

Alumni@Dentons

Grow | Protect | Operate | Finance

Spring-Summer 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

02

Editor's Note

03

Highlights

05

New Laterals

10

Alumni Spotlight

11

Client Successes

13

Pro Bono

17

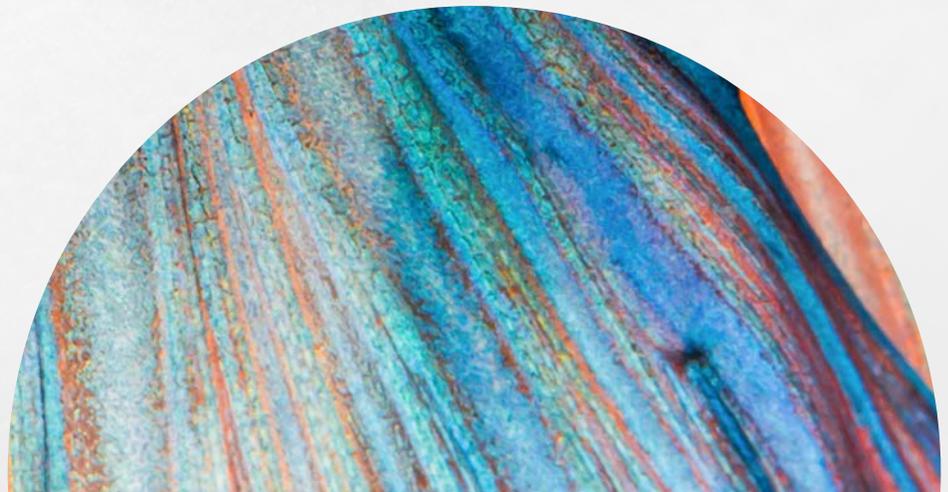
Kudos

19

In Memoriam

We are pleased to share this issue of Alumni@Dentons with our extended Dentons family in the US Region.

Drop us a line at alumni@dentons.com and let us know what you liked about this edition and what you would like to see in the future. Also, keep us posted on what you have been up to and we will be happy to share it in our next issue.



Editor's Note

We hope you have been enjoying your summer so far! Summer is always an exciting time at Dentons as we welcomed our summer associates in offices across our US Region. Check out this issue's Highlights for a brief recap of how our 2023 summer associates connected with their colleagues and communities during their eight-week program.

We are also proud to announce the continued expansion of the Firm's global footprint through a combination with leading Philippine law firm PJS Law; the completion of our previously announced combination with Indian law firm Link Legal; the arrival of new laterals in a variety of areas; and prestigious accolades on both the practice and individual levels.

Also included in this issue are recaps of recent successes, conversations with Dentons colleagues about the value of pro bono service, a spotlight on colleagues who have recently returned to Dentons and more.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Please share your comments or suggestions with us at alumni@dentons.com.



Highlights

Dentons US welcomes 2023 summer associates



This year, 25 talented summer associates joined Dentons US for our eight-week Summer Associates Program, including five returning from last year. The annual program encompasses training, mentoring, client work, pro bono projects, social events and volunteer opportunities.

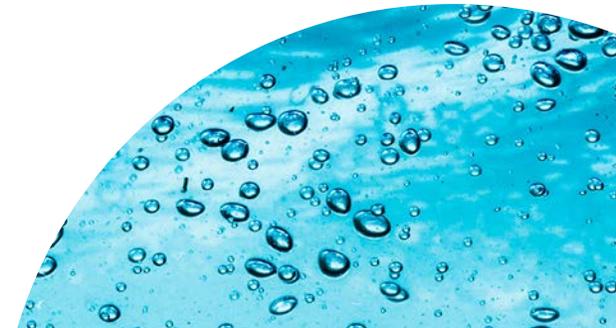


Summer associates across DUS enjoyed a variety of outings together between June and August, including escape rooms in Atlanta and Washington, DC—which both teams solved—axe-throwing in Denver, a visit to the Broad Museum in Los Angeles, a reception in the Meatpacking, NY, office, a Broadway show in Midtown New York and a Padres game in San Diego.



In addition, our Legal Recruitment team organized local service events for our summer associates around the US to celebrate Juneteenth:

- Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York and Washington, DC, colleagues assembled therapeutic activity kits for children in hospitals through Project Sunshine.
- Chicago colleagues raised more than \$1,000 and collected school supplies for Legacy Charter School.
- Denver colleagues volunteered with HomeAid Colorado's "Builders for Babies" diapers and wipes drive.
- San Diego colleagues packed and sorted food at Feeding San Diego.
- St. Louis colleagues visited Food Outreach, where they sorted and packed food for the local families affected by HIV and cancer.





Dentons joins forces with leading firms in the Philippines and India

We are pleased to announce that Dentons has combined with PJS Law in the Philippines and Link Legal in India, both leading firms in their respective nations that share Dentons' values of inclusion, diversity and commitment to excellence.

PJS Law has an outstanding reputation as a leading service provider in the Philippines. It is led by a strong team of 19 partners, 57 percent of whom are women. PJS Law offers a comprehensive range of legal services in both established and emergent fields of practice, as well as in-depth knowledge and extensive transactional experience in specialized fields such as energy, infrastructure and dispute resolution. The combination allows Dentons to connect clients to talent in six of the largest Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economies, adding offices in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam. Increasingly, having a significant presence across the ASEAN region is a commercial imperative for meeting our clients' needs.

Link Legal represents many of the large, fast-growing Indian companies that are globalizing, as India becomes the most populous nation in the world in 2023. The combination offers Dentons an established, physical presence in five of India's six largest cities: Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad. Dentons Link Legal's client base consists of India's leading business groups, public sector organizations, public and private sector banks, and international companies operating in India. Its top clients by revenue focus on aviation and aerospace, automotive, energy, infrastructure, life sciences and health care, luxury, fashion and beauty, manufacturing, professional services, real estate and technology.

We look forward to working with our new colleagues in the Philippines and India and to better serving our clients' needs in Asia and around the world.

New Laterals

Dentons welcomed laterals from a variety of areas, ranging from in-house and government positions to private law firms.



Stephanie Abrutyn

Litigation counsel, New York/Washington, DC

Stephanie has more than 25 years of experience in-house at leading media companies, handling sensitive claims, complex litigation and regulatory and compliance issues in a wide range of matters.



Christina Austria

Venture Technology and Emerging Growth Companies counsel, Washington, DC

Christina routinely serves as outside general counsel to clients, with significant experience in structuring, negotiating and advising clients on a wide variety of venture financing and M&A transactions.



Bill Averett

Landlords' Rights of counsel, Birmingham

Bill's extensive trial experience includes representing national banks and lenders in all matters of creditor rights and collection, including appellate and bankruptcy proceedings.



Anne Baggott

Employment and Labor counsel, Kansas City

Anne strategically guides businesses through the complex web of workplace laws; defends employers before administrative agencies and courts; and negotiates and advises clients on executive agreements, employment agreements, restrictive covenants and separation packages.



Ned H. Bassen

Employment and Labor counsel, New York

Ned has been practicing for 50 years, counseling and litigating on behalf of defense contractors, financial institutions, universities, nonprofits and individuals.



Juan Bendeck

Trusts, Estates and Wealth Preservation shareholder, Naples, FL

With more than 20 years of experience, Juan counsels personal representatives and trustees in administering estates and trusts, as well as guiding fiduciaries through all aspects of the administration process.



Timothy Bickham

Intellectual Property and Technology partner, Washington, DC

The head of Dentons US' China IP litigation group, Tim focuses on patent and trade secret litigation, advises clients on their patent portfolios and litigates cases in district courts through the US, with particular experience in Delaware and Texas.



Lauren Campbell,

Real Estate/Tax-Advantaged Investing counsel, Chicago

A former general counsel for Merchants Capital, Lauren represents investment fund sponsors in the formation and management of multi-investor and proprietary funds used to syndicate low-income housing tax credits and other federal and state tax incentives.

**Brian Cheney**

Real Estate shareholder, Salt Lake City

Brian has more than 20 years of experience advising clients in connection with complex real estate transactions and business transactions related to various types of real estate projects.

**Anthony Cieri**

Corporate partner, Lexington

Anthony has 10 years' experience in private practice and 10 years of in-house experience as assistant general counsel and chief mergers and acquisitions counsel for Valvoline.

**Jeff Denham**

Public Policy senior policy director, Washington, DC

A former four-term US congressman, Jeff was previously a member of the California State Senate and a staff sergeant in the US Air Force, serving in Operation Desert Storm, for which he was awarded various medals for combat duty.

**Adam Docks**

Hotels and Leisure partner, Chicago.

Adam has experience working with many prominent hotel brands and third-party operators, covering the full spectrum of hotel asset classes, both domestically and internationally.

**Michael Franzinger**

Intellectual Property and Technology partner, Washington, DC

Michael focuses on Section 337 investigations before the International Trade Commission, intellectual property litigation in federal courts and petitions for inter partes and post-grant review before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board.

**Melissa Gomez Nelson**

Commercial Litigation partner, Washington, DC

A seasoned corporate litigator and investigations lawyer with in-house experience, Melissa advises domestic and global clients across a variety of market sectors.

**Joseph Harrison**

Public Policy and Regulation partner, Evansville, IN

Joe has nearly 40 years of experience helping clients in southwestern Indiana, including counseling government agencies on economic development projects, contracts, litigation, employment matters, operations and more.

**Richard Hayes**

Venture Technology and Emerging Growth Companies partner, Meatpacking, NY

Richard represents global investment banks, commercial banks, debt funds and other lenders, as well as venture capital and private equity firms and corporations, with a focus on cross-border acquisitions, fund financings, asset-based lending and general corporate finance.

**Theodore Hunt**

Federal Regulatory and Compliance partner, Washington, DC

Ted has 13 years of experience in the General Counsel's Office of the Surface Transportation Board, and focuses on regulatory work and litigation for companies in the transportation industry as well as other regulated industries.



Lindsay Jewell

Hotels and Leisure partner, Phoenix

Lindsay has significant experience representing hospitality clients in acquisitions, dispositions, ground leasing, hotel and construction finance, real estate investment trust structuring, joint ventures, development and asset management.



Audrey Kwak

Commercial Litigation shareholder, Pittsburgh

Audrey brings more than 15 years of significant commercial litigation experience, including complex business, intellectual property and construction disputes.



Thomas Labuda

Restructuring, Insolvency and Bankruptcy partner, Chicago

Thomas represents clients in cross-border bankruptcies and out-of-court restructurings, and has extensive experience providing tactical advice, innovative solutions and courtroom representation to debtors, lenders, creditors' and equity committees, insurers and distressed-asset purchasers across a broad range of industries.



Megan Lantz

Immigration shareholder, Des Moines

A bilingual immigration lawyer, Megan helps individuals and families navigate the complex US immigration system and advocates for immigrants through the family-based visa process and in immigration court.



Ryan Mann

Economic Development of counsel, Indianapolis

With more than 15 years of experience in federal, state and local government, Ryan helps clients throughout the full arc of a project, from its inception to its implementation and completion.



Jordan McCarthy

Hotels and Leisure partner, Chicago

Jordan handles transactions involving hotels, concert and other event venues, multi-use developments and golf course developments, also bringing a background in bankruptcy and creditors' rights to advise clients on structuring and evaluating transactions.



Sulema Medrano

Commercial Litigation partner, Chicago

A former Illinois state prosecutor, Sulema defends clients in complex insurance and commercial litigation and disputes related to breach of contract, regulatory compliance, business torts and professional liability.



Will Messer

Commercial Litigation of counsel, Lexington

Will represents businesses and organizations in complex litigation in areas including corporate law, construction law, employment law, creditors' rights and appeals, as well as handling workers' compensation matters, including federal black lung litigation.



Gary Meyerhoff

Commercial Litigation partner, New York

Gary handles complex and high-stakes matters, including insurance coverage disputes, bankruptcy cases, defamation and discrimination cases, employment disputes, reseller/franchise matters, and disputes concerning corporate and limited liability company governance, on behalf of businesses in a variety of industries.



Anthony Moscato

Commercial Litigation counsel,
Short Hills, NJ

A former assistant US attorney, Judge Advocate General lawyer and in-house counsel for a Fortune 500 company, Anthony has more than 25 years of trial counsel experience, including conducting internal investigations to determine whether laws, regulations or internal policies were violated.



Chad E. Oswald

Commercial Litigation of
counsel, Indianapolis

Chad represents personal representatives, trustees, attorneys-in-fact and other fiduciaries in fiduciary, commercial and real estate disputes and represents small businesses, shareholders, closely held business members and large corporations in complex commercial litigation.



Rebecca Hughes Parker

Commercial Litigation counsel, New York

Rebecca handles all aspects of discovery and trial in federal and state courts, including arbitration and mediation, and she advises clients on privacy and media law matters as a Certified Information Privacy Professional.



Sarah Myers Raben

Tax of counsel, Huntsville

As a former trial attorney for the IRS Office of Chief Counsel, Sarah handles a broad range of legal matters for individuals, partnerships and corporations, including those pertaining to federal and state tax controversy issues.



Jon Salomon

Litigation partner, Louisville

Jon represents clients across a wide variety of industries in complex litigation and has more than 20 years of experience providing counsel on corporate and government law matters.



Daniel Schnapp

Intellectual Property and Technology
partner, New York

A trial lawyer with more than 20 years' experience, Dan has he amassed significant experience representing clients in the entertainment, music, media, art, fashion, technology and financial services sectors.



Amianna Stovall

Commercial Litigation partner, New York

Amianna's practice focuses on the prosecution, defense and management of complex commercial disputes in federal and state courts, before federal regulatory bodies and in numerous arbitration forums.





Christopher Tillson

Venture Technology and Emerging Growth Companies partner, Miami

Christopher specializes in complex commercial transactions, corporate finance transactions, M&A and corporate governance.



Steven Welk

Commercial Litigation counsel, Orange County

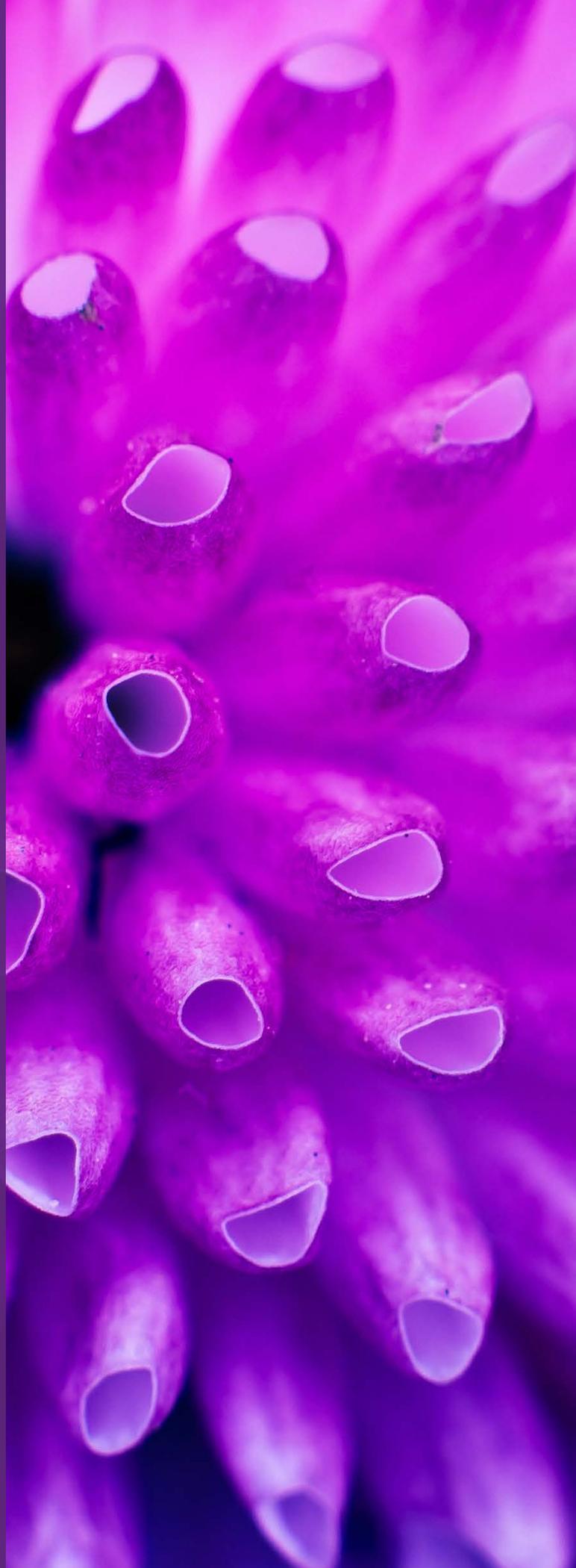
A former assistant US attorney, Steve focuses on commercial litigation and defending individuals and corporations in white-collar criminal defense matters, with an emphasis on cases involving alleged financial crimes, large-scale fraud, RICO violations and more.



Stephen Yang

Intellectual Property and Technology partner, New York

Fluent in Mandarin and possessing vast knowledge of the international market and compliance issues, Stephen has extensive experience helping Asian companies to enter and expand in the US market, navigate US laws, and coordinate litigation and IP strategies across Asia, Europe and the US.



Alumni Spotlight

Returning colleagues on why they rejoined Dentons

The first six months of 2023 saw four lawyers rejoining Dentons: Litigation partner Melissa Gomez Nelson, Litigation counsel Rebecca Hughes Parker, Restructuring, Insolvency and Bankruptcy partner Thomas Labuda and Litigation partner Gary Meyerhoff. Though representing different sorts of clients in different legal climates, the reasons for their return shares some common threads. Most notably, they cite the strong support Dentons provides all its colleagues in every role, at every level.

“I knew that at Dentons there were skilled and compassionate lawyers, and expertise in the most dynamic areas of the law right now.”

— Rebecca Hughes Parker

“I knew that at Dentons there were skilled and compassionate lawyers, and expertise in the most dynamic areas of the law right now,” said Rebecca Hughes Parker, a counsel in the Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice, based in the New York office, as well as a Certified Information Privacy Professional. “I also knew that Dentons values diversity and appreciates a range of talents. I had twins my first year at Dentons, and the Firm provided me, as a young parent, with flexibility years ago, before anyone was Zooming. I appreciated that. I worked on fascinating cases at Dentons and appreciated the opportunities I had to play significant roles in those cases early in my career.”

The scope Dentons offers—which has vastly expanded in the last several years both within the US Region and around the world—is another draw.

“Dentons offered me a platform to continue building my practice that I wouldn’t have gotten at another firm.”

— Gary Meyerhoff

“Dentons offered me a platform to continue building my practice that I wouldn’t have gotten at another firm,” said Gary Meyerhoff, a partner in the Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice, based in New York. “That’s in part because of the way the Firm is set up, and in part because of the relationships and goodwill I’ve built over a long career here.”

Rebecca also notes Dentons’ recent rapid growth, from opening new offices around the US to joining forces with leading regional firms. “The Firm is a lot bigger than when I was here last and there is a lot more infrastructure, which is great,” she said. “There are more opportunities for public engagement. Plus, Dentons’ global presence also opened more doors. I love that there are so many people to meet and so many training opportunities.”

One thing that has not changed is Dentons’ fundamental commitment to client service. Gary observes, “The lawyering seems to be very similar to what it was when I left, which is one of the reasons I returned. I like the way we lawyer cases.”

Along with the Firm itself, the number of returning colleagues also grew. Now they are bringing additional skills and experience to bear for their clients at Dentons. Gary, who served as general counsel of the New York State Liquor Authority between October 2019 and August 2022, is putting that background to good use. “Doing something else, whatever it is, is going to add to your perspective on the way the legal world works,” he said. “Understanding how the government works, and who’s making the decisions, and what they care about—that is enlightening to somebody who’s going to help clients deal with state government or federal government.”

Rebecca voiced the same sentiment. “I certainly took so much that I learned from my first stint at Dentons with me to the next phase of my career,” she said, “and I am taking a lot with me back to Dentons that I learned after I left.” Before rejoining Dentons, Rebecca spent more than a decade as an editor, journalist and in-house counsel, during which time she built two legal publications from the ground up. “I learned that some of our most popular articles were about communication.” And as a former in-house counsel, she adds, “I learned about the pressures in-house counsel face from the business and from management, and how to earn the trust of your colleagues ... so that you can work together towards solutions that mitigate risk but do not stifle innovation or unduly impede the business.”

With lawyers and professionals bringing such depth of skills, experience and lessons from their time both within and away from Dentons, our Firm continues to expand our capacity to serve clients where, when and how they require, and to help them achieve their core objectives to Grow, Protect, Operate and Finance their organizations.

Client Successes

Class action defense

Dentons has acquired an international reputation as the law firm of choice for enterprises facing high stakes class actions, with thousands of potential plaintiffs, government/regulatory scrutiny and huge corporate implications. We defend all types of cases, but are particularly well known for our defense of insurance, securities, privacy and consumer class actions. We have a particularly strong track record in finding early “wins” through targeted motion practice and case sequencing, with a focus on practical and tactical strategies developed early in the case. We also have an excellent record defeating class certification. The past year has seen one success after another. Following are summaries of some of the most significant wins.

Shutting down suit over life insurance policies

Dentons partnered with our client to defeat certification of a class, and then secure complete dismissal of a high-stakes class action against Metropolitan Tower Life Insurance Company, a MetLife subsidiary, in the Southern District of California. Litigation partners Sandy Hauser (New York), Jeff Zachman (Atlanta) and Spencer Hamilton (Dallas), and Washington, DC, senior managing associate Cassandra Beckman Widay, led the matter with help from New York senior paralegal Karen Ogle. The plaintiff asserted breach of contract, bad faith and other claims on behalf of herself and a putative class, alleging that Met Tower terminated life insurance policies in violation of California lapse statutes. The court denied the plaintiff’s class motion finding lack of typicality and predominance then later granted our summary judgment, finding the plaintiff had no claim because the statutes at issue did not apply to her policy. The case has been closely watched throughout the life insurance industry, since more than two dozen similar lawsuits are pending against other insurers, with significant potential exposure. The court’s opinion addressed significant statutory interpretation questions that have been intensely litigated in this and similar cases. That critical guidance will benefit other insurers, including several Dentons clients.

Defeating a securities suit stemming from an IPO

Dentons defeated a securities class action against longtime client electroCore, Inc., a bioelectronic medicine and wellness company, arising out of its 2018 initial public offering (IPO). The appellate court upheld the trial court’s dismissal, based on a forum selection clause in the electroCore’s certificate of incorporation that provides for exclusive federal court jurisdiction for the resolution of claims under the Securities Act of 1933. The team included Washington, DC, Litigation partners Ken Pfaehler and Drew Marrocco, New Jersey Litigation partner Jon Jemison and New Jersey Litigation counsel Jonathan Henry, along with New Jersey Venture Technology partners John Cleary and Ira Kotel, both longtime advisors to electroCore, who handled its IPO.

A dismissal of a consumer class complaint

A Phoenix Litigation team won an appeal following a full dismissal of a consumer class action complaint against Precision Air & Plumbing for alleged violations of the Arizona Consumer Fraud Act. The team originally secured a victory at the trial court, which agreed with our team’s statutory interpretation arguments, finding that the plaintiffs failed to state a claim. The court further agreed that, even if the plaintiffs stated a claim under the statute, the case could not be litigated as a class action. On appeal, the Arizona Court of Appeals affirmed in full. Counsel Doug Janicik handled the oral argument on appeal. The team also included partners Karl Tilleman and Erin Bass, paralegal Beth Conner and legal secretaries Beth Hardin and Lisa Podsiadlik.

Resolving a complex class action settlement

A Litigation team quickly and successfully resolved the sole appeal of a complex, long-term care insurance class action settlement for longstanding client Genworth Life Insurance Company. The team’s creative motion strategy resulted in the appellant voluntarily withdrawing the appeal, paving the way for swift implementation of the settlement that is projected to be beneficial to the company and will provide class members with policy options not otherwise available outside the settlement. The team included partners

Reid Ashinoff (New York), Michael Duvall (Los Angeles), Drew Marrocco (Washington, DC) and Grant Ankrom (St. Louis); senior managing associates Catharine Luo (Washington) and Michael Harriss (St. Louis); managing associates Haley Grissom (Dallas), Samantha Fahr (Los Angeles) and Rachel Ross (San Diego); and associates Alyssa Landow (New York) and Pooja Shah (Los Angeles). The client lauded the team's "great work" that delivered an "excellent result" to the company.

Obtaining dismissal of consumer fraud case against insurer

Dentons won dismissal of a putative class action against Farmers Insurance Group. Filed in Kane County, IL, the complaint alleged breach of contract and violation of the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act. Immediately after oral argument on our motion to dismiss, the judge dismissed the complaint in its entirety and with prejudice. Chicago Litigation partner Mark Hanover led the team, which included senior managing associate Kristine Schanbacher and associate Emily Eggmann.

Winning dismissal of cyber-bullying suit against messaging app

Dentons obtained full dismissal with prejudice of a lawsuit filed against YOLO/Popshow in California federal court. The client, which formerly operated in the ephemeral messaging platform space, was sued along with other platforms and apps (including Snapchat) in a class action alleging they were to blame for bullying that occurred via user messages. Led by partners Nick Pujji (Employment and Labor, Los Angeles) and Jacqueline Whipple (White Collar and Government Investigations, Kansas City), and supported by Employment and Labor managing associate Carol Yur and associate Emma Moralyan (both Los Angeles), our team successfully raised a Communications Decency Act defense on a motion to dismiss.

Plaintiff drops \$100B suit over crypto losses after motion to dismiss

A Litigation team defeated a putative class action against Terraform Labs Ltd., Do Kwon, Luna Foundation Guard and other defendants, seeking potentially more than \$100 billion in damages. The team moved to dismiss the complaint on multiple grounds, including that the plaintiff lacked standing because he made

nearly 100 percent profit on his purchases of the tokens at issue, and thus suffered no injury, prompting plaintiff's counsel to voluntarily drop the suit. New York partner Doug Henkin and Chicago partner Stephen Senderowitz led the team, which included Washington, DC, partner Mark Califano and senior managing associate Nick Petts, and St. Louis managing associate Ashley Jaros.

Winning denial of class certification in rail easement dispute

An Atlanta Litigation team secured an important win for the City of Atlanta in a class action involving the very popular Atlanta BeltLine, a former railroad corridor that has been converted into a multi-use public trail. The putative class members claimed ownership of the former railroad property now underlying the BeltLine and sought tens of millions of dollars in damages for alleged inverse condemnation and trespass on the property, an amount that could have significantly impacted the trail's ongoing development. Our team first defeated class certification in trial court, which was upheld at the Georgia Court of Appeals, then obtained summary judgment on the merits in our client's favor. Partner Nathan Garroway led the team, which included partner Jeff Zachman and senior managing associate Sarah Hannah Phillips.

Defeating high-frequency trading suit

In the largest securities class action ever filed, Dentons won summary judgment in favor of the New York Stock Exchange, NYSE Arca and NYSE Chicago. The plaintiffs alleged that our clients and four other exchanges provided high-frequency trading firms with enhanced data feeds and faster order processing, and let them locate their servers near the exchanges' own servers so trading signals would be sent faster. They asserted sample damages exceeding \$5 billion and were expected to seek 20 times that amount once the class was certified. Instead, the court found that after almost eight years of litigation, the plaintiffs could not demonstrate that they had suffered an injury, let alone one potentially traceable to the defendants. Our team was led by New York partner Doug Henkin, with assistance from Chicago partner Stephen Senderowitz, New York partner Justine Margolis and Washington, DC, senior managing associate Nicholas Petts.

Pro Bono

Pro bono service is more than a professional responsibility at Dentons. It is a calling and an opportunity to give back to those communities in which we live and work. Below, two Dentons colleagues share their thoughts on participating in pro bono activity.



Kristine Schanbacher
Partner, Chicago

What motivated your decision to participate in the pro bono program?

It was Ben Weinberg, actually. He's a couple doors down from me and has amazing stories so I definitely wanted to be part of a great program.

My main interest is in helping people in the Chicagoland area in a variety of cases, including claims related to food stamp benefits, immigration status or a criminal conviction. Unfortunately, the system is set up so that even if these clients have very meritorious claims, if they have to represent themselves, it may not go in their favor, even though based on the facts and law, it should.

Tell us about a recent asylum victory.

In 2022, we had two big wins in immigration courts in Chicago and Newark where I was the primary trial counsel. One was a traditional political asylum case in which an asylum-seeker from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was unfairly targeted by the Congolese government for helping women and children in a war-torn area, which then led to his unbelievably inhumane treatment. He was able to escape, but if he had to return, he would likely be put to death. We teamed up with AT&T in-house counsel and, two days before his hearing, were finally able to connect with his mother in the DRC. We told her, "We believe your son; we've seen the scars all over his body but we have no proof that he was held and tortured. The judge has a terrible record of deporting people and the government is going to go hard, and we are very concerned he will be sent back."

His mother dug through her deceased husband's belongings and found a newspaper clip that came out after their son went missing in which one of the reporter's sources said they saw him taken by a militia force to a holding area where he was tortured. A priest helped him escape the country. The US government's position was that he came here fraudulently, and it tried to keep out this decade-old newspaper article unearthed two days before the hearing on grounds that it was untimely and material evidence. The judge did allow it in, and that was the game-changer. He said that without it, he wouldn't have granted asylum.

Would you say that was your most memorable pro bono experience?

No, that would be my first asylum case, in 2015. Another associate and I were representing a transgender woman from Mexico. It was a difficult case because she had come over the border so many times because she wanted to be able to live here and express herself freely. In Mexico she had been shot and it exploded one of her breast implants and caused permanent organ damage, resulting in a need for dialysis. She couldn't live her authentic self in Mexico and said she would take her own life before returning. Her case was not good factually or legally because of how many times she crossed the border illegally. Luckily we had a very fair judge. But we also wanted to prepare our client for a bad outcome. And because you usually get a ruling right from the bench in these cases, we said we would do everything we could, including filing an appeal, to delay her deportation. She told us that they would not take her alive—and meant every single word—and that weighed heavily on us. Throughout the hearing, the judge pointed out all the flaws in our case and how the case law could go the other way. We argued the judge should exercise his discretion, reminding him that our client had family in Chicago, was able to live freely here and had begun to make a life for herself.

Based on the judge's conduct and comments, we expected to lose at this hearing, and it came as a surprise when he decided to grant asylum. We had been speaking to our client through a translator, and the decision had not been translated yet so we were able to watch her hear the good news. Her reaction was a moment that will stay with me my entire career. And in rendering his ruling, the judge explained why, despite the issues he had pointed out earlier, the case warranted asylum, resulting in the government waiving its right to appeal.

Can you talk about any meaningful connections that have resulted from your pro bono work.

We did a clemency partner project with Allstate.

“It was awesome to be able to work with in-house counsel who I work with on civil litigation matters that are completely different from this.”

— Kristine Schanbacher

It was awesome to be able to work with in-house counsel who I work with on civil litigation matters that are completely different from this. It was a years-long process but was successful. We were able to take the weight off of someone's back, and that was extremely rewarding.

How would you describe the support you have received from Dentons?

It's been great. For one of my asylum cases we needed a expert child psychologist, which was going to be expensive, but we explained that we would do no less for the asylum-seeker than we would a paying client and were approved to retain the expert. We also deployed multiple associates, a partner and a translator, and prepared for that case like we would for any of our paying clients.

Have you learned anything through pro bono that has been transferable to your paying practice?

I got to do a sentencing hearing for a juvenile who was convicted to life in prison without the possibility of parole. After the US Supreme Court found juvenile life sentences unconstitutional, all those cases had to be resentenced. This one was assigned to a veteran prosecutor and was particularly challenging because not only was my client's crime really heinous, but he had continued down a very violent path in his more than 20 years of incarceration. The prosecutor did not give me one inch. All my questions had to be formal and proper. The testimony had to be within the rules. I got no beneficial inferences. He really made me earn everything. From that I learned how to ask a question that can't get stricken because it is proper and the answer is within the bounds. I also learned that you have to know the material so well that when you inevitably get interrupted repeatedly by opposing counsel, it doesn't rattle you; you just keep going or adjust on a dime. That's a skill I am continually working on.

What was the outcome?

Our client wanted us to argue that he should be released from jail. We explained that, based on the facts and the law, this was not a credible position, and because we were before a notoriously "no BS judge," an incredible position could prompt him to side with the prosecution's recommendation. So, working with our client, we recommended 20 years. The prosecution went to 100 years. We argued that would be unconstitutional because he would die in prison. The judge ultimately went to 40 years, and with good time, our client could be out in 20 years. This was a fair and favorable result.

Any other pro bono work you're particularly proud of?

Leah Bruno and I wrote a brief on behalf of the American Medical Association opposing anti-choice legislation in Wisconsin. We succeeded at getting it stricken and that was a huge victory. But that was before the Supreme Court decision overruling *Roe v. Wade*.



Debodhonyaa Sengupta
Partner, Washington, DC

What motivated your decision to participate in the pro bono program?

I consider myself very fortunate. I came here from India when I was in my twenties to go to grad school, then I went to law school. Over the years, I have been able to build a fairly successful career in this profession, so I've always wanted to give back. I'm involved in nonprofits in my community and I thought the best way to give back at work was to do pro bono. As an associate it was great that a certain number of pro bono hours were automatically counted as billable and I could request billable credit for more pro bono hours depending on which projects I was on. That encouraged me to get involved in pro bono when the opportunity presented itself.

What type of projects have you been involved in over the years?

The biggest one that I've been involved in is a family law litigation involving child custody and support. We started working on it in 2019 and it's still pending. A Litigation partner in Washington, Alanna Clair, sent out an email requesting assistance and I put my hand up. I'm not a litigator—I prepare and prosecute domestic and international patent applications—but I've always been interested in litigation, and I thought pro bono would be a great way to keep those skills alive. So, I volunteered, and it turned into two full-blown cases where I second-chaired the trials with Alanna as lead counsel. Other than that, I've worked on asylum cases and legislative research, and I've volunteered at intake legal clinics.

Do you have a most memorable pro bono experience?

It would be winning a custody trial in Howard County, MD, in our family law case. I have friends who do family law full time, and I don't know how they do it because there are a lot of motions—and emotions—involved, and it is very complicated when children are involved. It was a great feeling to win in court and get our client what she wanted.

How would you say that pro bono work has added to your professional skill set?

As a transactional lawyer, being able to go to court and write motions and briefs, depose witnesses and handle the day-to-day logistics of a case keeps some of those skill sets fresh. Alanna's a great mentor when it comes to pro bono. She gave me an opportunity to take the lead on various matters, and also gave me an opportunity to stand up in court and speak. Overall, it just makes me a more well-rounded lawyer. And it also lets me dabble in things that I'm interested in. For example, I have an interest in animal law—when I retire, it's probably going to be something I do full time—and I was able to help a local nonprofit that works with animals on a summer project. It also gave me an opportunity to involve some of our summer associates, and they got an opportunity to present to the client at their monthly meeting. That hands-on experience so early in their careers is priceless and I hope the associates benefitted from it.

Have you made any meaningful connections, inside or outside the Firm, through your pro bono work?

Yes, I've worked with so many colleagues outside of my practice group through my pro bono work. We get so focused on what we do and the people we work with every day that we don't really get to interact with others outside of our practice groups. Through my pro bono work, I've had the opportunity to work with and get to know colleagues in other practice groups.





How would you describe the support you receive from the Firm?

It's great. Ben [Weinberg] is awesome. For the family law litigation that I'm working on, each year I exceeded my creditable hours as an associate, and he never denied me credit for the additional hours that I worked on the case. As soon as I asked Ben about representing the animal law-related client pro bono (the matter involved a review of various state regulations because the client was trying to convince lawmakers to draft some legislation specific to DC) he said, "Not a problem." I had another pro bono client needing a review of their contracts and non-disclosure agreements and got no pushback from Ben on any of these matters. Based on my experience, I believe the Firm recognizes the importance of making a difference in the community at large through our pro bono work while also honing our own skill sets and building relationships with our colleagues.

"The Firm recognizes the importance of making a difference in the community at large through our pro bono work while also honing our own skill sets and building relationships with our colleagues."

— Debodhonyaa Sengupta

Is there something you learned through pro bono that has been transferable to your practice?

Dealing with clients. As an associate, and especially as a junior associate, oftentimes you don't get any face time with clients. But between the limited team size

and the nature of pro bono practice, it is easier to get more one-on-one time with the client as an associate. Those skills are invaluable, and absolutely transferable, to a billable practice.

Why do you think pro bono is important for a young lawyer?

It's the best way to develop skill sets. There are more opportunities to be in court, or to write a brief, or to interact with a client, than you would otherwise get as a junior associate. Those things usually don't come until you're a more senior associate, or even counsel—especially standing up in court and speaking—and they can be invaluable to your long-term success as a lawyer.

Do you think your pro bono work contributed to your being made partner?

I think so. This goes back to what I said about pro bono being a way to get to know people outside of your practice group. I think it did help my elevation to partnership because more people knew about me and what I have done for the Firm over the years. As a result, when my candidacy came up, more colleagues knew about me as a person as opposed to just "Oh, she does patents." I certainly don't think it hindered. I, personally, don't see any negative aspect to building a pro bono practice alongside a billable practice, as long as we maintain a proper balance between the two.

Are you going to continue to do pro bono as a partner?

I'm trying to delegate more to associates to give them an opportunity to sharpen their skills and benefit from pro bono practice as I have over the years, and I will continue to do at least some cases pro bono every year.

Kudos

Two Honors at the Euromoney Women in Business Law Americas Awards

Dentons won twice at the 2023 Euromoney Women in Business Law Americas Awards, which celebrate the outstanding work of women lawyers across the US, Canada and Latin America. We were named US Midwest Firm of the Year and also named Best Pro Bono Work International Firm for the second year in a row. Here are some of our many recent successes that earned us these prestigious international accolades:

- Dentons and Legal Aid Chicago achieved one of our most important victories through our Domestic Violence Appeals Project. The First District Appellate Court granted our client's petition for an order of protection, overturning the trial court. The appellate court found that the trial court had discounted evidence of serious abuse and, in effect, ruled that the survivor's actions invited and excused the abuse. In reversing that decision, the appellate court vindicated survivors across the state who have been blamed for their own abuse and provided clear guidance to courts hearing orders of protection. Created in 2014 by Dentons, Legal Aid Chicago and Ascend Justice, our Domestic Violence Appeals Project has won 15 of 17 appeals, with three published opinions, and has greatly improved access to justice in domestic violence courtrooms throughout Illinois. We are steadily expanding this work to other cities throughout the US.
- Dentons filed an amicus brief on behalf of social science experts in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, presenting decades of evidence about the social, psychological and health impacts of unintended pregnancy and abortion, as well as the long-term harm of restricting abortion access. In the wake of the recent Supreme Court's decision, Dentons lawyers and professionals have been working with providers and advocacy groups to analyze new state restrictions on reproductive rights so that people who can become pregnant may be fully informed of their rights and risks. We have also been filing amicus briefs in state supreme courts that are adjudicating whether their state constitutions protect the right to choose. This work is part of Dentons' more than 50-year track record of advancing and defending reproductive rights at all levels, frequently in conjunction with Planned Parenthood, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Reproductive Rights.
- Dentons worked pro bono alongside the National Center for Law and Economic Justice to obtain class certification of an injunctive relief class and a settlement agreement in a disability rights lawsuit against the Suffolk County, MO, Department of Social Services. Our clients, and similarly situated members of the plaintiff class, could not apply for or maintain vital public benefits because the department failed to provide reasonable accommodations, as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act. This case was of particular interest to women because disability rates are higher for women. The groundbreaking settlement will transform every aspect of the county's provision of public benefits, including Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and emergency shelter, in order to redress such barriers to justice.
- A large team of lawyers from six Dentons offices in Canada worked with local students and the 30 Birds Foundation on the refugee applications for young female Afghan Hazara scholars. Our team supported 30 Birds in helping more than 450 scholars and affiliated community members resettle in Saskatchewan.
- Dentons provides pro bono services to a wide range of nonprofits in Uruguay, including Ronald McDonald House Charities of Uruguay; the Uruguayan Presidency Program for Entrepreneurs; and the University of Montevideo's center of leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation. In addition, the Firm is a founding member of Fundación Pro Bono Uruguay, which provides pro bono legal assistance to nonprofits. Among the work carried out this year, we help international organizations in judicial investigations related to regulations on press freedom and the functioning of justice in the country and the region.

- Dentons participated in a multinational research project on violence and harassment in the workplace to support an initiative by the NGO Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género. The project involved work in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

Leah Bruno named to *Crain's Chicago Business*' notable litigators list



Crain's Chicago Business named partner Leah Bruno, managing partner of Dentons' Chicago office and a member of the Firm's Litigation and Disputes practice group, to its 2023 "Notable Litigators and Trial Attorneys"

list. Leah, who has 23 years of civil litigation experience both in and out of the courtroom, exemplifies the culture of excellence and diversity at Dentons.

A partner in the Litigation group since 2006, Leah won over the judges with a string of successes in a diverse range of cases in 2022, including obtaining a complete trial victory for plaintiff Metro Storage International LLC in the Delaware Court of Chancery; securing dismissal of a nationwide putative class action against Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. in Cook County, IL; and notching an appellate win for defendant-appellee CarData Consultants Inc. in the First Circuit Court of Appeals.

"Leah's diverse practice is a result of decades of commitment to her clients and the causes she is passionate about," said colleague Keith Moskowitz, co-leader of the global Insurance sector and the US Insurance Litigation and Arbitration sector. "She brings her intellectual creativity to all her clients' issues—whether pro bono or paying—and achieves outstanding results."

Natalie Spears, a fellow trial lawyer and partner in the Litigation practice in Chicago, said Leah is a "compelling leader and litigator because she focuses on what matters most—people. She wins cases and minds alike with her trademark combination of intellect, empathy and sarcastic wit."

"Leah has a way of putting clients at ease quickly," said Corporate partner Steve Rist. "She gives clients a sense that she has taken ownership of the problem and treats

it as if it were her own personal problem. This defuses some of the emotion in the process and allows clients to quickly make smart and logical decisions. She's also tactically great and has a wonderful bedside manner with clients in difficult, and often regrettable, situations."

A significant factor in Leah's selection was the effectiveness of her pro bono work. An ACLU cooperating counsel for more than 20 years, Leah has been active in the area of reproductive rights, leading national matters on behalf of the Center for Reproductive Rights and other national women's organizations. She has filed multiple Supreme Court amicus briefs arguing that providing meaningful access to sexual and reproductive health care is essential to ensuring women's reproductive autonomy. From 2016 through 2021, Leah led efforts on four such SCOTUS submissions on behalf of the US Women's Chamber of Commerce and the National Women's Law Center, among other women's organizations. In 2022, she worked on behalf of the women of Illinois through the ACLU's Reproductive Rights Project. She is currently leading several projects in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

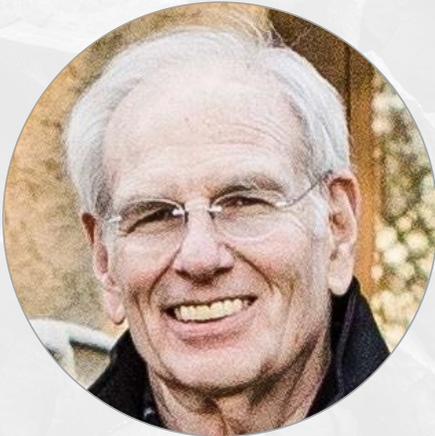
"Leah is a major pro bono leader within Dentons' Chicago office and nationwide," said Pro Bono partner Ben Weinberg. "Time after time, she has taken on important matters, often with very short lead times. As the kind of lawyer who makes meaningful pro bono a continuing part of her practice, Leah is an outstanding role model for associates and partners alike."

Crain's also considered Leah's civic engagement, board memberships and positions in professional organizations, which include membership, since 2015, on the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union, Illinois Chapter; membership on the legal advisory board of World Business Chicago; and membership in the Chicago Bar Association.

Within Dentons, Leah serves on the Associate Development Committee and as a leader of Dentons' WomenLEAD initiative, which develops and inspires women leaders in the Firm. She is also a leader in the Firm's Emerge Sponsorship Program, an 18-month program that pairs senior lawyers with protégés from across the US Region to work together to pursue opportunities for business development and for personal and professional growth.

In Memoriam

Roger Brice



It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of our colleague and friend, Roger Brice, a former partner in our Chicago office. Roger joined the Firm in 1988 and retired in early 2014. As many in Chicago fondly remember, he was a genuinely wonderful colleague who built relationships with so many and remained in contact as a friend and counselor after his retirement.

Roger practiced in the area of labor and employment. He counseled and handled litigation for unionized and non-unionized employers in all major substantive labor and employment law areas, including employment discrimination and wrongful termination matters, occupational safety and health, organizing campaigns and other representation matters, collective bargaining and labor contract administration, wage and hour matters, and Indian Tribal employment matters.

Before entering private practice, Roger practiced as a litigation specialist in the Division of Enforcement Litigation, Office of the General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, DC, where he handled litigation before state and federal courts throughout the country, as well as the National Labor Relations Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Labor and a variety of state and local agencies.

Roger wrote and lectured extensively regarding labor and employment matters in programs or publications sponsored by, among others, the Practising Law Institute, the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, the American Bar Association, the American Management Association, I.I.C.L.E., Aspatore Books, the Institute for Applied Management Law and many other professional and trade organizations.





Bob Grant

It is with great sadness that we share news of the passing of our colleague and friend Robert Grant, a former senior counsel in our Chicago office. Bob will be deeply missed. Since his graduation from Harvard Law School and admission to the Illinois bar in 1956, he never practiced law anywhere other than at Dentons or legacy firm Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal, moving up the ranks from real estate associate to partner to senior partner.

Over the course of a career spanning more than 50 years, Bob concentrated on negotiating leases for luxury tenants in high-end shopping malls and urban neighborhoods, and representing commercial tenants in the negotiation of urban office leases. In addition, Bob provided estate planning advice to individuals who invested heavily in real estate, and represented investors in the purchase or sale (often on a tax-deferred basis) of significant *objets d'art*, and the negotiation of gifting arrangements with museums.

Bob cared deeply about his community, serving as chairman of the Legal Aid Society of Illinois, a member of the board of directors and executive committee of Metropolitan Family Services (formerly United Charities); a former president and a longtime member of the board of directors of the Scholarship and Guidance Association; and a member and president of the Winnetka (IL) School Board, the Winnetka Plan Commission and the Winnetka Village Caucus. He was the founder and a former chairman of both the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation and the New Trier Township High School Education Foundation, and a member of the finance committee of Lake Forest Place, a continuing care retirement community in Lake Forest, IL.

Bob was also a veteran who served in the US Air Force during the Korean War, as a second and then first lieutenant, being deployed to the Far East for the majority of his tour of service.