

Sheppard Mullin Named Pro Bono Law Firm of the Year

09.24.2002

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton has been named 2002 Pro Bono Law Firm of the Year by the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program. This is the fifth time since 1989 that Sheppard Mullin has received this coveted award and is the latest in a series received by the Firm this year.

Sheppard Mullin also received the 2002 San Diego County Bar Association Law Firm Public Service Award and the 2002 Legal Aid Society of San Diego Outstanding Service Award.

Sheppard Mullin will be presented the Award at the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program's annual Justice For All Dinner to be held on Thursday, October 3, 2002.

Bob Gerber, Chair of the Firm's Pro Bono Committee, commented, "We are honored to be presented with such an esteemed award. Our Firm has worked hard to implement several new initiatives to increase participation in pro bono work and are extremely pleased that our efforts and accomplishments are being recognized." Gerber added, "Each of the communities in which we have offices has indigent individuals and non-profit organizations which are often unable to afford appropriate legal representation or assistance without lawyers willing to donate their time. Sheppard Mullin has a tradition providing that service. We are building a legacy of which we can all be proud."

Recent Pro Bono Honors

In addition to the Firm's receiving numerous accolades for its substantial pro bono efforts, several individual Sheppard Mullin attorneys, spanning all offices, have recently been acknowledged for their pro bono work. Gerber, who in addition to chairing the Firm's Pro Bono Committee, is also a partner in the Intellectual Property Practice Group in San Diego, received the Co-President's Award in 2001 from the Tom Homann Law Association in San Diego. The award was based upon his successful representation of a Mexican immigrant seeking asylum in the United States, which resulted in a landmark opinion by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Joseph Petrillo, partner in the Real Estate, Land Use, Natural Resources & Environment Practice Group in San Francisco, was recently honored by the Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative for pro bono work related to the establishment of new housing for low-income individuals and the homeless in the Bay Area.

Gregory Long, partner in the Business Trial Practice Group in Los Angeles, was honored by the American Civil Liberties Union for his work in defending an individual, in a case that went to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Andrew Guilford, past president of the State Bar of California and partner in the Business Trial Practice Group in Orange County, was recently honored by the Anti-Defamation League for his contributions to improving indigent access to the legal system.

Additionally, Sheppard Mullin attorneys hold leadership positions in legal services organizations throughout the state. In 2001, Edward Vogel, partner in the Financial Institutions Practice Group in San Diego served as president of the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, and James Mittermiller, partner in the Business Trial Practice Group, served as president of the Legal Aid Society of San Diego. Also, Jack Rubens, partner in the Real Estate, Land Use, Natural Resources & Environment Practice Group in Los Angeles, currently serves on the board of directors of Public Counsel, a pro bono legal services agency.

Pro Bono Initiatives

On September 6, 2002, 15 Sheppard Mullin attorneys finalized adoptions for 21 children. In conjunction with Public Counsel's Adoption Project, a special Adoption Day was organized by the Firm's attorneys. For the past several months, these attorneys, many of whom have previously volunteered on behalf of the program, volunteered their time and services to assist the families in the finalization process, and September 6 was the culmination of their efforts. There are 16 happy new families as a result of the hard work of these Sheppard Mullin attorneys. Over the past year, Sheppard Mullin attorneys have finalized 53 adoptions.

"We encourage participation in pro bono work by all of our legal professionals. We do so by ensuring that our associates understand our Firm's commitment to pro bono, which includes billable hour credits for associates for their pro bono work. As well, we conduct special internal education and training on pro bono matters," said Guy Halgren, Chair of the Executive Committee.

Sheppard Mullin provides pro bono legal services in a wide variety of cases, including Social Security claims, immigration, landlord/tenant disputes, and adoption proceedings, and disabled children seeking educational opportunities.

Sheppard Mullin has more than 330 attorneys among its seven offices in San Diego, Del Mar Heights, Orange County, Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Francisco. The full-service firm provides counsel in Antitrust & Trade Regulation; White Collar and Civil Fraud Defense; Business Litigation; Construction, Environmental, Real Estate, Land Use Litigation & Natural Resources; Corporate; Finance & Bankruptcy; Financial Institutions; Government Contracts & Regulated Industries; Healthcare; Intellectual Property; Labor & Employment; and Tax, Employee Benefits, Trusts & Estates. The firm is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2002.