

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 19-15**

**Step toe & Johnson LLP:  
Law School Graduates Providing *Pro Bono* Representation in the  
Domestic Relations Branch and Landlord and Tenant Branch**

**WHEREAS**, the Superior Court has the authority to approve special programs to allow individuals who are not members of the District of Columbia Bar to provide legal services to the public, pursuant to D.C. Court of Appeals Rule 49 (c)(10); and

**WHEREAS**, attorneys affiliated with Step toe & Johnson LLP (“Step toe”) have provided valuable *pro bono* representation to low-income individuals in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia Domestic Relations Branch and Landlord and Tenant Branch; and

**WHEREAS**, Step toe & Johnson LLP seeks authority to provide *pro bono* representation to clients who are eligible for free legal aid, through the use of law school graduates employed by Step toe & Johnson, LLP who are not active members of any Bar, with disclosure to the individual client of the bar status of the law school graduate; and

**WHEREAS**, the Superior Court has reviewed Step toe & Johnson LLP's request to be designated as a specifically authorized court program pursuant to D.C. Court of Appeals Rule 49 (c)(10) and the District of Columbia Court of Appeals Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law has no objection to the proposal under certain conditions;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is by the Court,

**ORDERED**, that Step toe & Johnson LLP is designated as a specifically authorized court program under D.C. Court of Appeals Rule 49 (c)(10); provided, however, that persons employed with Step toe must comply with the terms of this Administrative Order to the extent their practice otherwise would violate Rule 49; and it is further

**ORDERED**, the law school graduates who are employed by Step toe & Johnson LLP, and who have taken a bar examination but have not yet been admitted to a bar, may provide *pro bono* representation to clients in the Domestic Relations Branch and Landlord and Tenant Branch, consistent with the following requirements:

1. The law school graduate shall have graduated from an ABA-approved law school; and
2. The law school graduate shall provide legal services in affiliation with the Public Defender Service or a non-profit organization located in the District of Columbia that provides legal services at no charge (or for a nominal processing fee) to individuals of limited means; and
3. The law school graduate has not been admitted to the bar of any jurisdiction; and

4. The law school graduate shall only practice until the person's application is granted or denied. The law school graduate shall notify Steptoe and Johnson as soon as that person receives notice of their bar application grant or denial; and
5. The individuals providing legal services under this Order shall be trained and supervised by an enrolled, active member of the District of Columbia Bar in good standing who is employed by Steptoe & Johnson LLP, and who takes responsibility for the quality of the work and complaints concerning the services; and
6. The individuals practicing under this Order shall disclose to the public and to their clients that he or she is not admitted to practice law in any jurisdiction, but is providing legal services under the supervision of a member of the D.C. Bar pursuant to the exception provided in D.C. Court of Appeals Rule 49 (c)(10); and
7. The individuals practicing under this Order must provide the following disclosure after their name when it appears on pleadings, court filings, or discovery documents as well as letters, e-mails, or other business documents used in their work under this Order:

"Not admitted to practice in the District of Columbia. Authorized to provide legal services under the supervision of a member of the District of Columbia Bar in the District of Columbia in the Domestic Relations Branch and the Landlord and Tenant Branch of the District of Columbia Superior Court as an employee of, Steptoe & Johnson LLP a specifically authorized court program under D.C. Court of Appeals Rule 49 (c)(10)."

And it is further

**ORDERED**, that no individual shall be permitted to provide legal services under this Order for a period exceeding twenty four (24) months from commencement of such practice regardless of whether their application is still pending; and it is further

**ORDERED**, that individuals providing legal services under this Order are subject to the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct and the Rules of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia relating to Domestic Relations Branch and Landlord and Tenant Branch, and are subject to the applicable enforcement procedures to the same extent as if he or she were an enrolled, active member of the District of Columbia Bar; and it is further

**ORDERED**, that Steptoe & Johnson LLP shall submit a report to the Superior Court and to the D.C. Court of Appeals Committee on Unauthorized Practice of Law annually, 30 days prior to the anniversary date of this Order, stating the names of all individuals who provided legal services under this Order at any time during the preceding year, the start date and any end date of each individual's service under this Order, the jurisdictions where each individual is admitted to practice law (if any), and the date (if any) that each individual applied to the District of Columbia bar; and it is further

**ORDERED**, that the period during which legal services are provided pursuant to this Order will not begin the ninety-day period within which an application for admission to the District of Columbia Bar must be filed after a practitioner "commences practice in the District of Columbia" to qualify under D.C. Court of Appeals Rule 49 (c)(8); and it is further

**ORDERED**, that individuals participating under this Order will be exempt from Superior Court Rule 101(a)'s *Pro hac vice* requirements; and it is further

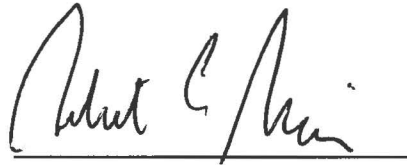
**ORDERED**, that the status of Steptoe & Johnson LLP as a specifically authorized court program and the effectiveness of this Order shall terminate on March 31, 2020, unless extended by the Court; and it is further

**ORDERED**, that this Order shall take effect immediately.

**SO ORDERED.**

**BY THE COURT**

Date: November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019



Robert E. Morin, Chief Judge

Copies to:

Judicial Officers  
Executive Officer  
Clerk of the Court  
Division Directors  
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Daily Washington Law Reporter  
DC Bar Webmaster  
Paul Lee, Steptoe & Johnson LLP  
Harmony Jones, Steptoe & Johnson LLP