

PRO BONO & COMMUNITY SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

RICHARDS
LAYTON &
FINGER
125 YEARS



OUR PRO BONO AND COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2023-2024

For this year's annual report, we have moved from a fiscal year to a calendar year. Therefore, this report encompasses pro bono and community service events from July 2023 through December 2024.



Russell Silberglied
Director, Chair



Monica Ayres
Director, Committee Vice Chair,
2024-25



Mark Purpura
Director, Committee Vice Chair,
2023-24



Lisa Schmidt
President



Paul Heath
Executive Vice President



Jeff Moyer
Senior Vice President



Jennifer Veet Barrett
Counsel



C. Malcolm Cochran, IV
Director



Mark Collins
Director



Brock Czeschin
Director



Doneene Keemer Damon
Immediate Past President
and Chief Diversity Director



Jennifer Jauffret
Director



Cory Kandestin
Director



Beth Gansen Knight
Director



Mark Kurtz
Director



Melissa Lennon
Chief Legal Talent Officer



Elisa Erlenbach Maas
Director



Christine Morabito
Counsel



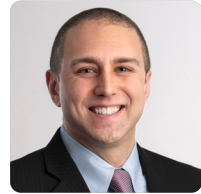
Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk
Director of Attorney Development



Joshua Novak
Director



Laura Lubin Rossi
Chief Marketing and
Communications Officer



Drew Sloan
Director



Marisa Terranova Fissel
Counsel



John Mark Zeberkiewicz
Director

Russell C. Silberglied
Chair of Pro Bono and
Community Service Committee

Monica M. Ayres
Vice Chair of Pro Bono and
Community Service Committee,
2024-25

Mark V. Purpura
Vice Chair of Pro Bono and
Community Service Committee,
2023-24

Danielle A. Nowaczyk
Director of Attorney Development

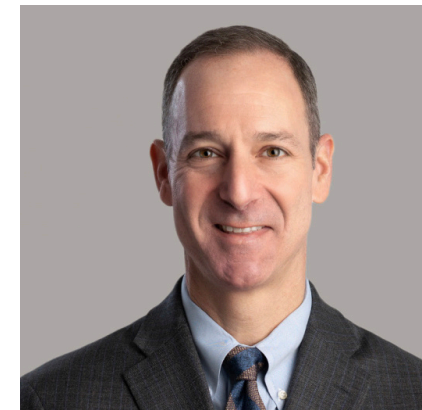
A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT — Lisa A. Schmidt



As we celebrate our 125th year, we take pride in our tradition of excellence and the crucial role we've played in defining Delaware law since 1899. Another important part of our legacy is our commitment to our community.

Our lawyers have been acknowledged leaders of the Delaware bar for more than a century while remaining dedicated to building and improving our community. I'm proud of the many ways our lawyers have fully embraced the importance of giving back. Year after year we provide legal services to countless non-profit organizations and individuals in our community through our support of Delaware's legal aid organizations, in-house pro-bono teams, and court appointments. Through our pro bono efforts, we have experienced firsthand the personal and professional fulfillment that comes from using our skills to assist the underserved in our community. Most importantly, though, we are maintaining the deep roots Richards, Layton & Finger has always had in our community and continuing to work together to improve the lives of others.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR COMMITTEE CHAIR — Russell C. Silberglied



We can all be proud to be part of a firm that truly values pro bono service. And it's not just words: Richards Layton has developed a thriving pro bono program that allows attorneys to donate their talents to causes that are meaningful to them, credits pro bono work as billable hours, and features specialized pro bono teams to help attorneys readily take part in projects that offer valuable professional development opportunities while making a difference.

Our six pro bono teams provide substantial assistance to those in need in our community and beyond. Our work includes serving as child attorneys, representing victims of domestic violence, and assisting indigent seniors with their wills. We represent local and global non-profits, and we work on civil rights cases in the Delaware District Court. In addition to the efforts of our teams, our individual attorneys work on a wide variety of pro bono matters, including helping to revitalize distressed areas of our community and championing underserved children. The firm also takes a team approach to volunteering within the local community and giving back to it through donations and collections. Additionally, over 70 non-profit organizations benefit from the leadership provided by members of our firm on their boards of directors.

THE POWER OF CARING

Richards, Layton & Finger attorneys and staff continued to undertake pro bono engagements in large numbers during FY 2024, with 73% of the firm’s attorneys participating in pro bono and community service (“PBCS”) projects.

During the year:

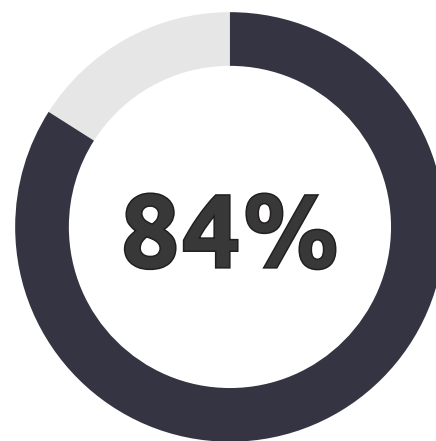
5,000+

Hours logged by RLF attorneys and staff on PBCS matters

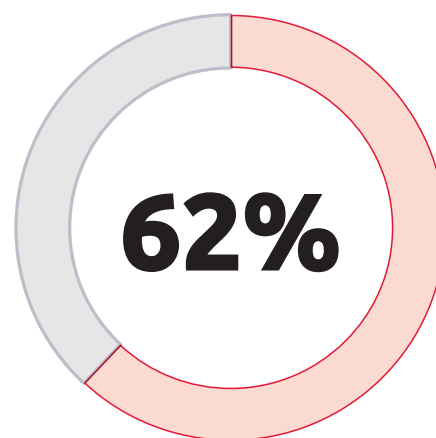
31

New PBCS matters opened in 2024

Our staff provided administrative support on nearly all PBCS matters



OF THE FIRM'S ASSOCIATES RECORDED PBCS TIME DURING THE YEAR



OF OUR COUNSEL AND DIRECTORS SPENT TIME ON PBCS MATTERS

PRO BONO PROGRAMS



ATTORNEY AD LITEM TEAM

In 2022, at the request of Chancellor **Kathleen McCormick**, the firm started an attorney *ad litem* pro bono team to serve as attorneys *ad litem* in adult guardianship hearings in the Delaware Court of Chancery through **Delaware Volunteer Legal Services (DVLS)**. **Rob Burns** and **Chad Shandler** are co-chairs of this 15-member team. **Rob Burns**, **Susan Hannigan Cohen**, and **Nicole Henry**, among others, have represented clients in these matters, and many other RLF attorneys have completed the required training.

FEDERAL CIVIL PANEL TEAM

The firm participates in the Federal Civil Panel under the auspices of the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware. Through this program, the firm receives referrals from the Federal District Court of cases filed by indigent plaintiffs, typically involving alleged civil rights violations. This program is intended to give attorneys the opportunity to first-chair active litigation matters in the Delaware District Court. The Federal Civil Panel Team is led by **Kelly Farnan**.



▶ From left: John Mark Zeberkiewicz, co-chair of the Non-Profit Team; Elisa Maas, co-chair of the Non-Profit Team; Anne Foster; Josh Novak; Mark Collins; and Sara Wagner

NON-PROFIT TEAM

This team’s goal is assisting non-profit organizations with various legal projects, including drafting incorporation documents, answering legal questions, and serving on or counseling non-profit boards. It is a popular team among the firm’s attorneys, with 41 members. The Non-Profit Team is led by **Elisa Erlenbach Maas** and **John Mark Zeberkiewicz**.

The Non-Profit Team hosted a variety of presentations directed to attorneys who serve or are interested in serving on a non-profit board of directors. In November 2023, directors **Mark Collins**, **Anne Foster**, **Josh Novak**, and **Sara Wagner** presented the CLE, *Non-Profit Boards: Understanding the Role and the Opportunity*.

In February 2024, the Non-Profit Team hosted the CLE presentation, *Reviewing Financial Statements as a Non-Profit Board Member*, featuring director **Mark Gentile** and Alyssa Pietrobono, CPA, MBA, MSA.

In November 2024, the Non-Profit Team hosted the CLE presentation, *Nonprofit Governance from a Lifecycle Perspective*, featuring **Sheila Bravo, PhD, President and CEO of the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA)**.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE TEAM

The Office of the Child Advocate (“OCA”) Team is comprised of 33 attorneys, led by **Jennifer Jauffret**. Over the course of the year, 13 RLF attorneys represented 14 children in abuse and neglect proceedings, providing an important service to the court and the children as well as valuable litigation and counseling experiences for our lawyers. Our attorneys dedicated over 235 hours as child attorneys in FY 2024.

Since the inception of this program over 20 years ago, our attorneys have dedicated over 14,750 hours to the representation of 295 children in these Family Court proceedings. In 2024, the Office of the Child Advocate honored **Gregory Ladner** with a **20-Year Service Award** and **Nicole Henry** with a **5-Year Service Award**.

In February 2024, the OCA Team hosted **Kelly Ensslin, Esq., Chief of Legal Services for the Office of the Child Advocate**, for the training CLE, *Nuts & Bolts of Representing Children in DSCYF*.

Congratulations to the following OCA Team members who were named to the **Office of the Child Advocate Pro Bono Honor Roll** in 2024: **Brock Czeschin** and **Gregory Ladner** for 20+ years of service; **Travis Hunter, Jennifer Jauffret, Cory Kandestin, Claire Love**, and **Amanda Steele** for 10-20 years of service; **Nicole Henry** for 5-10 years of service; and **Bobby Kissel, Kinsey Lenehan, Rae Ra, Yuan Tao**, and **Sandy Xu** for less than 5 years of service. Thanks to these attorneys, as well as **Mari Boyle** and **Edmond Kim**, among others, who served as child attorneys in 2023 and 2024.

WILLS TEAM

This team of 35 attorneys is headed by **Monica Ayres** and offers services, through DVLS, to indigent seniors with estate planning and related needs. In addition to the preparation of wills, the team offers various other estate-planning options, such as the creation of health-care directives, durable powers of attorney, HIPAA authorizations, and planning documents for the disposition of last remains. This pro bono offering affords valuable one-on-one counseling opportunities for our lawyers.

In October 2023, **Emanuel Perris** and **Frank Sun**, among others, participated in a **Wills for Seniors** event co-hosted by DVLS and the DSBA at the Elsmere Fire Hall in honor of National Pro Bono Week. In January 2024, **Andrea Filbeck** volunteered at a Wills for Seniors event co-hosted by DVLS and the DSBA at the Police Athletic League in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



▶ From left: Adria Kappauf, Frank Sun, and Emmanuel Perris

In October 2024, **Emanuel Perris** participated in a **Wills for Seniors** event co-hosted by DVLS and the DSBA at the Delaware Law School in honor of National Pro Bono Week.

Maddie Jolles was the lead attorney providing pro bono estate planning services to a Delaware senior, and after consultation and discussion, a will, durable personal power of attorney, and advance health-care directive were drafted and executed. **Emily Malafronti** and **Andrew Roedersheimer**, among others, also provided pro bono support, along with **Monica Ayres**, who served as the supervising director on the matter.

PROTECTION FROM ABUSE TEAM

The Protection from Abuse (“PFA”) Team consists of 18 attorneys who assist DVLS with obtaining protection from abuse orders for victims of domestic violence.

In November 2023, the PFA Team hosted **Jacquelyn Chacona, Esq., Director of Pro Bono Projects**, and **Thomas McDonough, Esq., Director of Pro Bono Recruitment**, for a CLE training presentation on handling PFA cases.

In March 2024, the PFA Team hosted **Family Court Commissioners Danielle Blount, Esq. and Para Wolcott, Esq.** for the CLE presentation, *Preparing for a Protection from Abuse Hearing: Perspectives from the Bench*.

In April and June of 2024, **Vicky Liu** and **Sandy Xu** volunteered to handle two PFA matters and a custody matter for Mandarin-speaking victims, with one of the PFA cases being resolved with a four-year consent order. DVLS expressed their deep appreciation to the firm for providing Mandarin-speaking pro bono attorneys to assist in these critical matters, noting they “were grateful for the extraordinary compassion, skill and time that the attorneys provided.”

In May, **Spencer Crawford** negotiated a consent order on behalf of his client, which included a protection from abuse order, temporary sole custody of the children, supervised visitations with the children, and reimbursement for medical expenses stemming from injuries sustained by his client.

CO-COUNSEL PROJECT

The Co-Counsel Project arose at the request of **former Chief Justice Strine** and the state’s **former public defender, Brendan O’Neill**. Private law firms were asked to provide pro bono attorneys to partner with the Public Defender’s Office on serious felony cases. Our attorneys serve as second chair and are expected to research, prepare, and argue motions. The firm has eight attorneys on this team.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

At the request of **former Chief Justice Strine**, RLF participated with other firms in training attorneys to represent unaccompanied minors coming to Delaware. **Marcos Ramos** and **Marisa Terranova Fissel** lead this team, supervising associates as they receive requests for representation in Family Court guardianship and immigration cases.

FAMILY COURT APPOINTMENTS

Throughout the course of a year, RLF receives a substantial number of Family Court appointments, in which attorneys are assigned to represent indigent clients. **Jessey Blau, Andrea Bomalaski, Anastasia Bowes, Brendan Clark, Spencer Crawford, Andrea Filbeck, Wilson Guarnera, Morgan Harrison, Edmond Kim, Grace Myers, Emanuel Perris**, and **Rae Ra**, among others, volunteered to handle Family Court appointments assigned to the firm in the past year, with **Kevin Gallagher, Travis Hunter, Greg Ladner**, and **Greg Williams** serving as supervisors.

HIGHLIGHT



Central Baptist Community Development Corporation

One of the firm’s largest pro bono projects has been its ongoing work on behalf of **Central Baptist Community Development Corporation (“CBCDC”)**. Under the leadership of directors **Mark Kurtz, Tony Roustopoulos**, and **Sara Wagner**, the firm dedicated over 540 hours in the past year representing CBCDC in connection with its Eastside Rising initiative, an effort to revitalize Wilmington’s Eastside community through housing improvement, workforce development, economic empowerment, and the eradication of “food deserts.” Our efforts include advising on agreements, contracts, leases, licensing, acquisitions, and other matters of Delaware law. This initiative has improved both the infrastructure and the quality of life in a significant section of our community. During the past year, **Avery Benesch, Chandler Elliott-Fehle, R. Parker Havis, Jennifer Jauffret, Edmond Kim, Mark Kurtz, Philip Micha, Alison Mitchell, Ellen Rosaio, Tony Roustopoulos, Susan Stewart**, and **Sara Wagner**, among others, contributed their time to this project.

PRO BONO PROJECTS FOR NON-PROFIT PARTNERS



All firm attorneys are invited to suggest and participate in pro bono and community service projects that reflect their interests. During FY 2024, RLF attorneys were engaged in a variety of *ad hoc* PBCS projects, including serving on boards and committees, setting up new non-profit organizations, researching issues of law for non-profits, and organizing fundraising efforts to promote various causes. Below are some of the more significant *ad hoc* PBCS projects in FY 2024.

Innocence Project DELAWARE

INNOCENCE PROJECT DELAWARE

David Queroli and Sara Metzler, under the supervision of Jason Rawnsley, each led a team of associates and summer associates, including Hap Conover, Clay Faller, Grant Knepper, Nicole Neri, Margaret Rockey, Andrew Rosen, and Kate Strauch, in research projects on behalf of Innocence Project Delaware. Each team presented their legal findings to James Moreno, Esq., Interim Executive Director, and Jessica Auletta, Director of Case Intake and Investigations, of Innocence Project Delaware, at the firm in July 2024.



▶ From left: David Queroli; Andrew Rosen; Jessica Auletta, Director of Case Intake and Investigations; James Moreno, Esq., Interim Executive Director; Clay Faller; Hap Conover; Nicole Neri; Grant Knepper; Kate Strauch; and Margaret Rockey



THE MINISTRY OF CARING INC.

MINISTRY OF CARING, INC.

The firm supports the **Ministry of Caring, Inc.** through various ongoing pro bono and community service efforts to provide safe housing, programming, and basic human needs to homeless, at-risk, and low-income members of our community.

In FY 2024, **R. Parker Havis, Phil Micha, Katharine Lester Mowery, Ellen Rosaio, Tony Roustopoulos, Susan Stewart, and Sara Wagner**, among others, contributed over 140 hours of pro bono assistance to the Ministry of Caring.



DELAWARE NATURE SOCIETY

Avery Benesch and Wilson Guarnera, under the supervision of **Robert Greco**, reviewed and revised the bylaws of the Delaware Nature Society.

SECOND CHANCE EMPLOYMENT COLLABORATIVE

The firm was again a pro bono partner for the Second Chance Employment Collaborative launched in 2021 by **JPMorgan Chase Foundation and Wilmington Alliance**, in partnership with **Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, Wilmington HOPE Commission, Delaware Center for Justice, and Project New Start**.



DELAWARE ALLIANCE FOR NONPROFIT ADVANCEMENT

Avery Benesch and Ryan Brady, under the supervision of **Stephanie Norman**, assisted the **Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA)** with its contract review needs.

LexMundi Pro Bono Foundation

LEX MUNDI PRO BONO FOUNDATION

RLF is the Delaware member firm of Lex Mundi, which is comprised of more than 150 member law firms spanning 100 countries across the globe, and the **Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation**. Through the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation, the firm's attorneys provide legal support to global organizations focused on societal changes that will improve lives and communities around the world.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS



LEADERSHIP COUNCIL ON LEGAL DIVERSITY'S SUCCESS IN LAW SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAM



In 2020, the firm began participating in the LCLD's Success in Law School Mentoring Program, which matches attorneys at LCLD member organizations with 1L students from underrepresented backgrounds. The Mentoring Program provides guidance and support to law students during their first year of law school and beyond.

The firm's past and current LCLD mentors include **Paul Altman, Jessey Blau, Doneene Damon, Andrea Filbeck, Kevin Gross, Maya Jackson, Jonathan Kaplowitz, Melissa Lennon, Philip Micha, Vicky Liu, Katharine Lester Mowery, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Marcos Ramos, Matthew Schwalm, Frank Sun, Cassandra Thompson,** and **Sara Wagner**, among others.

THE EMMANUEL DINING ROOM TEAMS

RLF lawyers and staff continue the firm's longstanding community outreach effort of serving lunch each month to the homeless and working poor within our community at the Ministry of Caring's Emmanuel Dining Room (EDR) West. The firm's four EDR Teams are led by **Albert Feeley, Jr., R. Parker Havis, Kathy Howard,** and **Melissa Lennon**. In FY 2024 the firm's EDR volunteers were **Jessey Blau, Ryan Brady, Elizabeth Collins, Gabby Colson, Spencer Crawford,**

AJ Dillione, Bryce DiPatre, Kendall Dunne, Andrea Filbeck, Morgan Harrison, Nicole Henry, Ken Jackman, Maya Jackson, Jennifer Jauffret, Bernie Kelley, Linda Kish, Greg Ladner, Zachary Lawlor, Lillian Leitao, Kinsey Lenehan, Tim Mangan, Alison Mitchell, Ismat Nawaz, Joshua Novak, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Michelle Righos, Margaret Rockey, and **Marisa Terranova Fissel**, among others.



▶ From left: Gabby Colson, Ryan Brady, Melissa Lennon, and Jessey Blau



▶ From left: Spencer Crawford, Alison Mitchell, and Melissa Lennon

SERVIAM GIRLS ACADEMY TUTORING PROGRAM



RLF participates in a tutoring program at Serviam Girls Academy, a private, tuition-free middle school that provides a year-round education to low-income girls in grades 5-8 in our community.

The firm's current and past volunteer tutors have included **Jessey Blau, Gabby Colson, AJ Dillione, Liz Freud, Wilson Guarnera, Morgan Harrison, Maya Jackson, Samantha Jonjo, Vicky Liu, Alison Mitchell, Grace Myers, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Lisa Schmidt, Sandy Xu,** and then summer associate **Dani Bell**, among others. A special thank you to **Ashley Brown**, who coordinated this program.

NATIVITY PREP TUTORING PROGRAM



In FY 2024 the firm launched a community service partnership with Nativity Preparatory School of Wilmington, a private, tuition-free middle school that provides a year-round education to low-income boys in grades 5-8 in our community. Our tutors commit to work with students twice a month in an afternoon study program.

Thank you to **Ashley Brown** for her efforts in coordinating this program, and to volunteer tutors **Dani Bell, AJ Dillione, Wilson Guarnera, Keegan Hicks,** and **Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk**.



▶ From left: Puja Upadhyay and Jessey Blau at the U.S. District Court of Delaware for the Law Day event

LAW DAY

The firm partnered with **The Honorable Maryellen Noreika** and **The Honorable Sherry Fallon** to host all the students from Serviam Girls Academy and Nativity Prep School for a Law Day event at the U.S. District Court of Delaware in December 2023. This opportunity included a mock trial presentation that involved the students as lawyers, judge, and jurors for a great educational experience. **Jessey Blau** spoke to the students and answered their questions about why she chose to become an attorney.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE

On Martin Luther King Day, the firm commemorates the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by promoting outreach to those in need in our community. The firm sponsored the DSBA's Annual MLK Day Breakfast and Day of Service at the Chase Center. Through the DSBA's Day of Service opportunities, **Maya Jackson** donated blood in partnership with the **Blood Bank of Delmarva** and **United Way**, **Andrea Filbeck** provided pro bono assistance at a **Wills for Seniors** event at the Police Athletic League, and **Ryan Brady** volunteered at the **Sunday Breakfast Mission** by preparing, serving, and cleaning up a lunch for the homeless and working poor in our community.

The firm continued its annual tradition of donating a catered lunch provided by Cosmos Restaurant to the **Ministry of Caring's Emmanuel Dining Rooms East and West** in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and legacy. **Monica Ayres, Doneene Damon, Maya Jackson, Mark Purpura, Marcos Ramos, Frank Sun, Sara Wagner,** and **Danielle Nowaczyk** represented the firm at the DSBA's MLK Day Breakfast.

Throughout FY 2024, the firm continued to support **Eisenberg Elementary School's** food pantry, which supplies students and their families with much-needed groceries and household items throughout the year. Eisenberg Elementary School serves over 500 children, many of whom are ethnically diverse and homeless, living in poverty, or at risk.



▶ From left: Mark Purpura, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Monica Ayres, Doneene Damon, Sara Wagner, Maya Jackson, Marcos Ramos, and Frank Sun

MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER

In October 2023 and October 2024, Richards, Layton & Finger sponsored the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk at Bellevue State Park. The 2023 and 2024 teams were led by **Tina Innis**. The 2023 team included **Susan Carey, Jennifer Carlson, Trish DiGenova, Bryce DiPatre, Bobby Kissel, Stefanie Lam, Sherill Marasigan, Alison Mitchell,** and **Emanuel Perris**. The 2024 Team included **Susan Carey, Kathy Howard, Lillian Leitao, Emanuel Perris, Ryan Brady, Bryce DiPatre, Ismat Nawaz,** and **Khatia Khadishvili**.



RLF's 2023 Walk Team at Bellevue State Park ◀



▶ RLF's 2024 Walk Team at Bellevue State Park
Front row from left: Susan Carey, Kathy Howard, Lillian Leitao, and Maria Marchesani . Back row from left: Tina Innis, Emanuel Perris, Ryan Brady, and Bryce DiPatre

NEW ASSOCIATES CLASS PRO BONO PROJECT

The new associate class continued the firm tradition of partnering with a local non-profit organization in a community service project of their choosing. The 2023 associate class volunteered at **Junior Achievement of Delaware** to assist the **Warner Elementary School** students who were participating in the Biz Town program. **Gabriela Monasterio** led this effort.



▶ From left to right: Andrea Filbeck, Zachary Lawlor, Kaitlyn Zavatsky, Jessica (Jessey) Blau, Wilson Guarnera, Gabriela Monasterio, Samantha Jonjo, and Margaret Rockey at Junior Achievement of Delaware

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE



In July 2024, the firm hosted a blood drive in support of the American Red Cross. Every unit of blood donated helps save up to three lives. Each recipient of that blood donation has his or her own story, and the positive impact of the donation is multiplied by the gratitude of that person's loved ones. Thanks to **Gina Edwards** for organizing this event on behalf of the firm.

SUMMER ASSOCIATES VOLUNTEERING AT RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

Volunteering is a tradition in our firm's summer associate program. In 2024 our summer associates, associates, and members of the Women's Initiative volunteered together to prepare and serve dinner at the **Ronald McDonald House of Delaware** through its new "Spoonful of Hope" program. **Samatha Stern** organized these community partnership opportunities.



▶ From left: Kristin Cunningham, Alexa Monroe, Alison Mitchell, Ashly Riches, Christine Dealy Haynes, and Clay Faller at the Ronald McDonald House of Delaware



▶ From left: Matthew Mallon, Andrew Rosen, Hap Conover, and Andrea Filbeck at the Ronald McDonald House of Delaware



▶ From left: Cayla Dupuis, Nicole Neri, Grant Knepper, Kate Strauch, Alyssa Boob, and Tim Mangan at the Ronald McDonald House of Delaware

OVER THE EDGE FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS OF DELAWARE

Chandler Elliott-Fehle partnered with **Delaware Real Estate Women (DREW)** in the annual "Over the Edge" fundraiser in support of the **Special Olympics of Delaware**. Chandler bravely propelled down the 17-story PNC building to help those served by Special Olympics of Delaware.



▶ From left: Parker Havis, Alison Mitchell, Leslie Henderson, Chandler Elliott-Fehle, and Sara Wagner at the Special Olympics "Over the Edge" fundraiser

ANNUAL PRO BONO CELEBRATION

In June 2024, the firm hosted its annual pro bono celebration to recognize the outstanding contributions and commitment of our attorneys and staff to our community. Lisa Schmidt spoke of the firm's longstanding commitment to helping others and highlighted the value the firm places on pro bono and community service efforts.

The firm recognized staff member **Crystal Weathers Carter** for her outstanding community service work and associate **Alison Mitchell** for her significant pro bono and community service work. Twenty-four years ago, Crystal Weathers Carter started the firm's Thanksgiving food drive to support the homeless, at-risk, and working poor who are served by the Ministry of Caring. She also created corporate partnerships in this effort to increase the overall donation. Crystal has been the driving force and leader on various firm-wide professional clothing, winter coat, and toy drives for those in need through various community partnerships with the **WRK Group**, **Ministry of Caring**, and **United Way**.

Alison Mitchell serves as the lead associate for the firm's longstanding partnership with **Central Baptist Community Development Corporation (CBCDC)** and its Eastside Rising initiative. Directors **Mark Kurtz**, **Tony Roustopoulos**, and **Sara Wagner**, along with Alison, host monthly meetings with **Rev. Dr. Terrence Keeling**, CBCDC's founder and executive director, and other staff members. Additionally, Alison has served as a tutor at Serviam Girls Academy for the past two years and as an Emmanuel Dining Room volunteer.

Keynote speaker **Kelly Ensslin, Esq.**, Chief of **Legal Services of The Office of the Child Advocate**, highlighted and thanked the firm for its ongoing advocacy on behalf of Delaware's dependent, neglected, and abused children.

▶ Alison Mitchell, recipient of this year's Pro Bono Award, at the Pro Bono Celebration



▶ Crystal Weathers Carter, recipient of this year's Community Service Award, and Russell Silberglied, chair of the Pro Bono and Community Service Committee, at the Pro Bono Celebration

▶ From left: Russell Silberglied, Kelly Ensslin, and Lisa Schmidt at the Pro Bono Celebration



SPONSORSHIPS

DELAWARE STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

In October 2023 and October 2024, RLF served as a gold sponsor of the DSBA's Annual Christopher W. White Distinguished Access to Justice Awards Breakfast honoring those who provide pro bono assistance to Delaware's underserved population.

In January 2024, the firm served as a platinum sponsor of the DSBA's Annual MLK Day Breakfast and Day of Service at the Chase Center.



▶ The 2023 DSBA Christopher W. White Distinguished Access to Justice Awards Breakfast, from left: Melissa Lennon, Mari Boyle, Paul Heath, Lisa Schmidt, Doneene Damon, and Danielle Nowaczyk

▶ The 2024 DSBA Christopher W. White Distinguished Access to Justice Awards Breakfast, from left: Brendan Clark, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Paul Heath, Anne Foster, Jeff Moyer, Josh Novak, and Melissa Lennon



COMBINED CAMPAIGN FOR JUSTICE

Since 1999, the Combined Campaign for Justice ("CCJ") has supported Delaware's three non-profit legal aid agencies: Community Legal Aid Society, Inc., Legal Services Corporation of Delaware, Inc., and Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, Inc. **Joshua Novak** represents the firm by serving as the **New Castle County co-chair** for the CCJ. The firm annually solicits support for the CCJ and its fundraising efforts to best serve the legal needs of low-income Delawareans. In FY 2024, the firm and its employees contributed more than \$135,000 to CCJ.

In August, **John O'Toole, Philip Micha, Kinsey Lenehan, Alexandra Ewing, Avery Benesch, Craig Ferrere, Wilson Guarnera, and Matt Milana** represented the firm at the Delaware CCJ Annual Golf Outing at the DuPont Country Club. Richards Layton is proud to have been a gold sponsor of the event.



▶ From left: John O'Toole, Kinsey Lenehan, Phil Micha, and Ally Ewing at the CCJ Annual Golf Outing

RACE JUDICATA

In July 2023 **Matthew Ady, Christine Dealy Haynes, Kinsey Lenehan, James McCauley,** summer associate **Hannah Ryan,** and **Christie Williams,** among others, represented Team RLF at the **18th Annual Art Connolly Race Judicata** at the Logan House in Trolley Square. The firm won the "largest team" award for the second year in a row. **Christine Haynes** won her age group and was the fastest woman in the DSBA. Summer associate **Hannah Ryan** won her age group, **Kinsey Lenehan** placed second in her age group, and **James McCauley** and **Matthew Ady** placed third in their respective age groups.

The funds raised support the **Delaware Law Related Education Center, Inc. ("DELREC"),** a private non-profit, 501c(3) organization that has provided services to Delaware's schools and the community for nearly a decade. Its most widely known programs are the Delaware High School Mock Trial Competition, the "We the People" Competition, and Law Day in the high schools. The firm again served as an event sponsor in support of DELREC.

In September 2024, RLF participated in the 19th Annual Art Connolly Race Judicata 5k at the Logan House in Trolley Square. Our team, led by **Ashley Brown,** included **Keegan Hicks** and **Matthew Ady,** along with RLF friends and family members. The firm received the "largest team" award for the third year in a row.



▶ From left: Hannah Ryan, Zoe Matherne, Christine Dealy Haynes, Kinsey Lenehan, Noah Brown, Dave Teklits, Christie Williams, and James McCauley



▶ Ashley Brown with the RLF team's trophy



▶ Matthew and Shelby Ady

MAKE-A-WISH®

In October 2024, the firm was a sponsor of the third annual **Make-A-Wish® Philadelphia, Delaware & Susquehanna Valley** "Celebration of Wishes," which commemorates the transformative power of a wish for a child battling a critical illness. The Andrisani family, including **Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk,** the firm's Director of Attorney Development, received the Star of Delaware award in recognition of their commitment to the Make-A-Wish Foundation and their conviction that the wish journey is a crucial part of a child's medical treatment.



▶ Front row from left: Ashley Brown, Lisa Schmidt, Christine Haynes, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Melissa Lennon

▶ Second row from left: Matthew Ady, Jonathan Kaplowitz, John Ferko, Laura Lubin Rossi, and Samantha Stern

OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE

The firm was a gold sponsor of the OCA's Annual "Jingle Mingle" in 2023 and 2024, which raises funds for foster kids to have opportunities and childhood experiences such as attending summer camps and school field trips.

DELAWARE BAR FOUNDATION

The firm continued its support of the Delaware Bar Foundation's mission to improve the administration of justice in Delaware by providing funding for legal services for those less fortunate, promoting study and research in the field of law, fostering knowledge of citizenship rights and responsibilities, and enhancing public respect for the rule of law.



Delaware Bar
Foundation

PROFUNDO BONO

The firm was a proud sponsor of **Profundo Bono, Inc.'s 2024 Bi-Annual Musical**, written, organized, and performed by Delaware judges, attorneys, and legal professionals on behalf of the Combined Campaign for Justice, which provides financial support to Delaware's three non-profit legal aid organizations. Thanks to **Edmond Kim, Rae Ra, Jessey Blau, and Christie Williams** for the volunteer support they lent to the success of this year's Profundo Bono.

Don't Miss Profundo Bono, Inc.'s 2024 Bi-Annual Musical!
All proceeds to benefit the Combined Campaign for Justice

Profundo Bono™

Anna Karenina

November 15th & 16th | 7:30 p.m.
Laird Performing Arts Center
@ Tatnall School

November 17th | 2:00 p.m.
Education & Humanities Theatre
@ Delaware State University

Tickets may be purchased at
www.ProfundoBono.org

Printing courtesy of DLS Discovery

from train to trial
Not My Characters

COLLECTIONS, DRIVES, AND CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

On behalf of the Pro Bono and Community Service Committee, the firm organized food drives and gift collections for those in need throughout the holiday season and in conjunction with the firm's annual MLK Day of Service.

CHARITY OF THE MONTH

Each month a different non-profit organization was chosen, and the person who nominated the cause is given an opportunity to tell the entire firm why this particular organization's mission is important. Through its 2023-2024 monthly fundraisers, the firm provided financial assistance to **Ronald McDonald House Charities, Greater Delaware, American Red Cross, The Delaware Ovarian Cancer Foundation, Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition, Wounded Warrior Project, UnLocke the Light Foundation, Department of Child Life at Nemours Children's Hospital, National Kidney Foundation of Delaware and Maryland, Autism Delaware, Special Olympics Delaware, Mental Health Association in Delaware, Vasa Previa Foundation, and YMCA of Delaware.**

Through these and other projects, firm attorneys are encouraged to continue to develop their skills and contacts, while giving back to the community in which they serve.

THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

RLF continued its 25-year tradition of supporting the Ministry of Caring's annual Turkeython to provide Thanksgiving dinners to the homeless, at risk, and working poor in our community. Thank you to **Brigitte Fresco**, whose inspiring emails and unwavering support of this annual tradition led the firm to a combined donation of \$12,600 towards Thanksgiving dinners for local families in need, and to everyone who donated to the Ministry of Caring's Turkeython in 2023 and 2024.



UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE'S WINTER WONDERLAND TOY AND COAT GIVEAWAY

For three years in a row, the firm participated in **United Way of Delaware's Winter Wonderland Coat and Toy Drive**, held at the Wilmington Library. **Ashley Brown** organized the firm's participation in this event, with support from **Brigitte Fresco**, and we helped many children in Wilmington receive new coats and toys.



From left: Ashley Brown and Brigitte Fresco



From left: Mariah Carr, Nysier Judkins, Brigitte Fresco, Kenyatta Livingston, and Ashley Brown with the firm's United Way donations



ADOPT-A-CHILD HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE

In 1999, the firm "adopted" six children from the **Ministry of Caring's Adopt-A-Child program**; now, the Adopt-A-Child program is a longstanding and much-loved firm tradition. Each year RLF attorneys and staff are matched with homeless and at-risk children in Wilmington and given the children's holiday wish list, and we have adopted 2,398 local children in need over the past 25 years. In 2023 and 2024 we donated a total of \$21,575 to provide gift cards for over 216 children in Wilmington. We thank **Anne Foster** for her passion and conviction in leading this effort—together we have helped spread joy to so many children as well as to all of us.

Giving Back

Richards, Layton & Finger is proud to have members of the firm dedicating their time and talents to serving in leadership roles in the following charitable organizations:

American Red Cross
of the Delmarva Peninsula
Board of Directors
Jake Crosetto

Boy Scouts of America, Del-Mar-Va Council
Advisory Committee
Fred Cottrell

Brandywine Conservancy
Board of Directors, Secretary
W. Donald Sparks, II

Cameron Kravitt Foundation
Board of Directors
Doneene Keemer Damon

Cancer Support Community Delaware
Board of Directors
Governance Committee, Chair
Mark Collins

Catholic Charities of the
Diocese of Wilmington
Board of Directors
Nicole Henry

Centreville Layton School
Board of Directors
Anne Foster

Christina Cultural Arts Center
Board of Directors, Executive Committee
Alexandra Ewing

Cobbs Creek Golf Foundation
Community Advisory Board
Melissa Lennon

Combined Campaign for Justice
New Castle County Co-Chair
Joshua Novak

Cornerstone West Community
Development Corporation
Board of Directors
Joshua Novak

Delaware Community
Development Corporation
Board of Directors
Alison Mitchell

Delaware Greenways
Board of Directors
Philip Micha

Delaware Historical Society
Read House & Gardens
Advisory Board
Brendan Clark

Delaware Nature Society
Board of Directors
Matthew Ady

Delaware Prosperity Partnership
Board of Directors
Doneene Keemer Damon

Delaware Real Estate Women
Board of Directors, President
Chandler Elliott-Fehle

Delaware Volunteer Legal Services
Board of Directors, Treasurer
W. Donald Sparks, II

DirectWomen
Board of Directors
Mark Gentile

Downtown Visions
Board of Directors
Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk

Equality Delaware, Inc.
Board of Directors
Mark Purpura

Equality Delaware Foundation
Board of Directors
Mark Purpura

First State FinTech Lab
Board of Directors
Doneene Keemer Damon

Friends of Wilmington Parks
Board of Directors
Benjamin Allen, Elizabeth Freud,
Kinsey Lenehan, and Sandy Xu

Girls, Inc. of Delaware
Alumni Association, President
Christie Williams

International FOXP1 Foundation
Board of Directors, Founder, Vice President
Katharine Lester Mowery

Jewish Federation of Delaware
Board of Directors, Chair Emeritus
Russell Silberglied

Jewish National Fund, Delaware
Board of Directors, President
Russell Silberglied

Junior League of Wilmington Delaware
Member Engagement Committee
Kinsey Lenehan

Kennett Education Foundation
Board of Directors
Grace Myers

Kind to Kids
Board of Directors
Laura Rossi

Las Americas Aspira Academy
Board of Directors
Marisa Terranova Fissel

Legal Services Corporation of Delaware Inc.
Board of Directors, President
Kevin Gross

Mariano Rivera Public Foundation
Board of Directors, Corporate Counsel, Secretary
Russell Silberglied

Mary Campbell Center
Board of Directors
Jennifer Jauffret

Mental Health Association in Delaware
Board of Directors
Emily Frauli

Ministry of Caring, Inc.
Board of Directors, Vice President
Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk

Ministry of Caring Property Management Inc.
Board of Directors
R. Parker Havis

Music School of Delaware
Board of Directors, Chair
Richard Facciolo

Opera Delaware, Inc.
Board of Directors
Samuel Nolen

Padua Academy
Board of Trustees
Michael Merchant

Rodney Inn of Court
Executive Committee
Katharine Lester Mowery

Rodney Inn of Court
Treasurer
Travis Hunter

Ronald McDonald House of Delaware
Board of Directors
Lisa Schmidt

Ronald McDonald House of Delaware
Building and Grounds Committee
Nicole Henry

Ronald McDonald House of Delaware
Development Committee
Christine Dealy Haynes
Kinsey Lenehan

Ronald McDonald House of Delaware
Strategic Planning Committee
Amanda Steele

Sacred Heart Village, I
Board of Directors, President
Christine Dealy Haynes

Sacred Heart Village, II
Board of Directors, President
Sara Wagner

Science, Technology and
Research Institute of Delaware (STRIDE)
Board of Directors
Robert Whetzel

Selective Service System for Delaware
Board
Fred Cottrell

Society of Colonial Wars
in the State of Delaware
Governor
Samuel Nolen

St. Edmond's Academy
Corporate Board
Fred Cottrell

St. Joseph's University
Board of Trustees
Doneene Keemer Damon

St. Joseph's University Haub School of Business
Board of Visitors
Doneene Keemer Damon

St. Patrick's Center
St. Patrick's Day Society
Fundraising Committee
Michael Collins

St. Thomas More Society
Board of Directors, Executive Committee
Michael Collins

Stroud Water Research
Board of Directors
Robert Whetzel

Structured Finance Association
Board of Directors, Vice Chair
Doneene Keemer Damon

Sycamore Hill Church Hockessin
Lead Trustee
Rudolf Koch

Temple University Beasley School of Law
Board of Visitors
Doneene Keemer Damon

Temple University, Fox School of Business
Real Estate Advisory Board, Vice Chair
Sara Wagner

The Forum of Executive Women
Board of Directors, Chair
Doneene Keemer Damon

The Grand Opera House
Board of Directors
Kelly Farnan

Ulster Project of Delaware
Board of Directors
John O'Toole

United Way of Delaware
Human Resources Committee
Gina Edwards

University of Delaware
College of Engineering
Advisory Committee
Robert Whetzel

Village of St. John
Board of Directors
Anne Foster

Waldron Mercy Academy
Board of Trustees
Melissa Lennon

Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance
at the University of Delaware
Advisory Board
Blake Rohrbacher

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Board of Trustees
Stanford L. Stevenson, III

William E. Proudford Sickle Cell Fund, Inc.
Board of Directors
John Mark Zeberkiewicz

Wilmington Economic Development Corporation
Board of Directors
Tony Roustopoulos

Wilmington Friends School
Alumni Board of Directors
Katharine Lester Mowery

Wilmington Institute
Board of Managers, Vice President
Samuel Nolen

Wilmington University
Human Resources Committee
Gina Edwards

Wilmington University School of Law
Advisory Board
Kelly Farnan
Blake Rohrbacher

Working Group on Legal Opinions Foundation
Board of Directors, Treasurer
William Yemc

YMCA of Delaware, Central Branch
Board of Directors
Brian Mammarella



We offer this report with profound gratitude for the Delaware legal community of which we are a part and with a fresh determination to continue pushing it forward.

— *Lisa A. Schmidt*
President



RICHARDS
LAYTON &
FINGER
125 YEARS