

Honoring Our Own

Each year, Ballard Spahr honors lawyers and staff for significant pro bono service.

Ballard Spahr donates \$1,000 to a charitable organization chosen by each award recipient. These awards are in addition to the \$25,000 Alan J. Davis Award given by the firm every summer in recognition of outstanding public service.

The firm's 2016 honorees are:

Clemency Project 2014 – Ballard Spahr lawyers from New York, Washington, D.C., and Salt Lake City obtained early release for four clients they represent through Clemency Project 2014, a U.S. Department of Justice initiative offering clemency to nonviolent offenders sentenced to lengthy terms under now-defunct mandatory sentencing guidelines. Ballard Spahr has represented three clients who have received clemency from President Obama, and a fourth who was released on a habeas petition. The clients' sentences were reduced by a total of more than 40 years. One woman, who was arrested at the age of 25 for assisting her boyfriend's drug operation, was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment, despite having no prior criminal record. She will be released after serving 22 years.

More than 100 Ballard Spahr attorneys have volunteered to screen and file petitions for eligible federal inmates through the program. The honorees, Charles A. Stillman, Blake K. Wade, Melanie R. Clark, Erica A. Leatham, Joanna Jiang, Erik M. Zissu, and Bowen "Bo" Ranney, are donating their award to the Foundation for Criminal Justice, which supports Clemency Project 2014.

Tenants' Rights – Scott S. Humphreys and Terrence M. Jones represent a California tenant who was wrongfully evicted by wealthy real estate investors from the rent-controlled apartment he lived in for nearly 25 years, so that the building would be more attractive for resale. Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Jones have been assisted by Peter L. Haviland and Taylor Steinbacher. Pretrial decisions have already strengthened protections for tenants and the case is being closely watched by tenants' rights groups. The honorees are donating their award to Tenants Together, an advocacy group.

Ballard Academy for Student Entrepreneurs – In 2015, Gregory L. Seltzer, Terence M. Grugan, Kimberly W. Klayman, and Brianna A. Wheeland launched BASE, a Philadelphia program that helps local university students with start-up ventures. Ballard Spahr attorneys advise their young clients on corporate governance and structure, draft and negotiate contracts, and counsel on a variety of additional business matters. They also match clients with business mentors, who share business perspectives and advice. The program concludes with an opportunity for the entrepreneurs to pitch their businesses to investors. BASE has expanded to serve clients in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Phoenix. The group is donating its award to HopeWorks, a program that provides training in technology and entrepreneurship to underserved youth.

Financial Security for Disabled Clients – David A. Haworth and Casey G. Watkins in New Jersey represented a homeless leukemia patient. The client was referred by legal services after he sold his business to pay for cancer treatments, but the buyer defaulted. Our lawyers volunteered hundreds of hours of legal services to obtain a settlement that brought stability and medical care for the client. Mr. Haworth and Mr. Watkins are donating their award to Philadelphia Volunteers for the Indigent Program.

In 2016, Ballard Spahr donated 40,000 hours of pro bono legal work.