



news

Colorado Judicial Branch
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**Colorado Supreme Court recognizes lawyers who achieved goal
in Pro Bono Commitment Program**
Program nearly triples in first three years

DENVER – The Colorado Supreme Court today announced that 85 law firms, solo practitioners and in-house counsel groups met an annual goal of providing an average of 50 hours of pro bono legal services per lawyer in 2008, nearly three times the number that met the goal in 2006, the program’s first year.

Last year, 109 law firms, solo practitioners and in-house counsel committed to providing an average of at least 50 hours of pro bono legal services per lawyer, primarily to indigent people or organizations serving indigent people. Eighty-five, or 78 percent, met the goal. In 2006, the first year of the program, 42 such commitments were made, with 34 firms, solo practitioners or in-house counsel meeting the goal.

“These attorneys and firms provide a tremendous benefit, ensuring access to justice for people who otherwise may not have been able to afford any legal services,” said Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Mary Mullarkey. “The thousands of hours of legal services given to those in need reflects that most of us who chose the law as a profession did so in the interest of helping people.”

The Pro Bono Commitment Program was created to secure an enduring commitment from Colorado's legal community to provide free legal services to indigent people in civil matters and to annually recognize law firms, solo practitioners and in-house counsel groups who give generously of their time. Participants have until Feb. 15 each calendar year to advise the court whether they met the goal for the prior year. The program is outlined in Rule 6.1 of the Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct, encouraging every lawyer to try to provide at least 50 hours of pro bono public legal services per year.

"I hope this program will continue to grow and fulfill a very important need," said Justice Gregory Hobbs. "It has been very heartening to see the significant growth in this program, but there still is a great deal of work to do to improve access to justice for Colorado's most vulnerable residents."

A reception is scheduled Monday, April 13, at 4 p.m., in the Colorado Supreme Court courtroom on the fifth floor of the Colorado Judicial Building at 2 East 14th Ave. The Supreme Court will honor those firms, solo practitioners and in-house counsel groups who met the 2008 Pro Bono Commitment Program goal, as well as those who are committed to working toward achieving the goal in 2009.

More information on the program, including a listing of participants, is available on the Colorado Judicial Branch Web site at

http://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Supreme_Court/Pro_Bono.cfm.

Editor's Note: Rule 6.1 (Voluntary Pro Bono Public Service) is reproduced below.

COLORADO COURT RULES: APPENDIX TO CHAPTERS 18 TO 20, COLORADO RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT: PUBLIC SERVICE: Rule 6.1. Voluntary Pro Bono Public Service

A lawyer should aspire to render at least fifty (50) hours of pro bono public legal services per year. In fulfilling this responsibility, the lawyer should:

(a) provide a substantial majority of the fifty (50) hours of legal services without fee or expectation of fee to:

(1) persons of limited means or

(2) charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means; and

(b) provide any additional legal or public service through:

(1) delivery of legal services at no fee or a substantially reduced fee to individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights, or charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters in furtherance of their organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources or would be otherwise inappropriate;

(2) delivery of legal services at a substantially reduced fee to persons of limited means; or

(3) participation in activities for improving the law, the legal system or the legal profession.

In addition, a lawyer should voluntarily contribute financial support to organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means.

Where constitutional, statutory or regulatory restrictions prohibit government and public sector lawyers or judges from performing the pro bono services outlined in paragraphs (a)(1) and (2), those individuals should fulfill their pro bono responsibility by performing services or participating in activities outlined in paragraph (b).