



Vedder Community Year In Review 2020

VedderPrice

Vedder Price P.C. is affiliated with Vedder Price LLP, which operates in England and Wales, Vedder Price (CA), LLP, which operates in California, and Vedder Price Pte. Ltd., which operates in Singapore.

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Our Commitment to Pro Bono

The greatest global health crisis in generations presented unprecedented obstacles to the delivery of pro bono legal services in 2020. Nonetheless, Vedder Price rose to the occasion and performed 8,790 pro bono hours, which represents a 22% increase from 2019 and a 54% increase from 2018. As our pro bono efforts continue to expand, we remain firmly committed to supporting those in need, including communities of color, veterans, and low-income individuals.

Throughout the pandemic, we found that pro bono work brought us together and taught us to serve the community in new and different ways. For example, the first in-person trial that Vedder Price handled since the pandemic began was the successful pro bono representation of a family seeking asylum in the immigration courts—masks and all. We continue to have an energetic group of attorneys and valuable support staff committed to serving immigrants and their families in our offices coast to coast.

Additionally, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, our firm executed on its goal to expand our work on behalf of veterans. Our teams seamlessly transitioned to Zoom client meetings and online advocacy, which allowed us to increase our veterans caseload significantly during the pandemic. Our tireless work on behalf of veterans led to the firm receiving the 2020 Pro Bono Award from the Center for Veterans' Advancement.

Drawing on our corporate strength, we also helped numerous nonprofits to weather the storm at a time when fund-raising efforts were jeopardized by the pandemic. We spent hundreds of hours advising nonprofits on the impact of government stimulus programs and helped structure creative staffing programs to allow these organizations to survive and thrive through turbulent times. We also continued our financial support to our key legal aid partners.

Finally, we learned that pro bono legal representation is one of the most powerful and effective ways to show our commitment to ensuring equal access to justice. We continued to partner with Legal Aid Chicago to assist clients in clearing old criminal convictions from their records, which will allow them greater access to jobs, housing, and educational opportunities. Many of our attorneys also acted as guardians ad litem for minors, ensuring that the best interests of children prevailed during custody matters. Through their pro bono work, our attorneys and paralegals help “level the playing field” for our pro bono clients and empower them to look towards a brighter future.



Michelle T. Olson
Shareholder and Co-Chair, Pro Bono Committee



Patrick W. Spangler
Shareholder and Co-Chair, Pro Bono Committee

Pro Bono Committee Members



Danielle Meltzer Cassel



Thomas R. Dee



Joshua A. Dunn



John H. Geager



Deborah A. Hedley



David M. Hernandez



Nusra Ismail



Blaine C. Kimrey



Daniel B. Lange



Blythe E. Lovinger



Jonathan Maude



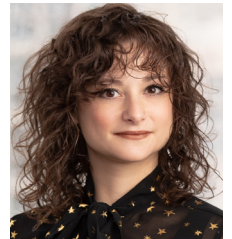
Michael R. Mulcahy



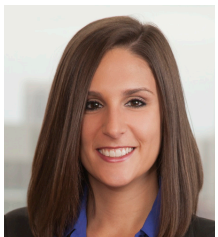
Scott H. Olson



Anthony Pacheco



Shelby E. Parnes



Caitlin C. Podbielski



Anand V. Ramana



Jonathan M. Rauch



Lydia Westropp

Pro Bono at Vedder Price

Our Pro Bono Committee, led by co-chairs Michelle Olson and Patrick Spangler, oversees the firm’s pro bono activities and works to develop relationships with pro bono agencies around the world. We strongly encourage all of our attorneys to fulfill their professional obligation to provide pro bono legal services, and the firm has worked hard to fill the legal void created by COVID-19. In 2020, our attorneys and paralegals donated nearly 8,800 pro bono hours to those in need. The firm was also proud to receive the “Advocate for Inclusion” award from Aspire for our advocacy for people of all abilities, and the “Pro Bono Award” from the Center for Veterans’ Advancement for our advocacy on behalf of low- income veterans and their caregivers.

188 
 VP employees did
 pro bono work in 2020

52% 
 of VP lawyers did pro
 bono work in 2020

8790 
 pro bono hours
 provided in 2020

Average number of pro bono
 hours donated per attorney in 2020

\$4.76 Million 
 Value of pro bono
 services provided in 2020

25.88 

2020 Pro Bono Awards

- 2020 Pro Bono Award Center for Veterans Advancement
- Advocate for Inclusion Award



Our Pro Bono Partners

The firm partners with a number of pro bono legal service providers in each of its legal markets. Our partners provide critical services to diverse communities including low-income communities and communities of color. Our pro bono partners include, but are not limited to, Safer Foundation, Urban Gateways, Change Summer, Inc., D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Legal Aid Chicago, CARA Chicago, Raphael House, Talbot Interfaith Shelter, Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, National Immigrant Justice Center, Chicago Volunteer Legal Services, Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice, KIND – Kids In Need of Defense, Help for Heroes, LawWorks, and TransLatin@ Coalition. Through our partnerships with a diverse group of pro bono organizations, our attorneys and paralegals have access to a wide variety of opportunities for pro bono work. For example, in 2019 and 2020, the firm partnered with the in-house department of a Fortune 500 company and Legal Aid Chicago to host a half-day expungement clinic in an effort to help break down legal barriers to employment and housing faced by many ex-convicts. Additionally, our litigators are actively managing a number of pro bono civil rights cases, including representing asylum seekers in partnership with the National Immigrant Justice Center and KIND – Kids In Need of Defense, and representing police torture victims before the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission.



LA Represents/ Public Counsel



Helping Families

The pro bono efforts of our attorneys and paralegals directly affect the lives of people who are in need of stability and a feeling of safety and security. In 2020, through the firm’s partnership with the National Immigrant Justice Center, a team of Vedder attorneys and paralegals helped a couple from Honduras and their three children receive asylum in the United States. The father, a former police officer and chief of police in Honduras, sought asylum in the United States to protect his family from retribution for his efforts to combat gang violence in their country. The team, led by shareholder Jeanah Park and including associate Kareem Ratani and paralegals Fernando Torres and Gabe Anello, argued that the family had a reasonable fear that they would be singled out for murder if forced to return to Honduras and that it would be very difficult for their government to protect them. The Immigration Judge agreed and granted the family’s asylum petition.

The family is incredibly grateful and looking forward to a safe and stable future in the United States. The experience was also particularly rewarding for the Vedder team. “Watching our clients react with tears of joy when they heard the immigration judge grant them asylum in the United States, forever changing their lives and the lives of their children for the better, was one of the most rewarding experiences of my personal and professional life” said Jeanah Park. For Fernando Torres, “getting to know this family, their journey to the United States, fleeing from violence and conveying their plight to an immigration judge has been one of the most dramatic experiences in my professional life. We were truly happy to have helped this family find hope for a better future. It was also an opportunity to work with a superb group of colleagues from other practice areas. It was a very fulfilling experience, both on a personal and professional level.”



Jeanah Park
Shareholder



Kareem Ratani
Associate



Gabe Anello
Paralegal



Fernando Torres
Paralegal

“What Pro Bono Means to Us”



“ Anthony Pacheco, Shareholder and Pro Bono Lead, Los Angeles Office:

Helping veterans receive benefits and regain their rightful place as honorably discharged members of the military is something that Vedder Price — lawyers and staff alike — has eagerly embraced. The chance to serve our veterans has truly been a privilege, and I look forward to continuing our work with Public Counsel’s Center for Veterans Advancement in 2021. Additionally, our work on behalf of the TransLatin@ Coalition has given us the opportunity and pleasure to represent some of the most vulnerable and treasured members of our community.

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“ Ryan M. Helgeson, Associate:

The pro bono opportunities I have been able to participate in have allowed me to assist vulnerable individuals and populations with underserved legal needs. It is truly a great joy to see the happiness on the clients’ faces when a case comes to a successful resolution. These pro bono opportunities have allowed me to explore new areas of the law, to push myself professionally, and to work closely with attorneys across all practice areas.

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“ Nusra Ismail, Associate:

“It’s been incredibly rewarding working with Chicago Volunteer Legal Services (CVLS) on minor guardianship cases. Through CVLS, Vedder Price has handled nearly 20 guardianship cases in the last year. We’ve been able to connect with many families and members of our community to help ensure that the best interests of children are being met through legal guardianship proceedings.”

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“ Tamara Droubi, Associate:

Our work for veterans strikes at the core of who we are as humans, providing me with both the privilege and challenge of facing the physical, emotional and psychological trauma our veterans can face. It has been heartbreaking to learn that when they needed help and understanding most to begin healing from their service-related trauma (such as PTSD), a number of veterans were not treated with empathy and were separated from the military without the distinction they deserved. As a result, many were denied essential services and benefits, all while struggling to apply for jobs, help their families and manage issues of self-contempt and feeling powerless. These struggles, for some, have spanned years, if not decades. The honor of working with these veterans has been the chance to listen to them, and to try to provide the care, compassion and respect that was denied. It is my hope that as part of this process, our clients begin to feel recognized and empowered—and get the status and benefits that they should get as having been the guardians of our freedom.

”

2020 Pro Bono Awards

On February 2, 2021, Vedder Price’s Pro Bono Committee held a virtual reception to recognize the attorneys and paralegals who dedicated their time to pro bono service in 2020, to draw attention to the important causes we support and to encourage continued pro bono service in 2021. Attorneys and paralegals who reached important milestones were recognized at both the office level and on an all-firm level.

We are proud to recognize the attorneys and paralegals below for their outstanding commitment to providing pro bono legal assistance to those in need. This year, the Pro Bono Committee also recognized our Los Angeles Office as the winner of our first annual Pro Bono Champion Award, which is awarded to the office with the highest number of pro bono hours per attorney. The LA Office averaged an incredible 50.66 pro bono hours per attorney, earning office bragging rights for the year.



2020 Pro Bono Event Sponsorships

- 2020 CVLS Race Judicata
- CVLS “Vino and Van Gogh” Virtual Event
- Legal Aid Chicago’s Virtual Holiday Celebration and Annual Awards

Summer Pro Bono Challenge

In 2020, the firm announced its inaugural “Summer Pro Bono Challenge,” encouraging all our attorneys and paralegals to dedicate at least five hours to pro bono legal work during the month of July. Our lawyers and paralegals provided nearly 1080 hours of pro bono legal services in July as part of the Summer Pro Bono Challenge, with 68 people meeting the challenge goal of at least five hours. The Firm honored all of the participants at a virtual celebration in August.

Pro Bono Awards – Vedder Price

Pro Bono All-Firm Award Winners



Brett D. Heinrich
Shareholder
202 hours



Ryan M. Helgeson
Associate
304 hours



Fernando Torres
Paralegal
118.2 hours

Pro Bono Awards – Honorees by Office

Chicago



Jeanah Park
Shareholder



Ryan Burandt
Associate



Rita Mahoney
Paralegal

Washington, DC



Amy L. Bess
Shareholder



Aleksandra Rybicki
Associate



Jonathan M. Rauch
Associate

Los Angeles



Anthony Pacheco
Shareholder



Nate Wright
Associate

New York



Jonathan A. Wexler
Shareholder



Victoria L. Jaus
Associate

San Francisco



Scott H. Olson
Shareholder



Mindy M. Wong
Associate

London



Jon Edgelow
Counsel

PILI Graduate Fellows Program

Vedder Price sponsors postgraduate public interest work as part of the Public Interest Law Initiative's ("PILI") Graduate Fellows Program, which allows an incoming Vedder Price first-year associate to work at a public interest legal aid organization in Illinois while studying for the bar exam. PILI's mission is to cultivate a lifelong commitment to public interest law and pro bono service within the Illinois legal community to expand the availability of legal services for individuals, families and communities in need. Shareholders Daniel Lange and Patrick Spangler serve on the PILI Board of Directors as Secretary and Board Member, respectively.

George Cortina, an Associate in our Finance & Transactions Practice Area, was selected as the firm's 2020 PILI Fellow. During the summer of 2020, George worked with Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation in Champaign and focused his pro bono efforts on assisting veterans and low-income individuals obtain much-needed public benefits. Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation's lawyers provide a full range of civil legal assistance to low-income residents from 65 counties in central and southern Illinois, including providing legal advice and counsel, litigation support, and community education.



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George L. Cortina:

The PILI Fellowship was an incredibly rewarding opportunity that allowed me to apply many of the skills I learned in law school to help those most in need in my community. As attorneys, we are in a unique position to help give a voice to those most in need. Every day I worked with veterans, the disabled and elderly clients to assist them in traversing the complex legal system. The PILI Fellowship showed me the impact that attorneys could have in their communities and the importance of pro bono work.

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VedderCares

In addition to giving back to our communities through pro bono legal work, Vedder Price, through its Vedder Cares initiative, facilitates charitable giving and community service opportunities for our employees. Building a sense of community within our offices and the locations we serve is essential to creating a thriving work environment, and Vedder Cares demonstrates its commitment to the community through hours and resources volunteered by Vedder Price attorneys and staff. While the global pandemic limited in-person service opportunities, members of the Vedder Price community still came together virtually throughout 2020 to give back to our communities.

VedderCares Supported the Following Organizations in 2020:

- Direct Relief
- National Health Services
- The Courage Fund
- PAWS Chicago
- The Anti-Defamation League (Midwest)
- Gigi's Playhouse
- Pets for the Elderly
- The Trussell Trust
- Alzheimer's Association
- Chicago Children's Choir
- Rise Against Hunger
- Toys for Tots
- San Francisco Firefighters Toy Program
- SONG – Southerners on New Ground
- Arc Children's Centre
- FareShare

VedderCares donated
approximately
\$92,000
to charities in 2020

VedderPrice

Chicago • New York • Washington, DC • London
San Francisco • Los Angeles • Singapore • Dallas

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