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DC Chief Judges Applaud the Contributions of Attorneys in 3rd Annual Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll

- *Record Numbers Register for the Honor Roll* -

For the third year in a row, the Chief Judges of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia jointly published the *Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll*, which recognizes attorneys who provide vital pro bono legal service to those who cannot afford counsel. Through a self-nomination process, four thousand two hundred fifty-three (4253) D.C. Bar members and others authorized to perform pro bono work in the District reported providing fifty hours or more of pro bono service in 2013; two thousand five hundred sixty-two (2562) of those attorneys reported providing one hundred hours or more, thereby qualifying for the “High Honor Roll.” Both numbers reflect a significant increase from the previous two years. The Honor Roll includes attorneys from all segments of the bar, including one hundred forty-three law firms and scores of solo practitioners, local and federal government agencies, and non-profit organizations.

In a joint letter sent to the honorees, DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric T. Washington and DC Superior Court Chief Judge Lee Satterfield expressed their sincere gratitude, “We salute the commitment and compassion of our 2013 Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll attorneys. The DC Courts greatly value your participation in making justice accessible to thousands of people in DC who otherwise would have appeared in our courts without counsel or might not have endeavored to assert their rights. Congratulations on a job very well done.”

Peter Edelman, Chair of the D.C. Access to Justice Commission, noted the importance of the Honor Roll’s increased numbers. He said, “Being listed on the Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll becomes more meaningful every year to D.C. Bar members. We thank the Court for its strong support of the Honor Roll and the honorees for their tremendous contributions.” Added James J. Sandman, Chair of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Committee and President of the Legal Services Corporation: “We believe that the record number of attorneys registering for the Honor Roll translates into more pro bono work being performed. We should take a moment to congratulate ourselves, and then start thinking about how to increase next year’s participation.”

The District has long been viewed as having the most robust pro bono culture in the nation. “The District of Columbia has long been celebrated for its vibrant and diverse pro bono community, and we’re proud to be a part of the significant effort made by lawyers throughout the city in the past year,” said Peter D. Shields, managing partner of Wiley Rein LLP. “We continually strive to encourage our lawyers

to give back to the community. It is this commitment and service which makes for a well-rounded lawyer, and serves a vital need in the legal field.”

Every year, the number of attorneys self-registering for the Honor Roll has increased, though it probably only reflects a fraction of those performing pro bono service. D.C. Bar President Andrea C. Ferster commented on D.C.’s reputation as a leader in pro bono service, “Bar leaders and executives from across the country are envious of how committed our lawyers are to pro bono service. The attorneys participating in the Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll reflect the best of our profession.”

The Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll is the first local initiative to recognize the pro bono contributions of individual attorneys. Through the “40 at 50” Judicial Pro Bono Recognition, the D.C. Federal Courts recognize law firms that provide pro bono contributions at benchmark levels. In addition, the D.C. Access to Justice Commission’s Raising the Bar in D.C. Campaign recognizes law firms that contribute a benchmark percentage of revenue to support D.C. legal services providers.

The Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll and chief judges’ joint letter are available on the courts’ website at <http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/about/probonohonorroll/main.jsf> .

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