

Alum Profile: Joseph Guay

Joseph Guay, a partner and the Real Estate Section Leader at Holland & Knight LLP, is a 2009 Cornerstone Award winner because of his extensive work for Bridge Street Development Corporation. In 2011, Holland & Knight received the Institutional Cornerstone Award.

Q – How did you first become involved as a volunteer with Lawyers Alliance?

Lawyers Alliance distributes e-mails to law firms detailing available volunteer opportunities. I came across one of those approximately seven years ago and noticed a real estate matter for Bridge Street Development Corporation. It was in my comfort zone and area of expertise, and I was interested in volunteering. I assisted Bridge Street on buying and financing affordable housing in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. I really enjoyed the experience and developed relationships with both Bridge Street and Lawyers Alliance.

Q – What is the nature of the work you have undertaken for the nonprofit clients served by Lawyers Alliance?

The transactional nature of the work is appealing to me, and Lawyers Alliance's clients are doing vital work for low-income communities. Shortly after working with Bridge Street, I assisted Bronx Community Pride Center on a leasing issue for space for the community center. I worked on a facilities agreement for Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School, a relatively new school in the South Bronx, and an office lease for Center for the Homeless. I have also encouraged my colleagues at Holland & Knight to take on matters involving nonprofit corporate governance, transactions, strategic alliances, intellectual property, employment, and government contracts.

Q – How have you encouraged others at Holland & Knight to become involved in pro bono work?

In 2010 I was promoted to head of the firm's Real Estate Section. In that capacity, I oversee 13 real estate groups and approximately 220 real estate attorneys and professionals nationally and have been able to use my "bully pulpit" to encourage volunteerism. Our firm has a rich history in serving the less privileged members of our community who need access to the legal system. Three years ago our Managing Partner developed a dedicated department to facilitate our pro bono legal service in conjunction with our other community service efforts and charitable giving. We are constantly seeking pro bono and community organizations with which to partner. We need Lawyers Alliance clones across the country so that everyone can participate in this positive pro bono experience.

Q – As someone with a continued dedication to pro bono work, what do you find most rewarding about the volunteer experience?

It is a rewarding way to help organizations that wouldn't otherwise have access to legal services, or to the services of a large firm. The organizations that I've had the opportunity to work with are helping people in great need.

Q – How and why are you now involved with Lawyers Alliance?

I have become familiar with the staff and process at Lawyers Alliance and enjoy working with them. I'll continue to volunteer, as well as promote pro bono within Holland & Knight, which was honored to receive a Cornerstone Award for the firm's serious commitment to pro bono. I also believe that financial support for Lawyers Alliance is important, so it can continue assisting nonprofits.



Joseph Guay

About Joe

Employment includes:

- › Partner and Real Estate Section Leader, Holland & Knight LLP
- › Practice focuses on hotel and resort development, operations and financing as well as general real estate matters throughout the US, Latin America, and the Caribbean
- › Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* guide, 2013 and *The Legal 500 US*, 2012
- › *U.S. News and World Report – Best Lawyers*, selected Holland & Knight as "Law Firm of the Year" in the "Real Estate Law" practice area

Current activities include:

- › Multiple speaking engagements, including Moderator at the 2012 Hotel & Lodging Legal Summit
- › Involved with Circle of Care, a nonprofit organization which provides support for families who are dealing with children with cancer

Graduate of:

- › Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, J.D.
- › University of Connecticut, B.S., *summa cum laude*

This article is one of a series of profiles of the people who have helped to build Lawyers Alliance for New York since 1969.



Connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities