

Honoring Our Own

Each year, Ballard Spahr honors every lawyer and paralegal who has performed more than 50 hours of pro bono service. The firm also recognizes four individuals or groups who have made significant pro bono contributions during the past year and donates \$1,000 to a charitable organization of their choice.

In 2011, the honorees are:

Rutgers Children's SSI Team. During the past two years, attorneys and staff in our New Jersey office have partnered with Rutgers Law School and South Jersey Legal Services to successfully appeal the denial of Social Security benefits to five children, ages 3 to 16 years old, who suffer from physical, emotional, educational, and behavioral disabilities. The team, comprising **David A. Haworth, Paul F. Jenkins, Christopher N. Tomlin, Stephanie Marguccio, and Connie A. Buttil**, has donated its award to South Jersey Legal Services' Children's Supplemental Security Income Project.

Sustainable Food Projects. Joel E. Tasca (Philadelphia) and **Erica A. Leatham** (Bethesda). Mr. Tasca represents Urban Tree Connection (UTC), whose mission is to engage members of impoverished communities in North and West Philadelphia to turn vacant lots into urban farms, and provide access to fresh produce in communities that otherwise lack it. He represented UTC in the first successful petition under a new law—the Pennsylvania Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act—allowing UTC to become the official “conservator” of one of its most important vacant lots.

Ms. Leatham represents Common Good City Farm, an urban farm and education center that grows food and provides nutrition education for low-income residents in Washington, D.C. Ms. Leatham assisted Common Good City Farm with land use and permitting issues to enable construction and improvements at the farm.

Mr. Tasca and Ms. Leatham divided their award between Urban Tree Connection and Common Good City Farm.

Las Vegas Initiative. The Las Vegas office exceeded the firm's target for pro bono work last year by developing new, office-wide projects and, in the process, was recognized by the Nevada Supreme Court and the legal services community. These efforts included organizing and staffing a legal clinic for homeless people and starting a child advocacy practice group, which recently hosted a training session and accepted three new cases to represent abused children, in addition to individual attorneys' efforts on behalf of veterans and transactional work for nonprofits. In October, Ballard Spahr was named Pro Bono Law Firm of the Year by Nevada Legal Services.

The initiative was led by Pro Bono Committee member **Bill Curran** and **Shane Jasmine Young**, with able support from **Edward Chang, Christine V. Grady, Robert C. Kim, Ann Marie McLoughlin, Robert E. McPeak, Michael M. Miles, Timothy R. Mulliner, Alissa L. Neufeld, Maren Parry, Stanley W. Parry, Jon Theodore Pearson, Mary F. Sedillo, and Abran Vigil**. The Las Vegas office has donated its award to the United Way's Earned Income Tax Credit Program.

Nonprofit Work – Distinguished Service Award. For many years, **Jean C. Hemphill** has served as both a member of the Pro Bono Committee and a sounding board for the program,

offering advice and guidance on pro bono work for nonprofit organizations. In addition to being a valuable resource for attorneys working with nonprofits, Ms. Hemphill also regularly mentors and supervises young lawyers, providing them with valuable training on nonprofit formation. She is an engaged leader and for this we honor her long-term commitment to pro bono service.

Ms. Hemphill has asked that her donation be made to the National Health Law Program.