorney
Kansas City



David Suroff
Staff Attorney
Kansas City

provide critical case management and client support that is invaluable to the team.

In addition to serving as lead counsel on this massive docket, Megan and Dave provide support and supervision to Shook lawyers who choose to handle their own court appointments. They also handle their own pro bono cases, including guardian ad litem representation, adoptions, guardianships, and criminal and civil matters. Even though they have both dedicated their full-time career to public service, their commitment to the community does not end with their work at Shook. Dave is a member of the Board of Directors for the Kansas City Youth Court and Heartland Center for Behavioral Change. Megan runs the Kansas City Youth Court for the

University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, serves on the Children's Emergency Fund Board, frequently presents at CLEs, and is an active alum with both her high school and undergraduate alma matters. Megan and Dave also serve as co-chairs for the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association's Juvenile Law Committee.

Megan and Dave are model lawyers whose passion and skill is evident when you see them in action. The compassion for their clients and the respect from their peers and the judiciary is apparent each time they set foot in the Jackson County Family Court. Shook is truly lucky to have two such wonderful people on the team and the community is a better place because of their dedication and hard work.

Highlights

KIND: KIDS IN NEED OF DEFENSE

Since 2008, Shook lawyers have partnered with KIND: Kids in Need of Defense, to provide counsel for immigrant and refugee children in the United States without a parent or guardian. Founded by Angelina Jolie and Microsoft Corp. Executive Vice President and General Counsel Brad Smith, KIND is a unique opportunity for Shook lawyers to provide much-needed pro bono services in a collaborative partnership with firm client Microsoft.

Leading this project for the firm, Partner **Kelly Feimster** served on the host committee for KIND's Gala 2015. Lawyers in Houston, Kansas City, Orange County, Seattle, and Washington, D.C., have participated in KIND trainings and handled cases in immigration and juvenile courts across the country. In addition to client representation, Shook lawyers have participated with Microsoft lawyers in "lobby days" in Washington, D.C. These annual events provide an opportunity to meet with elected officials and discuss the unique issues facing undocumented children.

Staff Attorney **Kerry Manning**, Associate **Ben Walther** and Office Services Clerk Anabel Gerardo have handled six cases for KIND in the Houston office, providing life-saving assistance for eight children. Associate **Monty Hamilton** leads the program for the Washington, D.C., office, and Seattle Managing Partner **Bart Eppenaer** works with Kelly as a volunteer in Seattle.

TRANS LEGAL SERVICES NETWORK

Shook recently completed its first year as a member of the Trans Legal Services Network (TLSN) Advisory Council. TLSN connects organizations that provide trans legal services across the country. Shook's collaboration with TLSN formalizes a decade-long pro bono project that has provided legal name and gender changes for the transgender community.

Shook has helped over 20 clients with legal assistance necessary to amend birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports and government records. Alex Garnick and Jolie Justus take the lead on the project, with the crucial assistance of Berna Cosner. **Megan**

Roth and **Joy Springfield** have volunteered to help with clients in Kansas.

This year the group teamed up with Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City to serve families of children who are receiving treatment at the hospital's Gender Pathways Services Clinic. If you would like to volunteer for this project in any Shook office, please contact Associate **Alex Garnick** at extension 18027 or agarnick@shb.com.

CHICAGO BRINGS NEW FACES AND COMMITMENT TO PRO BONO

When Shook merged with Grippo & Elden earlier this year, it was a marriage of two organizations dedicated to giving back to their communities. Over the last three years, Associate **Matt Wolfe** has contributed extraordinary service on behalf of various pro bono clients in the Chicago area. He works with the Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) to ensure access to justice for immigrants and asylum seekers. Matt spearheads an office-wide project to assist kids eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a presidential executive order that provides much-needed relief for kids often referred to as "Dreamers." Matt has provided representation through the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, which recognized his successful settlement of a racial housing discrimination case.

In addition to Matt's work, Associate **Andy Meerkins** volunteers his time on multiple immigration matters and Partner **Michael Conway** has been appointed by the federal court to represent a prisoner in a section 1983 civil rights action.

KANSAS CITY TEAM ASSISTS IN SUCCESSFUL DEATH PENALTY APPEAL

Associates **Stephanie Sankar** and **Dale Johnson** did not hesitate when asked to assist on an eleventh hour appeal for Mark Cristenson, an inmate on Missouri's death row. Despite busy schedules, the team joined forces with death penalty lawyers

from New York in an attempt to stay their client's execution. Missouri had requested an execution date by the time Shook got involved, but Mr. Cristenson was never provided a federal habeas appeal due to the malpractice of earlier counsel who missed the deadline for filing the petition.

Stephanie and Dale, along with Associates **Matthew Stucky** and **Ruth Anne French-Hodson**, reviewed and digested thousands of pages of documents and coordinated with out-of-state counsel to file a brief requesting that Mr. Cristenson's execution be stayed while he pursued a federal habeas claim. The team won a huge victory when the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the lower court rulings and allowed Mr. Cristenson time to pursue his federal petition. The work of the Shook team was invaluable to the death penalty counsel, who now has the time to present Mr. Cristenson's claims as required by the state and federal constitutions.

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP LEADS TO PRO BONO SUCCESS IN ORANGE COUNTY

Partner **Mike Zito** worked with client CBRE and counsel in Shook's Orange County office to provide pro bono assistance to Goodwill of Southern California. CBRE general counsel has a longstanding commitment to Goodwill Industries and reached out to Mike for assistance with a lease dispute in Southern California. With the help of Orange County Managing Partner **Doug Robinson** and Associate **Gabe Spooner**, the Shook team quickly resolved a tough issue for the organization, allowing Goodwill to continue providing critical services to the community.

MIAMI TEAM PURSUES CRUCIAL RULING IN IMMIGRATION CASE

For the last year, a pro bono team in Miami has represented BYGM, an unaccompanied minor who came to the United States, fleeing gang intimidation in her native El Salvador. Shook is appealing the denial of the girl's request for dependency

adjudication in state court. This ruling is required as a predicate to seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status as allowed by federal law.

BYGM was abandoned by her father as an infant; and her mother moved to the United States when the child was three years old. The dependency court denied BYGM's request for a dependency adjudication, finding that she met the statutory definition of abandonment ("abused, abandoned or neglected by one or both parents"), but the abandonment by her father was too remote in time to the filing of her dependency petition, and that the child had failed to present evidence that she was harmed by the abandonment of her father because she was currently living with her mother in the United States.

Shook appealed and argued that the remoteness requirement was unprecedented in dependency law, and that no proof of harm was necessary beyond the harm of the abandonment itself. Shook also argued

that the Court impermissibly considered the fact that the child was seeking SIJ status in denying her dependency adjudication.

In July, the intermediate appellate court (Fla. Third District Court of Appeals) denied BYGM's appeal, adopting the reasoning of the lower court. Late this summer, Shook filed a Motion for Rehearing, Rehearing en banc, and Request for Certification to the Florida Supreme Court. BYGM's legal team is led by **Iain Kennedy**, who has taken the laboring oar on the briefing with assistance from **Hal Arteaga** and **Dan Rogers**. Shook is co-counsel with Catholic Charities, Legal Services of Miami and Florida International University Law School's Immigrant Children's Justice Clinic. Shook's brief was supported by an amicus prepared by the University of Miami Children & Youth Law Clinic, Florida Children's First, and Americans for Immigrant Justice.

By Shook Office

CHICAGO

- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center

DENVER

- Pro Bono Legal Research and Support

HOUSTON

- KIND: Kids in Need of Defense
- Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program

KANSAS CITY

- Forever Home: Adoptions and Guardianships
- Juvenile Justice and Family Advocacy
- Partners in Education: Special Education Advocacy

MIAMI

- Americans for Immigrant Justice
- Miami-Dade Special Assistant Public Defender Program
- Lawyers for Children America

ORANGE COUNTY

- Goodwill of Southern California
- KIND: Kids in Need of Defense

PHILADELPHIA

- Support Center for Child Advocates

SAN FRANCISCO

- The Bar Association of San Francisco's Legal Services Program
- PAWS: Pets Are Wonderful Support

SEATTLE

- KIND: Kids in Need of Defense

TAMPA

- Americans for Immigrant Justice
- Bay Area Legal Services
- Foster/Adoption Program

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
- Children's Law Center
- Legal Aid Society for the District of Columbia

By the Numbers

60%

Percentage of firm lawyers who participated in pro bono in 2014

40

Average number of pro bono hours per lawyer in 2014

19,980

Total number of pro bono hours contributed in 2014

155

Total number of lawyers with 20 or more hours of pro bono in 2014

Pro Bono Committee



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Chair
Kansas City



Jolie Justus
Vice Chair
Kansas City



Hal Arteaga
Of Counsel
Miami



Kali Backer
Associate
Denver



Gene Balloun
Partner
Kansas City



Brittany Boswell
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Matt Broaddus
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Joanna Vassallo
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Kris Verra
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Eva Weiler
Partner
Orange County



Jolie Justus

Vice Chair

Pro Bono Committee

This has been an exciting year of growth for the Pro Bono Division at Shook, Hardy & Bacon.

Over the course of the last year, we welcomed new team members Berna Cosner, Shawna Johnson, Deserae Rogers and **Dave Suroff** to the Kansas City pro bono team. Shook's newest office in Chicago brought new lawyers to the firm and with them, a commitment to giving back to their community. Seattle Managing Partner **Bart Eppenaer** upped his pro bono involvement and strengthened our pro bono commitment to KIND, a partnership with client Microsoft. Partners **Mike Zito** and **Patrick Oot** created win-win partnerships with their clients, by forging pro bono partnerships with in-house counsel. Partner **Elena McFarland** took the reins of a project that trained Shook lawyers to handle special education cases for children exposed to extreme trauma, and Associate **Amanda Tamayo** is leading the way on a collaborative project with the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law that provides guardian ad litem representation for children in homes affected by domestic violence.

“

If it's been a while since you explored the possibilities of pro bono work at Shook, please reach out and let us find a project that works for you.

”

Several new volunteers have stepped up and joined our Pro Bono Committee and the energy is contagious. If it's been a while since you explored the possibilities of pro bono work at Shook, please reach out and let us find a project that works for you. You'll be glad you did.



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