



News

Hinshaw's Liz Baker Earns National *Pro Bono* Recognition

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National law firm Hinshaw & Culbertson today announced Elizabeth S. Baker, of counsel in its Miami office, has been honored with the 2018 Jean Crowe Pro Bono Award by the American Bar Association Section on Family Law. The award annually recognizes "a person who has made a difference by offering services on a pro bono basis, or promoting organizations that provide legal services to low-income or underrepresented populations."

"We applaud the ABA Family Law Section for recognizing Liz's outstanding record of *pro bono* service," said Kevin J. Burke, Chairman of Hinshaw. "Her contributions have benefited hundreds of low-income women and children in Florida and across the country. She sets an example for attorneys nationwide. We are proud of her work and the difference she continues to make with her superb legal skills and longstanding dedication to social and economic justice for all people."

Baker devotes at least 100 hours annually to representing clients pro bono, a contribution that now totals more than 4,500 hours over her career. The cases she handles are often complex and usually lengthy, most of them involving complicated, domestic violence, child custody, child support and spousal support disputes.

"I am humbled to be selected for this national recognition," said Baker. "It is gratifying to be able to make a difference for the better in the lives of children and adults embroiled in high-stakes family legal disputes, clients who are often intimidated by the complexities inherent in our justice system. Representing them *pro bono* has been among the most rewarding aspects of my legal career."

"Liz is an inspiration to all of us at Hinshaw who make *pro bono* a priority," added Joshua G. Vincent, a Chicago office partner and founder of the firm's *Pro Bono* Legal Services program. "She is one of the finest lawyers and human beings I've ever had the privilege to know, and this award is well-deserved recognition of a legal career dedicated to making a difference on behalf of women and children."

Hinshaw Partner Steven Carlyle Cronig has practiced with Ms. Baker for more than a quarter of a century. He notes that "the Jean Crowe award is the latest of hundreds of similar awards with which Liz has been recognized since the beginning of her legal career. It is a privilege to have been her law partner for so many years. She is, without a doubt, an icon of the Family Law Bar."

Offices

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In her private practice at Hinshaw, Baker represents high profile, high net worth individuals in contentious and complicated marital and family disputes. She brings the same experience to her representation of impoverished battered women, broken families and children at risk of being further abused. She has a reputation for crafting creative solutions for each of their difficult and often legally challenging circumstances.

Baker also serves as a *pro bono* guardian *ad litem* for children in incredibly difficult, emotionally wrenching custody cases. She was honored for this important work with the 2007 James H. Pearson Guardian Ad Litem Award from the 11th Judicial Circuit of Miami-Dade County. A year later, she received the prestigious Legal Services of Greater Miami Distinguished Service Award for her volunteer legal assistance to the Monroe County Child Welfare office in securing the reversal of a trial court decision to remove custody of a child from an indigent mother.

With a community service record that extends well past the courtroom, Baker was instrumental in founding The Safespace Foundation, a domestic violence shelter in Miami. She created this innovative legal, economic and social service resource for victims of domestic abuse in 1978, well before the pressing need for women's shelters was widely recognized or supported elsewhere in the U.S. In the 40 years since, the indefatigable University of Maryland School of Law graduate has served as the President of the Board of Safespace, continued to provide *pro bono* legal representation to the organization, and continued to represent individual battered women referred to her by the Foundation. Always invested in *pro bono* causes and the welfare of the downtrodden, she remains an active member of The Safespace Foundation Board of Directors.

Baker also is an active volunteer on the Legal Services of Greater Miami's "Campaign for Equal Justice" Development Committee, which raises funds to represent indigent clients in civil matters; she regularly accepts *pro bono* appointments to represent low-income clients from judges across Miami-Dade County; and she participates in Dade County Legal Aid's "Put Something Back" program, which matches volunteer attorneys with clients in need of these services who lack the resources to pay for them.

Baker received the Jean Crowe *Pro Bono* Award in a ceremony on May 10, 2018, at the ABA Family Law Section's Spring CLE Conference in Nashville. She has designated The Safespace Foundation as the public service organization to receive the Section's \$1,500 cash prize honoring her win.

The ABA award is named in honor of Jean Crowe, an attorney with the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee for nearly 30 years where she changed the lives of low income abused spouses and their children by giving them the protection of the law and the courage to begin a new life. Crowe died in 2015.