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Husch Blackwell Presents 2022 Pro Bono Impact Award to Kelli Meilink and Jenna Brofsky

Husch Blackwell presented its annual Pro Bono Impact Award to partner Kelli Meilink and senior associate Jenna Brofsky as part of National Pro Bono Week observances today.

“Kelli and Jenna presented the idea for a large-scale pro bono program to assist Afghan refugees facing the one-year deadline to file for affirmative asylum in the U.S. after the fall of the Afghan government in August 2021,” said Margaret Richards, Husch Blackwell’s director of pro bono services. “This summer, we partnered with the Jewish Vocational Service of Kansas City (JVS) to assist more than 50 individuals with their affirmative asylum applications.”

Meilink and Brofsky coordinated the Afghanistan Emergency Assistance Project by working closely with JVS to identify clients, train and mentor Husch Blackwell attorneys and summer associates to review all of the applications before filing them with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Between May and October 2022, the firm contributed more than 1,620 pro bono hours valued at more than \$500,000 to the Afghanistan Emergency Assistance Project. The project consisted of 49 timekeeping members, including 2 partners, 15 associates, 3 paralegals, 29 summer associates and countless professional staff.

“With their help, and with a little luck, there are dozens of people who will have the chance to be granted asylum and build a life in our country after facing unspeakable horrors and the trauma of having to leave their homes. To me, this type of work is the epitome of what it means to give back to your community,” said Richards.

Established in 2018, the firm's Pro Bono Impact Award is presented annually to an attorney who has made a significant pro bono impact on behalf of those unable to afford legal representation and who made a special contribution to the establishment or enhancement of pro bono programs at Husch Blackwell.

Prior recipients of Husch Blackwell's Pro Bono Impact Award are:

2021: Javon Johnson, Dallas

2020: Joseph Diedrich, Madison and Angela Harden, Milwaukee

2019: Matt Knepper, St. Louis

2018: Maury Poscover, St. Louis and Larry McMullen, Kansas City

During Pro Bono Week observances October 23-29, 2022, Husch Blackwell is celebrating the ways the firm has put justice in action lifting the less fortunate and bridging gaps in our communities through pro bono service. In recognition of the nearly 600 attorneys and other professionals who individually contributed pro bono hours from October 2021 through September 2022, the firm has issued Pro Bono Badges that distinguish the various levels of pro bono contributions:

Contributor (up to 24 hours)

Achiever (24-49 hours)

Champion (50 or more hours)

In 2021, Husch Blackwell donated approximately 26,000 pro bono hours equaling \$10.2 million of legal services to important pro bono causes with every industry group and practice participating in the firm's pro bono efforts. This year, Husch Blackwell professionals have donated more than 18,500 pro bono hours to help meet a wide variety of needs across the country, including, but not limited to:

Anti-Human Trafficking Clinic

Civil Rights Court Appointments

Minority Entrepreneurship & Community Economic Development

Nonprofit Formation

Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community

Working with Veterans