

Cornerstone Awards Honor Outstanding Pro Bono Achievements

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
CORNERSTONE
AWARDS
1997-2022

Front row, left to right:

Rex L. Niswander, *Morrison & Foerster LLP*; Karol Robinson, *Herrick, Feinstein LLP*, who accepted on behalf of Fred R. Green; Debra Sapp, *Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP*; Nancy Marchand, *Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP*, who accepted on behalf of Mario Verdolini; Ashley E. DeLuca, *Ballard Spahr LLP*; and Anthony Cassino, who accepted on behalf of Institutional Honoree *Milbank LLP*

Second row, left to right:

Amber M. Degn, *ABC News / Disney General Entertainment*; Kristen A. Truver, *Alston & Bird LLP*; Douglas Dua, *Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP*; Oren Epstein, *Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP*, who accepted on behalf of Bruce Goldner; William Xiong, *Ballard Spahr LLP*; and Katherine Hughes, who accepted on behalf of Institutional Honoree *Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP*

Top row, left to right:

Aditya (Dean) Ramanathan, *Brown Rudnick LLP*; Keith McMurdy, *Bloomberg L.P.*; and Steven M. Lutt, *White & Case LLP*

An enthusiastic crowd of nearly 100 volunteers, nonprofit clients, colleagues, and friends and family gathered at **Paramount** on November 17 for the 2022 Cornerstone Awards. **Sarah Harp**, Senior Vice President, Senior Counsel, Corporate Transactions and Securities of Paramount Global, and Lawyers Alliance's Board Secretary, welcomed everyone to the celebration of pro bono excellence.

Elizabeth M. Guggenheimer, Executive Director of Lawyers Alliance, said, "As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Cornerstone Awards, we are pleased to celebrate the spirit of pro bono service together. This year's amazing honorees, including two exceptional law firms and 14 individuals, along with all of our volunteers, have provided outstanding legal services that strengthen nonprofit programs, operations, and finances."



Photo credit: Bill Bytsura

Institutional Honorees

For **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP**, commitment to pro bono has been a core value of the firm since its inception, and in recent years it has emphasized leadership in nonprofit law, offering holistic legal advice to pro bono nonprofit clients and drawing knowledge from across the firm. Cleary has partnered with Lawyers Alliance on 59 different pro bono matters for 52 organizations since July 1, 2017, as well as dozens of projects involving attorney externs. Cleary was the first firm to sponsor an extern at Lawyers Alliance. From 1989 through this year, 89 Cleary associates have worked full-time at Lawyers Alliance for four to six month rotations. **Katherine C. Hughes**, Cleary's Director of Pro Bono – U.S. and a former Lawyers Alliance Cleary extern, accepted the award on behalf of the firm.

Milbank LLP's strong community service ethic is reflected in its more than 25-year pro bono relationship with Lawyers Alliance. The firm expects all of its attorneys to dedicate a minimum of 25 hours to pro bono work annually. In 2021, Milbank topped 57,000 pro bono hours globally and handled 700 active cases, with more than 95 percent of its U.S. lawyers taking on pro bono matters. As part of this work, Milbank attorneys worked on 50 different legal matters for 39 Lawyers Alliance clients in the past five years, helping organizations to navigate leases, contracts, governance issues, and strategic alliances. **Anthony Cassino**, Pro Bono Counsel at Milbank, accepted the award on behalf of the firm.

Individual Honorees

The Individual Cornerstone Award winners are 14 talented individuals selected from more than 2,000 business and transactional lawyers who volunteered through Lawyers Alliance during the past year.

Amber M. Degn, ABC News / Disney General Entertainment: This in-house counsel is one of Lawyers Alliance's most reliable volunteers, working with eight nonprofits on waivers, releases, and participation documents.

Ashley E. DeLuca and William Xiong, Ballard Spahr LLP: This team assisted a community health center with financing and development of a new clinic in Coney Island, Brooklyn, benefitting this neighborhood in need.

Douglas Dua, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP: For the last seven years, this dedicated attorney has been assisting nonprofits with complex corporate structuring matters.

Bruce Goldner, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP: A supporter of Lawyers Alliance for decades, this experienced attorney fosters his firm's pro bono spirit and helps nonprofits protect their intellectual property.

Fred R. Green, Herrick, Feinstein LLP: Because of this attorney's thoughtful client counseling and governance work, numerous nonprofits have been able to scale up their operations and fulfill their missions.

Steven M. Lutt and Julianne Prisco, White & Case LLP: These expert attorneys have helped multiple nonprofits with their real estate needs, including the acquisition and financing of a building in Brooklyn which will serve as a social service community center for senior citizens.

Keith McMurdy, Bloomberg L.P.: This corporate counsel has provided indispensable labor and employment law and governance advice to a range of nonprofits through Lawyers Alliance clinics and full-scope representations.

Rex L. Niswander, Morrison & Foerster LLP: For 12 years, this dedicated attorney has shared crucial immigration knowledge with nonprofits, allowing them to hire and keep instrumental team members.

Aditya (Dean) Ramanathan, Brown Rudnick LLP: This dedicated lawyer has shared his intellectual property expertise with five nonprofit clients over the last two years, demonstrating a true understanding of nonprofits' needs.

Debra Sapp, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP: This real estate attorney's commitment to pro bono work has helped shelters serving vulnerable New Yorkers.

Kristen A. Truver, Alston & Bird LLP: This corporate finance attorney helped form a strategic alliance between two nonprofits, a complicated process that included drafting and negotiating terms of the alliance and restructuring both nonprofits' organizational fabric.

Mario Verdolini, Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP: Since 1996, this tax attorney has shared his nonprofit and tax law expertise, which has proven essential to the foundation and growth of countless nonprofits.

Congratulations to all of the 2022 Cornerstone honorees! For additional details and event photos, visit our [website](#).



Photo credit: Urban Pathways

Cornerstone Spotlight:

Nonprofits play an essential role in providing shelter and other support services for unhoused people in New York City, especially during the cold winter months. For the past five years, 2022 Cornerstone Award honoree **Debra Sapp of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP** has helped these nonprofits effectively negotiate and document relationships with the government agencies that fund this work and with the landlords renting space for it. With Ms. Sapp's assistance, **Urban Pathways** successfully negotiated a lease for a transitional housing facility in the Bronx and another lease for a new drop-in center in Manhattan to provide services including case management, food, and showers to chronically homeless single adults. **Mark Hurwitz**, Chief Operating Officer of Urban Pathways, said, "Because of Debra's work we were able to expeditiously negotiate complex commercial leases that included buildouts for our new programs. These programs will allow hundreds of New Yorkers to come off the streets and out of the cold this winter, and in the years to come."