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New York Litigators Prevail in Long Battle for Guatemalan Teen Refugee

New York Litigation associates **Bonnie Lynn Chmil** and **Jovana Vujovic** successfully obtained asylum for a teenage Guatemalan girl who sought refuge in the United States after being abducted, detained against her will and raped near her school at age 15 by an acquaintance, a member of a local gang. The teenager, an unaccompanied minor, arrived in the United States in November 2009, was immediately detained upon crossing the border in Arizona in November 2009, and was in removal proceedings when Katten took the case. Ineligible for special immigrant juvenile status, refugee status was sought on the grounds that the girl suffered past persecution on account of her gender and youth, and on the grounds that she feared future persecution because of the endemic violence against women in Guatemala. Bonnie Lynn and Jovana spent several years preparing the extensive materials and briefs, including affidavits of a psychologist and country conditions expert, and other documentation of the pervasive violence against women and girls in Guatemala. In October, US Citizen and Immigration Services granted the application for asylum. The teenager now resides in upstate New York, where she attends high school, is an active participant in her local church, and dreams of becoming a US citizen and attending college.

Chicago Partner and Incoming Associate Win Unemployment Appeal for Client

Litigation partner **BeLinda Mathie** and incoming Litigation associate **Amy Koehler** (Northwestern Law '14) successfully represented a client who came to the Katten clinic at Jose de Diego Community Academy seeking assistance with an appeal of a denial of unemployment benefits. The client has already received her benefits and is thrilled by the outcome, writing to her Katten lawyers, "I appreciate everything you have done for me in order for me to win my case. I don't know what I would have done if I did not take the initiative to further stand up for myself after being denied benefits."

Los Angeles – Century City Attorney Volunteers at National Adoption Day

In association with [Public Counsel](#), Real Estate associate **Wendi Sklaver** participated in [National Adoption Day](#), an annual, one-day event that makes the dreams of thousands of children come true by working with policymakers, practitioners and advocates to finalize adoptions and create and celebrate adoptive families. Wendi represented grandparents in the adoption of their three grandchildren, ages 11, 7 and 5. Wendi reports: "The older children wept as the judge made it official. I was very lucky to be a part of bringing a family together right before Thanksgiving."



New York Team Defeats Copyright Bully

New York Litigation partner **Alan Friedman**, and Intellectual Property associates **Jessica Garrett** and **Jennifer Carmen**, successfully defended a Pilates instructor and her small business against claims of copyright infringement asserted by the owner of a copyright in a Pilates instruction manual. Without ever reaching the copyright issues asserted in the complaint, the US District Court for the Southern District of New York dismissed the case for lack of personal jurisdiction, finding that requiring a California resident and her small business to submit to the jurisdiction of the New York courts did not satisfy constitutional due process standards. While the court found that the sale of 10 DVDs and an unspecified number of allegedly copyrighted photographs to customers in New York constituted enough business to “barely” satisfy long-arm jurisdiction, it was unreasonable for the defendants to expect their actions to have consequences in New York, nor did the defendants derive substantial revenue from their contacts with New York. The court further denied plaintiff’s request for jurisdictional discovery and/or to file an amended complaint. The client wrote: “Thank you for protecting me, and helping me win, and thank you for your guidance, your legal sureness and your generosity,” calling her legal team “the finest lawyers I could have possibly have had the privilege of meeting.”

Charlotte Office Attorneys Join Truancy Project

The Charlotte office has partnered with the [Council for Children’s Rights](#) (CFCR) to represent students in truancy cases that [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools](#) (CMS) bring to the district court. Katten attorneys will take the lead on cases involving excessive numbers of absences where there may also be other issues lurking in the background (drug use, parents working numerous jobs who can’t supervise kids getting on the bus, mental health issues, etc.). While no student will be detained or suspended as a result of these hearings, the absences permit CMS to bring the student before a judge, who can enter an order to provide community services to assist the child/family with the goal of getting the student back into school. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Litigation partner [Christopher Hicks](#) or Insolvency and Restructuring partner [Brad Pearce](#).



Council for
Children’s
Rights



Katten Lawyers Defend Gun Laws

A Katten team consisting of Director of Pro Bono Services **Jonathan Baum**, New York Litigation partner **Alan Friedman** and New York Litigation associate **Mark Ciani** is representing the [Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#), [Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America](#) and local gun safety organizations as amici curiae in defending against constitutional challenges to statutes enacted by the states of Connecticut and New York in the wake of the Sandy Hook tragedy. The statutes ban assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines (LCAMs). The cases are currently in federal trial courts in Connecticut and New York. The briefs filed by the Katten team assert that assault weapons and LCAMs are within the class of “dangerous and unusual weapons” held by the US Supreme Court to fall outside the protections of the Second Amendment, that the challenged statutes serve a substantial state interest in reducing violence—particularly mass shootings and threats to law enforcement—and that the statutes’ restrictions leave citizens with ample alternative firearms for defense of their homes.



Texas Offices Join Pro Bono Efforts

Wanting to ensure that Katten’s support for pro bono became part of the Texas offices from day one, **Mark Farley**, managing partner for Katten’s Texas offices, and Environmental associate **Jon Reidy** recently undertook the Houston office’s first pro bono case. The matter involves the representation of three-year old “Kylie M.”—possibly Katten’s youngest client. Kylie’s father abandoned Kylie and her mother shortly after Kylie’s birth, and has never provided any meaningful support (emotional, financial or otherwise). Kylie’s mother wanted her daughter to start kindergarten with a last name that reflected her true family unit, and she came to Katten for help. Mark and Jon filed a name change petition on Kylie’s behalf in district court, and tracked down her father in Oregon to make the necessary service. All are confident that Kylie will share her mother’s name very soon.

Los Angeles – Century City Litigators Argue Deportation Appeal



In cooperation with [Public Counsel](#), Los Angeles litigators **Kristin Holland** and **Yonaton Rosenzweig** are representing Roberto Roman-Suaste in the US Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit. Mr. Roman is a US legal permanent resident who was brought to this country at the age of 18 months and has lived here ever since. At the end of 2012, Mr. Roman completed a two-year sentence for selling marijuana. Although he had served his sentence, the immigration authorities separately detained him and initiated deportation proceedings. Mr. Roman followed detailed protocol to seek “cancelation” of removal on the grounds that he is a legal permanent resident, has lived here his entire life and has a family here. The Immigration Judge and Board of Immigration Appeals claimed that they had no discretion to cancel his deportation because selling marijuana is an “aggravated felony” under the Immigration and Nationality Act and requires automatic deportation. Katten’s brief argues that the California crime of “possession for sale” of marijuana is not an automatically deportable offense (i.e., not an “aggravated felony”) in light of recent Supreme Court case law and DOJ guidelines relaxing enforcement and penalties for sale of marijuana. Oral arguments are expected in late 2014.

Katten’s Efforts at Jose de Diego Legal Clinic Highlighted by LAF



In its October 2013 [eNewsletter](#), [LAF](#) recognized Katten’s dedication to the Jose de Diego Community Academy. Katten staff work with LAF and [The Law Project](#) in providing a legal clinic to assist low-income families of students enrolled at the school. Believed to be the first legal clinic in a public school in Chicago, the clinic operates on site at de Diego on the third Wednesday evening of each month, and is staffed by attorneys from Katten, LAF and The Law Project who provide free legal advice and services in a variety of areas, including SSI/public benefits, expungement, housing issues, consumer law, family law, small business and wills. As Litigation associate and volunteer Jared Heck explains, “Although its doors first opened mere months ago, the Clinic has already made a huge difference in many people’s lives.”



New York Intellectual Property Attorney Works to Combat Organ Shortage



Intellectual Property associate **David Sherman** recently helped nonprofit organ donation proponent [Organize](#) negotiate an agreement with an advertising agency to do a full re-brand, including changing its name and website, and developing an outreach campaign to both create public awareness and allow people to sign up to become organ donors in Gristedes stores in New York City. Organize works to end the organ shortage by reshaping organ donation awareness, policies and partnership throughout the United States.

San Francisco Bay Area Attorney Teaches About Environment

Darrin Gambelin, an associate in the Environmental practice, presented a class session as part of [Merritt College](#)’s environmental education program that works to educate people who have recently been in prison to help them get into productive roles in the workforce. Darrin prepared the materials and spoke on air quality regulation. The head of the program observed that not only was Darrin’s “the best summary of air quality-related topics I have seen to date,” but added, “Students also responded positively to the lecture, and felt hopeful, which is not always easy to feel if you live in West Oakland next to the Port.”



Katten Supports LAF Young Professionals Board

Katten was pleased to serve as the event sponsor for the [LAF](#) Young Professional Board's (YPB) 2013 Autumn Affair fundraising event, held on November 7 in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood. LAF is the largest provider of free civil legal services to low-income and disadvantaged people and communities in Illinois. The sold-out event raised more than \$15,000 for LAF, bringing the YPB's fundraising total to more than \$115,000 in 2013—more than in any previous year. Chicago Litigation partner **BeLinda Mathie** and associates **Jared Heck** (Litigation) and **T. J. Maas** (Intellectual Property) are members of the Executive Committee of the LAF YPB.



Katten Sponsors Special Olympics of Southern California at Pier Del Sol

Katten once again sponsored [Pier del Sol](#), a day of food and family fun at the Santa Monica Pier on October 13. Pier del Sol is the [Special Olympics of Southern California](#)'s (SOSC) largest fundraiser with more than 1,700 attendees. The more than \$425,000 raised helps SOSC enrich the lives of athletes with intellectual disabilities by empowering them to become physically fit, productive and respected members of the community. More than 15 Katten volunteers participated.



Special Olympics
Southern California

Jonathan Baum Recognized as “Pro Bono Trailblazer” by *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*

Jonathan Baum, Director of Pro Bono Services, was profiled in a [Chicago Daily Law Bulletin article](#) on how his dedication to volunteer lawyering has encouraged other attorneys to focus on pro bono. Following a passion for public interest work, Jonathan successfully pitched the position of Director of Pro Bono Services to Katten 20 years ago, becoming the first law firm partner in the Midwest to focus exclusively on the delivery of pro bono work and paving the way for similar positions at other firms. He describes the job as a combination of motivating, matchmaking, mentoring and monitoring, explaining, “My job is to come up with answers for every reason people give for not doing pro bono work. . . . It’s about finding what moves people and getting to that.”



This year, the Washington, DC office “adopted” 83 kids – a new record – through the Salvation Army’s angel tree program, providing toys, clothes and other gifts. Washington, DC Human Resources Manager **Denise Browne** shows off some of the gifts provided by attorneys and staff.

Martin Tully Lauded for Efforts with The Sedona Conference



The Deputy Executive Director of [The Sedona Conference](#) recently praised **Martin Tully**, national head of the Electronic Discovery and Information Governance practice, for his efforts on behalf of The Sedona Conference Working Group 1 on Electronic Document Retention and Production, calling him “one of a select number of leading practitioners creating cutting-edge commentary regarding document retention and production.” The Sedona Conference is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit legal think tank committed to advancing the law in a reasoned and just way through commentaries and conferences that find balanced, non-partisan solutions to cutting-edge issues of the law.

Small Business Legal Academy Provides Corporate Advice



New York litigator **Leah Campbell** participated in [The Small Business Legal Academy](#), a one-day event presented by the [Association of Pro Bono Counsel](#) to bring together law firms, financial services consultants, city and state agencies and other service providers to strengthen New York City’s vibrant and diverse small-business community. Attendees received free consulting services, learned about starting and managing a business or nonprofit, and uncovered solutions to the legal and financial challenges facing the organization. Clinic sessions were supplemented by presentations on subjects such as the basic concepts of intellectual property law (e.g., trademark, copyright, patent).

Katten Supports NFTE Chicago’s Back2School Back2Business Benefit



At the request of client General Electric Capital Corporation, Katten sponsored the Back2School Back2Business Benefit networking event on September 25 to support the nonprofit [Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship](#) (NFTE). NFTE’s mission is “to provide programs that inspire young people from low-income communities to stay in school, to recognize business opportunities and to plan for successful futures.”

WLF Partners with Dress for Success



On November 19, Katten’s Women’s Leadership Forum partnered with [Dress for Success](#) to host a reception in Los Angeles. Century City women attorneys, clients and guests donated suits and other professional attire for disadvantaged women entering or returning to the workplace.