

PRESS RELEASE

Baker Donelson Recognizes Attorneys for Pro Bono Work

April 30, 2010

Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, has recognized a number of attorneys throughout the Firm for their pro bono work.

Steven G. Hall was named the Firm-wide 2010 Baker Donelson Pro Bono Attorney of the Year. A shareholder in the Firm's Atlanta office, Mr. Hall was recognized for his extensive pro bono efforts on behalf of the Metropolitan Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless. Since late 2008, Mr. Hall has represented the Task Force in ongoing litigation that has threatened to shut down its facility.

Baker Donelson also recognized attorneys in many of its individual offices for their pro bono efforts.

- Kevin R. Garrison, Birmingham Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Garrison was recognized for his pro bono efforts on behalf of homeless and indigent clients. In addition to his work with the Homeless Experience Legal Protection (H.E.L.P.) program, which provides legal clinics offering pro bono advice and representation for homeless individuals, he is part of a team of attorneys representing individuals wrongfully incarcerated by small towns in the metro Birmingham area because they could not afford to pay fines for minor infractions such as traffic violations and petty misdemeanors. He has also partnered with a solo criminal defense attorney to represent these individuals in class action litigation aimed at bringing about change to a system that often unfairly targets the impoverished.
- Mark W. Mercante, Mandeville Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Mercante was recognized for his ongoing pro bono representation of an area church and day school. His work has included handling property, zoning and construction issues; employment disputes; review and negotiation of financial agreements; negotiation of cooperative agreements with other non-profits and outreach organizations; general legal advice; and litigation matters.
- George T. "Buck" Lewis, Memphis Pro Bono Attorney of the Year: Mr. Lewis was recognized for his efforts during his term as president of the Tennessee Bar Association (TBA). Mr. Lewis made access to justice the theme of his presidency, launching the "4ALL" campaign to bring much needed legal services to Tennesseans of modest means. The "4ALL" campaign resulted in significantly increased pro bono participation by Tennessee attorneys and eight separate court rules and legislative changes that have been instrumental to enhancing the delivery of pro bono services in Tennessee. The campaign has garnered state and national recognition. The Tennessee Society of Association Executives named the campaign the best statewide program by an association during the past year. The program also won first place for service to the public from the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.
- Sarah Katherine Casey and Kathryn B. Cooper, New Orleans Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year: Ms. Casey was recognized for her work with the Southwest Texas War Memorial and Heritage Foundation to create their equal employment policy. She also handled adoption, divorce and custody matters for clients referred by the New Orleans Pro Bono Project. Ms. Cooper was recognized for her assistance in launching a Firm initiative, the Baker Donelson Non-Profit Institute, which provides pro bono services to non-profit organizations, including board training on rights and responsibilities, charter and bylaw review and updating, and director liability analysis.

"These attorneys exemplify our Firm's commitment to pro bono work and to the overall betterment of our communities," said Lisa W. Borden, the Firm's Pro Bono Shareholder. "They are just some of the many Baker Donelson attorneys who devote substantial time and effort to pro bono service."

Through its commitment to pro bono representation, Baker Donelson provides legal services to groups and individuals likely to be marginalized in the legal system due to economic barriers. Over the years, the Firm's attorneys have provided a variety of counsel to many populations, including immigrants, refugees, the elderly and the impoverished. Baker Donelson's efforts include work on a wide range of matters, such as advocating for the homeless and organizations that serve the homeless, death penalty litigation, providing corporate legal services to non-profit organizations, and much more.