

### Sheppard Mullin Attorneys Elizabeth Balfour, Tamar Rosenberg and Melissa Freeling Receive the 2022 Bob Gerber Pro Bono Award for Significant Work in Response to Crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine

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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP is pleased to announce that it has awarded the Bob Gerber Pro Bono Award for significant commitment to pro bono in 2022 to partners Elizabeth Balfour and Tamar Rosenberg and to associate Melissa Freeling.

Balfour is being recognized for her extraordinary efforts last year in assisting refugees fleeing persecution from the Taliban following the United States' withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. In addition to directly supervising asylum matters, Balfour spearheaded the recruitment and training of more than 40 Sheppard Mullin attorneys to prepare asylum applications for refugees from Afghanistan seeking to obtain legal status. Balfour coordinated more than a dozen teams that undertook the representation of Afghan asylum seekers referred by Casa Cornelia Law Center, a public interest law firm. Balfour is a long-standing pro bono and community leader, regularly taking on and promoting pro bono work as the firm's liaison to Casa Cornelia and the Alliance for Children's Rights. Balfour is a partner in the firm's Business Trial practice and a member of the Healthcare industry team and based in the San Diego (Del Mar) office. She earned her B.A., *magna cum laude*, from Yale University and her J.D., *cum laude*, from Harvard University.

Commenting on receiving the Bob Gerber Pro Bono Award, Balfour stated, "I worked closely with Bob Gerber on pro bono matters until his sudden passing in 2012 at the age of 49. His deep commitment to providing access to legal representation for marginalized individuals has inspired me throughout my career. The teams of Sheppard Mullin attorneys who worked with interpreters and spent countless hours with their clients to learn and document their stories, embody the professionalism of the firm. Bob Gerber's life reminds us all to make time for pro bono: There is nothing more fulfilling than working to change the life of a client who would not otherwise have his or her story told."

Rosenberg is being recognized for her work assisting Ukrainians with humanitarian aid following Russia's invasion. Within days of the invasion, Rosenberg led a team of attorneys to help to form a new nonprofit to facilitate the work of the newly formed Cross Border Civilians Foundation, including completing all corporate and tax-exempt filings, to quickly allowing the organization to focus on its mission of providing humanitarian aid to civilians who are in, or evacuating from, Ukraine and other conflict zones. Shortly thereafter and throughout the year, Rosenberg provided pro bono assistance to Razom for Ukraine, now one of the most recognized organizations providing critical medical supplies and other life-saving support in Ukraine, advising the organization on a range of charitable, operational and nonprofit governance matters as donations grew to \$65 million following Russia's invasion. Rosenberg, a partner in the Tax, Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation practice group in the firm's New York office and leader of the firm's Nonprofit industry team,

received her B.A., *magna cum laude*, from the University of Pennsylvania and her J.D. from New York University School of Law.

Rosenberg said, “Supporting these organizations was very meaningful for me. It gave me the opportunity to do something tangible to help Ukraine, by supporting highly dedicated people undertaking extraordinary efforts to help others in a time of dire need.”

Freeling devoted more than 100 hours in 2022 to multiple immigration matters handled by Sheppard Mullin arising from the crises in Ukraine and Afghanistan, all of which were made more complicated by the ever-changing landscape of these dual immigration crises. She led or assisted teams in research projects, filing applications, responding to requests for evidence from the U.S. government and congressional outreach. Freeling’s work continues to serve as guidance for other attorneys working on similar cases. In addition, Freeling worked with a team of attorneys on a Somali asylum appeal and multiple guardianship matters. Freeling, who earned her B.A. and M.A. at California State University, Long Beach and her J.D. at UC Berkeley School of Law with a certificate in International Law, is an associate in the Business Trial practice group in the firm’s San Diego office.

Freeling stated, “Sheppard Mullin’s steadfast commitment to pro bono inspires me every day to find ways to contribute to our local and global communities. At every turn, the firm is prepared to dedicate resources to the less fortunate – a legacy of the late Bob Gerber. I am so grateful to have the opportunity to work closely with our pro bono leaders, Dan Brown and Abby Carrigan, whose guidance and support cannot be understated. Finally, no pro bono work could be accomplished without the incredible support of the firm’s staff. Thank you for this humbling honor.”

“Elizabeth, Tamar and Melissa exemplify the best of our profession and Sheppard Mullin’s commitment to helping those in need. Their pro bono work in response to the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine could not be more important,” said Dan Brown, Sheppard Mullin’s Pro Bono Partner.

Sheppard Mullin’s Bob Gerber Pro Bono Award is the firm’s highest pro bono honor, recognizing and rewarding the important pro bono work done by Sheppard Mullin attorneys. The award is named in honor and memory of Bob Gerber, the founder of Sheppard Mullin’s pro bono program and its leader for more than a decade.

## Attorneys

Elizabeth S. Balfour

Daniel L. Brown

Melissa Freeling

Tamar R. Rosenberg

## Practice Areas

Healthcare

Litigation

Tax

## Industries

Healthcare

Nonprofit