For more than a century, our attorneys, paralegals and staff have served our communities and well beyond through extensive pro bono legal service. This meaningful work adds to our diversity of culture and provides new perspectives that prepare our attorneys and clients to prosper in a global marketplace. Like the kaleidoscope, which reflects continually changing patterns of shapes and colors, our pro bono work is constantly evolving to meet the needs of vulnerable populations and nonprofit organizations that serve them. This year, our pro bono work championed human and immigrant rights, issues of fair and affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization, and provided meaningful representation to veterans, small businesses, nonprofits and low-income populations to create a positive impact in the communities where we practice.

During the 2019 ABA National Pro Bono Celebration, we took time to reflect on the work of the firm’s many pro bono volunteers. We are incredibly proud of the more than 25,000 hours donated over the past 12 months, while recognizing the immense work left to be done to close the justice gap for so many. As a signatory to the Pro Bono Institute Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge©, we continue our pledge to be a firm of great value to our clients, our communities and each other by donating 3% or more of our billable hours to pro bono.

Throughout this report, you will see quotes from Molly Marti’s “Walking with Justice,” a book reflecting on her time as a law clerk for Judge Max Rosem. Judge Rosem was known for his commitment to service, advocating throughout his impressive career for community leadership and the rights of others. The message embodied in these quotes is central to the service of our pro bono volunteers. They tell a story of justice, hope, resilience and humanity, much like our stories described in these pages. I am thankful for my colleagues’ generous donation of time and talent to this critical work. And to our readers, thank you for taking a moment to learn about the ways Stinson continues to honor and validate our long-standing commitment to pro bono service.

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Neighborhood Partnerships

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MARLBOROUGH COMMUNITY COALITION

This year, Stinson celebrated its 10th year of pro bono service to the Marlborough Community Coalition and the residents of the Marlborough neighborhood. In 2009, Stinson’s Kansas City office partnered with Legal Aid of Western Missouri (LAWMO) to help five urban Kansas City neighborhoods create the coalition and obtain 501(c)(3) status. The coalition was established to focus on increasing homeowner wealth, economic growth and high quality educational opportunities throughout the five neighborhoods. Through the partnership, Stinson has helped the coalition and Marlborough residents facilitate compatible new development and redevelopment projects, including the reuse of vacant lots, the rehabilitation of the neighborhoods’ housing stock through problem property litigation, and greater access to recreational spaces.

The coalition and Stinson partnership strengthened relationships with the city, leading to Marlborough’s selection as a Kansas City Water Services’ “Target Green” project, resulting in the transformation of 10 acres of vacant land into a wetland pond and an accompanying park. Together they capture and filter storm water to reduce sewer overflow.

The partnership was established under the leadership of now-retired Stinson Partner Steve Chinn. Since 2007, Stinson has continued to provide business litigation and transactional legal services to the coalition through the substantial, dedicated time of two Stinson partners: Litigation Partner Jere Sellers and Real Estate Partner Rich Cook. In addition to work on behalf of the coalition, the firm provides a range of legal services to small businesses, nonprofits, micro-entrepreneurs and residents in the Marlborough community, including representation in contentious landlord-tenant matters involving poor housing conditions.

In the project’s first 10 years, Stinson provided nearly 4,000 hours of pro bono service to the coalition as an organization and to individual residents, at a value of $1.2 million in legal work. More than 60 attorneys and paralegals have engaged in work in this signature pro bono project. The success of the Stinson-Marlborough-LAWMO collaboration helped lead to the 2015 creation of LAWMO’s Adopt-A-Neighborhood project, funded by back-to-back Pro Bono Innovation grants from the national Legal Services Corporation in 2015 and again in 2017. This funding allowed LAWMO to expand the concept of the law firm neighborhood partnership to six additional law firms and neighborhoods in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Success in Marlborough also led to the creation of Stinson’s additional neighborhood partnerships in Minneapolis and St. Louis.

10-Year Anniversary Event

In June, Stinson, LAWMO and the Marlborough Community Coalition celebrated 10 years of collaboration at an event held at the coalition’s Catalyst Center, a meeting and gathering place established over the course of the representation. Then candidate, and now Mayor Quinton Lucas, and other city council members addressed the crowd to celebrate the success of the public-private partnership.

CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH THE NORTHSIDE RESIDENTS REDEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Stinson and Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid (MMLA) have served as pro bono counsel to the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) since 2016. NRRC is a nonprofit neighborhood organization that has served the Near North and Willard-Hay neighborhoods of Minneapolis since 1969. NRRC’s primary goal is to improve the quality of life in North Minneapolis through an active, informed and self-sufficient citizenry. Among other things, NRRC is the neighborhood association the City of Minneapolis designated to represent the Near North and Willard-Hay neighborhoods in city planning and development activities. Stinson has provided counsel to NRRC regarding a variety of neighborhood housing issues, including participation in the city’s comprehensive plan update, tenants’ rights actions, and representation of individual neighborhood residents in matters related to home ownership.

From the outset of the relationship, NRRC and Stinson have been exploring options for NRRC to take a more direct role in promoting home ownership through financing, developing and selling high quality affordable homes to neighborhood residents. In 2019, NRRC started taking affirmative steps toward that goal by making connections with neighborhood banks to establish sources of funds for development and home acquisition. Additionally, Stinson has assisted with NRRC’s becoming a Community Development Corporation and Community Development Financial Institution. NRRC is currently working with the City of Minneapolis on a program that will allow NRRC to acquire vacant lots from the city, on which NRRC will develop single family and duplex homes for sale to neighborhood residents. The program will include design standards to ensure high quality construction, funding to ensure affordability and an opportunity to build equity, and covenants that will ensure the homes will remain affordable and will not be converted to rentals.

CONTRIBUTION TO NEIGHBORHOOD VACANCY INITIATIVE AND PARTNERSHIP WITH HYDE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

In St. Louis, Stinson is now using its extensive experience to provide community-based pro bono services to support the Hyde Park neighborhood of North St. Louis in addressing its vacant property problems. Stinson attorneys began working with the neighborhood in 2017, assisting with incorporation of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association of North St. Louis, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting business development, providing and enhancing housing opportunities in the community, and providing services and support to neighborhood residents. With the launch of Legal Services’ Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative in 2018, Stinson’s involvement expanded to include a pro bono beneficiary deed clinic that served area residents working to help prevent vacancy through estate planning assistance. This year, Stinson’s involvement expanded to include representation of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association in lawsuits against absentee owners of vacant nuisance properties, under the leadership of partners Vince Keady and Scott Mueller and associates Julie Schelpeiter and Keegan Shea.

Pro Bono Volunteer of the Month

In November, the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis’ monthly publication, the St. Louis Lawyer, recognized Litigation Partner Vince Keady as the Pro Bono Volunteer of the Month. Over the last year, Vince donated nearly 80 hours to eight different pro bono matters. He has played an integral role in the firm’s new neighborhood partnership with the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri’s Neighborhood Vacancy Initiative. Vince has a number of his own cases and always willingly supervises new associates who are investing their time in pro bono work.
Deinard Legal Clinic & Everyday Legal Services

DEINARD LEGAL CLINIC

In 2019, 94 Minneapolis lawyers and paralegals (48% of office total) contributed over 5,500 hours of time and legal talent to the Deinard Legal Clinic, the firm’s 26-year-old medical-legal partnership operated by Stinson in partnership with the Community-University Health Care Center (CUHCC). The Deinard Legal Clinic is the firm’s historic partnership founded in 1993 in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis and is one of the oldest medical-legal partnerships in the nation. It has also served as a model for other medical-legal partnerships in Minnesota and the Dakotas. Last year 84 clients received either brief service or advice-only representation from the firm. Another 39 individuals received full representation in the areas of family, immigration, guardianship, housing, criminal expungement and public benefits law. Eighty-seven percent of the clients served experienced a severe and persistent mental illness, 88% were diverse and 42% had children, with 124 dependents benefiting from the legal services received through the Deinard Legal Clinic. Fifty-eight percent of those served had annual incomes under $15,000. Stinson attorneys also trained clinic staff on guardianship under $15,000. Stinson attorneys also worked on family law, immigration, housing, and other issues under the supervision of a Stinson partner.

A Chance for a New Beginning

Stinson Partner Keith Mohelnan teamed up with CUHCC Advocate Mercedes Moreno to assist a client who was faced with a divorce after 12 years of marriage and worried about making ends meet for herself and her 10-year-old son. Bill collectors were contacting her about debts her husband had incurred after the separation. She required assistance with debt management and discharge in addition to securing custody and receiving child support. The husband was extremely uncooperative, refusing to provide records needed for the divorce. Keith and Mercedes worked together to initiate the divorce petition, negotiate a child support amount, and even before the divorce process they were able to begin wage withholding so that the woman and child had some income. At trial, Keith created a record with the client’s testimony and obtained the decree for everything she wanted, including sole physical and legal custody of the child, continued child support by wage garnishment, sole ownership of the townhouse and car, and relief from any debt incurred by the husband. Thus, the client was able to begin anew.

2019 Recipient of Deinard Legal Clinic Award

Associate Brittany Michael received the Deinard Legal Clinic Volunteer of the Year Award in 2019 for donating over 80 hours on 12 different pro bono matters. Work on these matters included eight Deinard Legal Clinic immigration matters, a divorce matter, staffing an estate protection clinic and handling advocacy for Human Rights (AHR) cases. Brittany also serves on the Deinard Legal Clinic Screening and Intake Committee. Her two significant immigration wins were on behalf of two men, both facing dire consequences.

Deinard Legal Team Secures Benefits for Disabled Client

PT partner Joel Abrahamson, and associate Carroll Wright, assisted a 50-year-old woman with securing Social Security benefits dating back to September 2017. Joel tried the case before an administrative law judge who found the woman was unable to work due to her mental health impairment. The Stinson team was able to show the client lacked the residual functional capacity to do relevant work or to effectively participate in the national economy. The woman was extremely grateful for Joel and Carroll’s representation, stating that they had “changed her life.”

Minneapolis Summer Associates Visit CUHCC

To gain an understanding of the importance of pro bono legal work, Minneapolis summer associates toured the Deinard Legal Clinic at CUHCC in June 2019, met the medical and behavioral health staff and learned about the firm’s long-standing partnership with this clinic. All of the summer associates received a Deinard Legal Clinic case and worked on family law, immigration, housing and other issues under the supervision of a Stinson partner.

The first case involved winning a cancellation of removal matter for one of the Somali 92 detainees who came to Minneapolis as a child. The client had a mental illness and was arrested for violating his probation and was placed into removal. Brittany filed a successful motion to re-open the man’s case based on conditions in Somalia and his mental illness and, after hearing her argument, the government agreed to drop the case.

Additionally, Brittany obtained a green card for a refugee from northern Africa who also suffered from mental illness and as a young man had faced having to choose between killing others and being killed himself. Brittany was able to argue the man’s case to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and they approved his green card and stay in the United States. Tom Jensen, one of Brittany’s supervising partners, stated, “Brittany’s relentless advocacy in these matters ensures a peaceful life for these clients here in Minnesota; they continue to receive medical and mental health care, as well as opportunities that one day will lead to becoming U.S. citizens.”

CASE HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE FIRM

Writing the Next Chapter

Minneapolis attorneys David Dobmeyer and David Axtell successfully represented a woman in a criminal expungement case that allowed her to regain her healthcare license and secure a job. The team expunged an old theft case that was impeding her ability to work and support herself. In a thank you letter to the attorneys the client wrote, “But by God’s grace I am slowly making my way back to getting my life on track and providing for my son, with what I know I am capable of doing for us so that...”
I can create a comfortable life for him. I owe all that to you and your team for helping me through this process! From the bottom of my heart I thank you. I thank you all and all the wonderful staff at your law firm.”

“Your value lies not in status or title, but in the roots of your character and the depth of your compassion.”

**Human Rights**

Year after year, Stinson remains committed to protecting human rights in the U.S. and around the world. In 2019, this included work protecting minor survivors of human trafficking, supporting the public defender system and access to counsel within the criminal justice system, a commitment to innocence work, and research for The Advocates of Human Rights on a range of issues affecting individuals around the world. Partnering with many human rights and civil liberties groups, 150 firm attorneys and paralegals donated more than 3,670 hours to these issues.

**PRO BONO IMPACT AWARD**
The firm recognized Kansas City attorneys Vicki Smith, Monique McElwee and Lauren Fleming with its 2019 Pro Bono Impact Award, given to a timekeeper or group of timekeepers who have devoted substantial time and effort to a large matter for a single client, a large matter for multiple clients, or a matter involving public policy or community improvement. Vicki, Monique and Lauren continue their representation and request for clemency for Hope Zeferjohn, a survivor of human trafficking.

Hope, a Tocqueville native, fell into an abusive relationship when she was just 14 with an adult male, who soon began trafficking her. Hope suffered extensive physical and emotional abuse while she was under his control, including death threats and severe beatings.

“She destroyed my life,” Hope, now 21, told KCUR in Kansas City. “He tried to kill me twice, and I tried to think about it like ‘I need to go, I need to get out,’ but I’m stuck in this whole situation.”

Hope now sits in prison where she is serving a sentence for aggravated human trafficking. She was arrested at age 17 for charges stemming from accusations that she recruited other minors into prostitution while under the man’s control. Recognizing the brutal realities of these situations, the Kansas Legislature recently changed the law so that being a minor who is a victim of trafficking is now a defense to a charge of sex trafficking. This change unfortunately occurred too late for Hope, and she was prosecuted as an adult in the state of Kansas without the benefit of this new defense.

With the help of her Stinson legal team, Hope is now seeking a pardon from Kansas Governor Laura Kelly. It is not uncommon for those under the control of a trafficker to be forced to recruit others into the operation, and to be charged with trafficking crimes. The team is fervently pushing for clemency on Hope’s behalf from not only her prison sentence, but also her life-long registration on the sex offender registry. Hope denies recruiting others for prostitution, and maintains everything she did while with her trafficker was done as a minor and under threat of death and harm to her family and her infant child. Due to the complicated nature of the various forms of relief the team considered, 961 hours have been logged to this case, including 234 hours in 2019 alone. With no intention of slowing down, Vicki and team are committed to giving Hope the opportunity she deserves to lead a successful life.

**OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS WORK**

A Commitment to Innocence

In 2019, Stinson expanded its commitment to the work of the Midwest Innocence Project (MIP), a local organization that advocates for and obtains the exoneration and release of wrongly convicted people within the organization’s five-state region (Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Iowa and Nebraska). The MIP typically has around 600 applicants for their services, waiting for their cases to be reviewed and considered for further investigation and possible litigation, and Stinson attorneys and paralegals assisted with a number of case investigations last year. In addition, the MIP litigates multiple innocence matters every year, and a large team of attorneys in Kansas City is co-counseling one of these matters with the MIP. In 2019, Stinson dedicated 562 hours to MIP case investigations and litigation matters.
Supporting Public Defenders

Through the Missouri Coalition for the Right to Counsel (MCRC), attorneys in Kansas City and St. Louis provide representation to individuals charged with felonies and gross misdemeanors. The MCRC was launched in 2017 to support an overburdened public defender system while providing pro bono opportunities and trial experience to members of the private bar. A Stinson team continues to represent the Jackson County Public Defenders as they request statutory relief from their current caseloads to ensure proper defenses can be prepared for their clients. Thirteen timekeepers in Kansas City and Omaha, working under the leadership of partners John Aisenbrey and Brad Yeretsky, donated 416 hours to this matter in 2019.

Under Color of Law

The firm is committed to accepting and providing zealous representation in appointments from the federal court system. Stinson attorneys continue as active participants in the District of Colorado Civil Pro Bono Panel, with Partner Perry Glantz and associate Hailey Perkins recently accepting a new federal court appointment. In St. Louis, associate John Schroeder recently settled a three-year Section 1983 case in federal court, representing a prisoner on claims of failure to provide adequate medical care. Thanks to his pro bono representation, the case survived summary judgment, and John negotiated an excellent monetary settlement. Our client was paroled from prison just as the case reached its conclusion, so he was able to reenter society with a settlement that will help get him on his feet as he seeks further medical treatment.

Assisting The Advocates for Human Rights

Death Penalty Research

Egypt: A multi-office team led by Partner Perry Glantz and including associate Jenny Ahn and paralegal Stephanie Hess helped prepare a death penalty report on Egypt in preparation for its upcoming Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The UPR is a peer review of the human rights performance of each of the United Nations’ 193 member states, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which includes detailed developments in the legislation and practice surrounding the use of the death penalty. The AHR focuses on Egypt because of the country’s efforts to encourage others to retain and use the death penalty.

Malaysia: The AHR received a request for urgent assistance from a Malaysian member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty to help conduct research to support the country’s recent decision to limit the circumstances in which the death penalty is pursued. A multi-office team led by Partner David Kim, with assistance from paralegal Merima Trifunovic, prepared a policy brief on an extremely tight deadline in advance of the Seventh World Congress Against the Death Penalty, held in Brussels.

Asylum Guides for Immigration Attorneys

A group of five St. Louis and Jefferson City associates helped prepare new guides for use by the AHR when screening applicants for eligibility for asylum based on nationality, political opinion, race or religion. The AHR case screeners made immediate use of the guides and shared them with the Immigrant Advocates Network, where they will be available to pro bono attorneys and legal services nonprofits across the country.

POLICY AND IMPACT IMMIGRATION MATTERS

Ensuring Safety for Immigrants

In late 2018, at the request of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), local churches in Phoenix, Arizona, began providing food, clothing and necessities to families released from the immigration services in that state. According to a lawsuit filed by Stinson attorneys and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), soon after the relief efforts began, the local churches and their volunteers were targeted by organizations through the brandishing of firearms, trespassing and allegations that the churches were engaged in human trafficking and sex trafficking. Attorneys Larry Wulkan, Javier Torres and paralegal Anne Slawson joined the SPLC as co-counsel in a lawsuit against these groups alleging civil defamation. Both cases were successfully included with a consent decree. There have been no reports of harassing behavior since.

Immigration Policy Work

Stinson attorneys in Washington, DC (Harvey Reiter, Roy Goldberg, Brandon Nagy, Dennis Lane, Jon Schneider, Michael Tucci), Wichita (Christina Hansen), Minneapolis (Andy Davis, Jenny Ahn, Kate Kosiek, Tom Burman), Phoenix (Jiim Holland) and Dallas (Matt Miller) worked on the following matters:

- Drafted amicus briefs supporting motions to re-open proceedings for various Harama litigants who faced removal orders to return to Iraq
- Filed two amicus briefs in the Sixth Circuit supporting appellants in another Hamama-related litigation
- Drafted an amicus brief for the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and a coalition of religious organizations, supporting a lawsuit opposing an executive order giving states and localities veto power over resettlement of refugees in their communities

- Filed public comments under the Administrative Procedure Act and later filed a federal lawsuit challenging the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) public charge rule, which makes it harder for immigrants to qualify for permanent resident status
- Filed comments opposing an arbitrary and unsupported DHS rule to dramatically increase fees for green card citizenship and work authorization applications
- Filed comments opposing DHS’s proposed rule to increase the number of categorical grounds for denying asylum applications
- Represented a number of asylum clients through the AHR and the Tahirih Justice Center

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A New Start for Syrian Refugees

Over the last several years, Partner William Hanna and paralegal Debbie King worked with a family of Syrian refugees as they applied to adjust their status to legal permanent residents (green card). The family fled their Syrian homeland when the war started by ISIS began. They spent four years in Jordan before receiving refugee status to migrate to the United States. The family now resides in Kansas City, and, in addition to securing green cards for the family, William assisted the family with resettlement efforts and recently hosted the family for dinner at his home. The family reports the children are well settled and stabilized in a local school district and they are on the honor roll.

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Nonprofit Legal Clinic

In June, Stinson and the Mid-America Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) teamed up to host an inaugural legal clinic for 17 nonprofit organizations from the Kansas City metropolitan area. This first of its kind event in Kansas City provided an opportunity for corporate and transactional attorneys to give back to nonprofits serving the local community.

Following the creation of an ACC Pro Bono Committee a few years ago, the local chapter collaborated with Stinson to create an event that would appeal to local in-house attorneys and Stinson attorneys who engage in a transactional practice. The clinic allowed these attorneys to offer the kinds of services they provide their own employers and billable clients—corporate governance and operation matters like contract review, risk management or advising on employment law.

One Stinson attorney was paired with one local in-house counsel and member of the ACC to aid a nonprofit with legal needs in their areas of expertise. The requests for legal services included questions regarding governance and policies, board engagement, liability of officers/directors, fundraising, employee policies, employee contracts, general contracts, real estate (leasing-owning), trademark and copyright, risk management, and HIPAA.

The 17 participating nonprofits included: ADHOC Group Against Crime, Children’s Advocacy Network, Community LINC, Connections to Care, CASA of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, Child Abuse Prevention Association, Community LINC, Connections to Success, COVERS, Emmanuel Family & Child Development Center, Grace United Community Ministries, I Matter Experience, Kidsight, Lee’s Summit CARES, Redemptorist Social Services Center, Shepherd’s Center of Raytown, Veracruz’s Voice, and Whatsoever Community Center.

One nonprofit noted, “The Nonprofit Legal Clinic is a fantastic idea. The opportunity to address professional legal needs for nonprofit organizations is very much needed. The attorneys that I worked with were very informative, supportive and provided needed legal resources for areas of concern. I am so happy that this workshop was created and look forward to future sessions!”

Stinson participants included: Christina Arnone, Steve Cosentino, Ashley Cross, Karen Garrett, Scott Hecht, Ben Hober, Bob Hunter, Charley Jensen, Molly Keppler, Pat Konopka, Todd LaSala, Mike Lochmann, Bob Monroe, Jim Selle, Kent Stallard, Kelly Stout, Kenda Tomes and Sara Welch.

The following ACC-member attorneys participated: Patrick Courtney (Terracon), Stacy Conad (Spirit AeroSystems, Inc.), Matt Ellis (Koch Companies Public Sector LLC), Aaron Freestone (Rosen’s, Inc.), Kelly Gaide (Spirit AeroSystems, Inc.), Mark Kanage (Spirit AeroSystems, Inc.), Rebecca Kreisman (PNC Bank), Jennifer McAdam (National Association of Insurance Commissioners), Mindy McPeeters (Spirit AeroSystems, Inc.), Josh Mortensen (Garmin International), Rosetta Robbins (Strategic Management Solutions LLC), Yolanda Sims (Kansas Medical Mutual Insurance Co.), Dillon Strohm (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City), Emily Vijayakirji (Black & Veatch), John Watts (CommunityAmerica Credit Union), Dawn WAV-le Rogers (Textron Aviation), Taylor Wales (CommunityAmerica Credit Union), Charlene Wilson (H&R Block), and Andrew Wimmer (Jack Henry & Associates).

Participating attorneys noted how much they enjoyed meeting with their pro bono clients and providing helpful guidance, along with gratitude for the opportunity to engage in meaningful pro bono work and a desire to see this become an annual event.

Naturalization Work in Kansas City

Following a fall 2019 training, attorneys Molly Keppler, Emily Monroe, Nick Bertron, Ashley Dillon, Whitney Cole, Paulina Escobar, Abraham Sotoel, Nick Pappas, Bryce Langford and Courtney Harrison, and paralegals Leena Stevens and Lisa Parks accepted multiple naturalization referrals from LAWMO. One client has already been approved to become a naturalized citizen and she is scheduled to take her oath of citizenship.

A Win for Religious Freedom

Partners Eric Liebeler and Laura Halferty, with the assistance of paralegal Kathryn Barnes, helped a native of Uzbekistan successfully navigate the asylum process in order to escape religious persecution when she converted to the Jehovah’s Witnesses faith. Not long after the client came to the United States on a student visa, she learned the police in her country of origin were arresting Jehovah’s Witnesses for possessing Bibles, and that members of her congregation were arrested and physically abused. The national TV station in her country of origin broadcasted police raids on Jehovah’s Witnesses worship spaces. The client sought asylum and withholding of removal based on religion, membership in a partnership social group and under the torture convention.

Citizenship and Family Law Help for Deindar Legal Clinic Client

Partner Bill Gottlieb represented a pro bono client seeking divorce, and was able to negotiate a favorable divorce settlement including spousal maintenance for the disabled client. After concluding the divorce, associate Shiveta Vaid stepped in and obtained the client’s disability waiver and filed a citizenship application on her behalf. Almost a year later in 2019, USCIS asked for a new waiver, which Shiveta promptly prepared. The client’s interview took place in the summer of 2019, and at long last she was approved for citizenship in early fall of 2019, taking her oath in September. It was a great win for the client and her son and they are delighted with the outcome.

A Positive Outcome for Survivors of Labor Trafficking

Attorneys Karl Phares and Sam Butler along with paralegals Debbie King and Olga Oldani donated over 300 hours to the preparation of a complex T and U visa application to help victims of labor trafficking in the roofing industry. Both clients received the wonderful news that their T visas were approved in 2019, making them eligible to apply to adjust their status to legal permanent residents, bringing some peace and permanency to these families who have been through a harrowing situation.

“The life experience poses this question: How do you want to be changed because of me?”
Hunger Busting in Dallas

Partner Shane Armstrong collaborated with Hunger Busters, a local nonprofit, in strategizing and formulating the group’s arguments at a Department of Agriculture hearing in Austin, Texas, to advocate for Hunger Busters to receive more state funding. Hunger Busters is a Dallas-based charity focused on feeding kids by providing a much-needed third meal of the day to food-insecure children. As of 2018, one in every four North Texas children are considered food insecure and 89% of Dallas school district students qualify for free or reduced meals at school. In 2017, Hunger Busters provided 350,000 meals to local schoolchildren. Following a decision from the Department of Agriculture, Hunger Buster’s CEO, Trey Hoobler, was pleased to announce that the state granted hundreds of thousands of dollars of additional funding to the organization.

Making the 2020 Census Count

In preparation for the 2020 census, both Nebraska Appleseed and Kansas Appleseed are reaching out to “hard to count” communities. Under-counts disproportionately miss young children and people of color, leading to long-term political and economic inequalities, as well as a loss in federal representation and funding. Attorneys John Gamm and Robert Kmiecik in Omaha and Matt Salzman in Kansas City continue to research legal issues that arise for both organizations as they raise community awareness.

United Business Advisory Success

Last year, the Denver Mile High United Way launched its United Business Advisory program to support small business owners in underserved communities grow and expand their businesses by providing skilled and experienced business advisors who volunteer their consultative time and skills at no cost to the clients. One of the first business owners involved in the program owned a small insurance agency she had operated for over a decade under a contractual agreement with a Colorado-based insurance broker. The client was interested in exiting the broker-agent agreement to start an insurance brokerage with her adult daughter. The client originally hailed from Mexico, English is her second language, and she needed guidance on her business and legal options. Partner Robert Botts accepted the case and worked with the client over several months. With his help, she was able to break amicably from the brokerage contract and move forward to help her daughter focus on her own recently launched insurance brokerage business.

Community Development in St. Louis

The Community Economic Development (CED) Microenterprise Program provides free civil legal assistance to eligible entrepreneurs, small businesses and nonprofits who serve and support low-income communities. CED cases involve various legal issues, including formation and amendment of business documents, drafting contracts, employment issues, review of leases and real estate purchases, tax issues, and intellectual property issues such as trademark and copyright. St. Louis Partner Butch Miller was recognized by the program as an “Individual Superstar” for his CED client work in 2019, and Stinson was also recognized as one of the top contributing law firms in terms of volunteer hours last year.

Patron Pro Bono Pride

St. Louis patron agent Scott Shaw proudly displayed his 50-hour Pro Bono Week ribbon, saying he is “thrilled to be at a firm which so highly values community involvement. Personally, I contributed to the USPTO Patent Pro Bono program through GatewayVMS and am proud to display my “50 hours volunteer ribbon.” Way to go, Scott! We love our pro bono patent volunteers who are making our patent system accessible to people of limited means.

Housing Work

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT FOR ALL

The lack of safe, quality and affordable housing is often considered a cause of increased homelessness, with adequate housing as a key ingredient to solving homelessness and stabilizing families. The American Bar Association in its 2019 report entitled, “Adequate Housing is a Human Right” by Emily Bergeron, notes that a place of shelter influences every aspect of our lives. Housing can impact our physical health, create cost burdens, create concentrated areas of poverty and impact individual and community identities. In 2019, Stinson attorneys from across the firm leveraged their time and legal talent to address this pressing issue and listen to the unique needs of each client.

Minneapolis office named VLN Housing Law Firm of the Year

Stinson was proud to be recognized as the housing law firm of 2019 by the Volunteer Lawyers Network (VLN). The housing team donated 695 hours through VLN’s Eviction Representation Project, the Hennepin County Advice Only Housing Court Project and on individual housing matters through our partnership with Neighborhood Residents Redevelopment Council and the Deindar Legal Clinic. Stinson attorneys David Axstell, Drew Glasnovich, Calvin Hoffman, Amy Johns, Kevin Kitchen, Jama Kirz, Logan Kugler, Ivy LeTourneau, Jada Lewis, Steve Lindeman, Keith Mohabian, David Parry, Todd Phelps, Joshua Poertner, Michelle Rehbein, Zach Sheahan and Jon Woodruff all donated time on housing cases in 2019.

LAWMO Tenant Help Line Provides Critical Legal Services

LAWMO launched a new tenant help clinic in 2019, where Kansas City attorneys can now walk to the courthouse to provide a few hours of limited service representation to low-income tenants. Partner Kirk Doan volunteered at the clinic multiple times and reports that many of the clients are young, single mothers who face multiple legal challenges, only one of which is housing. Kirk was able to use his legal counseling skills to help one young mother avoid eviction.

A Victory for Justice

Over the last four years, attorneys Tom Davis, Courtney Harrison, Joyce Hart, Cari Matias, Chris Sevedge and others worked with LAWMO on four housing law cases involving failure to treat a bed bug infestation in a local apartment complex. Tom and LAWMO attorney Jesi Stanley took the first case to trial and prevailed. However, the plaintiffs’ request for attorneys’ fees was denied because plaintiffs’ counsel involved LAWMO and a pro bono attorney, therefore, there was no client fee. Stinson and LAWMO argued on appeal that the fees were authorized under the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act (MMPA) and are designed not only to compensate counsel who choose to remedy violations of the MMPA, but are also to be used to deter prohibited conduct and protect Missouri citizens. The court of appeals held that denying an attorney’s fee award because a litigant is represented by legal aid or pro bono counsel “thwarts the remedial purposes of the MMPA’s fees shifting provisions.”

The court remanded the matter back down to the circuit court to award fees under the traditional lodestar factors. A reasonable attorneys’ fees recovery was collected and donated to LAWMO. Stinson donated close to 1,200 hours on this matter.

Joint Collaboration Launches Gateway Neighborhood Mortgage Fund in St. Louis

Attorneys Patrick Respolders, Karen Garrett, Tom Molins and Rob Harry, provided the legal work allowing for the launch of the Gateway Neighborhood Mortgage Fund. The city of St. Louis, the St. Louis Development Corporation and a number of nonprofits, various banks and a community financial institution collaborated to create this mortgage fund that will provide loans to qualified borrowers to purchase and improve homes in neighborhoods with depressed home values. The mortgage fund will close an appraisal gap, allowing families to become owners in their own neighborhoods.

“Every person is a living treasure box. Listening holds the key.”
Recognitions & Honors

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
HONORS FIRM FOR PRO BONO SERVICE

Early in 2019, the Board of Directors for Legal Services Corporation (LSC), the governing body for legal services programs nationwide, held its board meeting and a pro bono reception in St. Louis. Stinson was one of the four awardees from across the State of Missouri recognized for extraordinary commitment to equal justice for its work with LAMWO. The award was given for Stinson’s 2018 work in which the firm handled 44 pro bono cases referred by LAMWO for a total of 1,795 hours. Stinson and Pro Bono Manager Katie Cronin were also recognized as the lead participating firm in LAMWO’s Adopt-a-Neighborhood Project, through which it works to resolve issues with abandoned housing, illegal dumping, and other issues affecting low-income communities.

2019 RAMSEY COUNTY PRO BONO AWARD

Minneapolis partners Eric Galatz and Keith Mohelen received the Ramsey County Pro Bono Award for their work on behalf of the St. Paul-based Listening House, a daytime drop-in center that provides homeless, disadvantaged and lonely people with a safe place to shelter from the rain or cold. This team of Stinson lawyers was called in after the shelter relocated to a new part of the city and began its operations for homeless individuals. When neighbors lodged a complaint with the city against the shelter, Eric stepped in to represent them through city-directed negotiations with the neighbors. A restrictive city council resolution was issued that allowed the shelter only to serve 20 people a day, which was not acceptable. Keith, a seasoned litigator, took the matter to court and the shelter received a favorable ruling that allowed them to continue to operate.

PRO BONO HONOR ROLLS

The Minnesota State Bar Association recognizes members who provide 50 hours or more of pro bono legal services as North Star lawyers. Seventy-four Stinson attorneys were recognized as 2019 North Star Lawyers.

The Missouri Bar Pro Bono Wall of Fame recognizes attorneys who perform 40 or more hours of pro bono work in a year for their generous commitment of time, professional skill and legal knowledge. Seventy-two Stinson attorneys will be included on the 2019 Missouri Bar Pro Bono Wall of Fame.

The District of Columbia Courts’ Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll recognizes attorneys who have provided 100 or more hours of pro bono work to DC residents. Seven Stinson attorneys were included in the 2019 Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll, with four of those attorneys donating 100 or more hours through the Advocacy Clinic.

STINSON’S PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD

This award is given to a timekeeper who has devoted substantial time and effort to more than one cause involving everyday legal services for those in need. The 2019 award was given to attorney Brandon Nagy, Financial Services and Class Action associate, who donated over 120 hours on 10 matters in 2019.

A CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In November 2019, at the Annual Family Court Volunteer Appreciation Banquet, Stinson attorney Laura Higgins-Tyler received two awards, first for her efforts in planning the KCMBA Unity Day, a second-time event for the family court to recognize parents who have successfully reunited with their children, and a second award for her efforts in a new initiative to provide representation to parents in protective custody hearings. Laura has been a long-time public interest advocate for the firm in the Jackson County courts and has served as a dedicated advocate on behalf of children and their families.

ATTORNEYS RECEIVE MMTC PRO BONO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

In March 2019, the Multi-Cultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC) held its 10th annual broadband and social justice summit, “Connectivity, Capital, Community,” where they convened hundreds of media and telecom industry expert innovators and thought leaders, to discuss bridging the digital divide and creating opportunities for underserved communities. At the event, Washington, DC partners Russell Prisby and Dennis Lane were awarded MMTC’s Distinguished Pro Bono Achievement Award for their appellate advocacy on behalf of the group to advance its goal of increasing the number of diverse owners of media companies (radio, television, newspaper, etc.).

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Our 2019 Pro Bono Partners

**NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**
- The Advocates for Human Rights
- American Bar Association Survivor Reentry Project
- American Civil Liberties Union (national and local chapters)
- HIAS
- Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- National Law School Veterans Clinic Consortium
- Southern Poverty Law Center

**DALLAS**
- Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, Inc.
- Legal Hospice of Texas
- Mazie's Mission
- Texas Civil Rights Project

**DENVER**
- Colorado Attorneys For The Arts
- Colorado Lawyers' Committee
- Colorado Poverty Law Project
- District of Colorado Civil Pro Bono Panel
- Mile High United Way United Business Advisory Program

**MINNESOTA**
- Children's Law Center of Minnesota
- Community-University Health Care Center
- Federal Bar Association's Pro Se Project
- Gender Justice
- Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
- LegalCORPS
- Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid
- Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
- Minnesota Lawyers for the Arts
- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
- Upper Midwest Healthcare Legal Partnership
- Learning Collaborative
- Upper Midwest Pension Rights Project
- Volunteer Lawyers Network

**MISSOURI**
- Innovation Law Lab/Deportation Defense Legal Network
- Kansas Appleseed
- Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association Military Matters
- KU School of Law Medical-Legal Partnership
- Legal Aid of Western Missouri
- Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
- Midwest Innocence Project
- The Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project
- Missouri Appleseed
- Missouri Coalition for the Right to Counsel
- MU Veterans Clinic
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's Patent Pro Bono Program
- Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts

**OMAHA**
- Nebraska Appleseed
- Strands from the Heart

**PHOENIX**
- Arizona South Asians for Safe Families
- Community Legal Services, Inc.
- Federal Court Self Service Clinic

**WASHINGTON, DC**
- DC Bar Advocacy and Justice Center
- Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington, DC
- Tahirih Justice Center
- Tevoke

**WICHITA**
- The Arc of Sedgwick County
- Kansas Legal Services
- Passageways, Ltd.
- Saint Francis Community Services

To learn more about Stinson’s pro bono program, please contact:
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- Katie Cronin, Pro Bono Manager | 816.691.3272 | katie.cronin@stinson.com

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- Jamie Boyer
- Katie Cronin
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