

ROBINS KAPLAN LLP COMMUNITY GIVING AND *PRO BONO* REPORT

# RISE UP

BETTER TOGETHER.



ROBINS  KAPLAN LLP

At Robins Kaplan, we know that *pro bono* services are critical to bridging the access-to-justice gap for low-income individuals, enforcing civil rights, and advancing the public interest. Last year, our attorneys gave their time and skills to protect the lives of individuals fleeing persecution in their home countries and violence in their homes. The firm's *pro bono* services prevented homelessness and unjust incarceration and protected the beauty of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The *pro bono* legal services we provide remove barriers to obtaining employment and housing and allow our clients to enforce their rights and provide for the basic needs of their families. We are pleased to share the stories of a few of our *pro bono* clients here. As you will see in this year's Pro Bono and Community Giving Report, our attorneys are dedicated to fighting for our *pro bono* clients, and all our firm members are committed to giving back to the community.



**“Working on behalf of the common good is the engine of democracy, vital to our communities, cities, states— and, ultimately, the nation.”**

- MATTHEW DESMOND,  
*EVICTED: POVERTY AND PROFIT IN THE AMERICAN CITY*

# RISE UP

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A woman with long brown hair is sitting on a windowsill, looking out a large window. She is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved top and dark pants. The window is divided into four panes, and the view outside is blurred, showing trees and a bright sky. The lighting is soft and natural, coming from the window.

# 820 HOURS

The firm provided 820 hours of *pro bono* service to help low-income clients in housing matters in 2022.

# SECURING JUDGMENT

Our client's home had no working kitchen or bathroom, and its doors and windows were broken. When the landlord ignored orders from the City of Minneapolis to repair the rental home, Robins Kaplan took the tenant's case *pro bono*.

The landlord threatened to evict instead of repair and filed a retaliatory eviction action against our client. We secured immediate dismissal and expungement of the eviction action at the first appearance, ensuring that it would not prevent the client from finding housing in the future. Robins Kaplan then fought back on behalf of the tenant by intervening in the City's Tenant Remedies Action to protect our client's interests, and ultimately proceeded to trial in a rent escrow action where the landlord blamed the tenant for the repair problems and again tried to evict our client. Following multiple days of trial, the court found that the landlord forged a lease between the parties and was not credible. The court ultimately ruled in our client's favor on each claim and awarded substantial rent abatement.

**ATTORNEYS:**

Marcus Guith,  
Spencer Davis-VaNess,  
Anne Lockner, and  
Michael Collyard

**PARTNER**

**ORGANIZATIONS:** Volunteer  
Lawyers Network & Mid-  
Minnesota Legal Aid

# PREVENTING EVICTION

**ATTORNEY:**

Rashanda Bruce

**PARTNER**

**ORGANIZATION:**  
Volunteer Lawyers  
Network

Rashanda Bruce recently prevented the eviction of a low-income single mother with five children. Rashanda volunteered to represent the client after meeting with her at the Volunteer Lawyers Network Eviction Representation Project clinic. In addition to preventing the family's eviction, Rashanda's representation prevented the loss of the client's rental subsidy and revealed that the landlord, in fact, owed our client around \$1,300 in overpaid rent. The settlement agreement Rashanda negotiated also ensured that the record of the eviction case was expunged so that it will not serve as a barrier if the client decides to look for new housing in the future.

# VICTORY IN BOUNDARY WATERS

Our *pro bono* team achieved a significant victory in a lengthy legal challenge to the federal government's renewal of two expired copper-nickel mining leases on land adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

In 2018, Robins Kaplan filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, alleging that the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) reinstatement of these expired mining leases would allow further exploration and development of a sulfide-ore copper-nickel mine incompatible with the wilderness character of the area. That lawsuit claimed BLM's decision to reinstate the expired leases was arbitrary, capricious, contrary to law, and exceeded the government agency's authority while improperly disregarding a decision by the U.S. Forest Service to not consent to the lease renewal because of the inherent risk of damage from the proposed mine. In 2020, after the BLM completed the renewal of those leases, Robins Kaplan filed a second lawsuit claiming that the renewal was conducted without an adequate environmental review under improper political pressure.

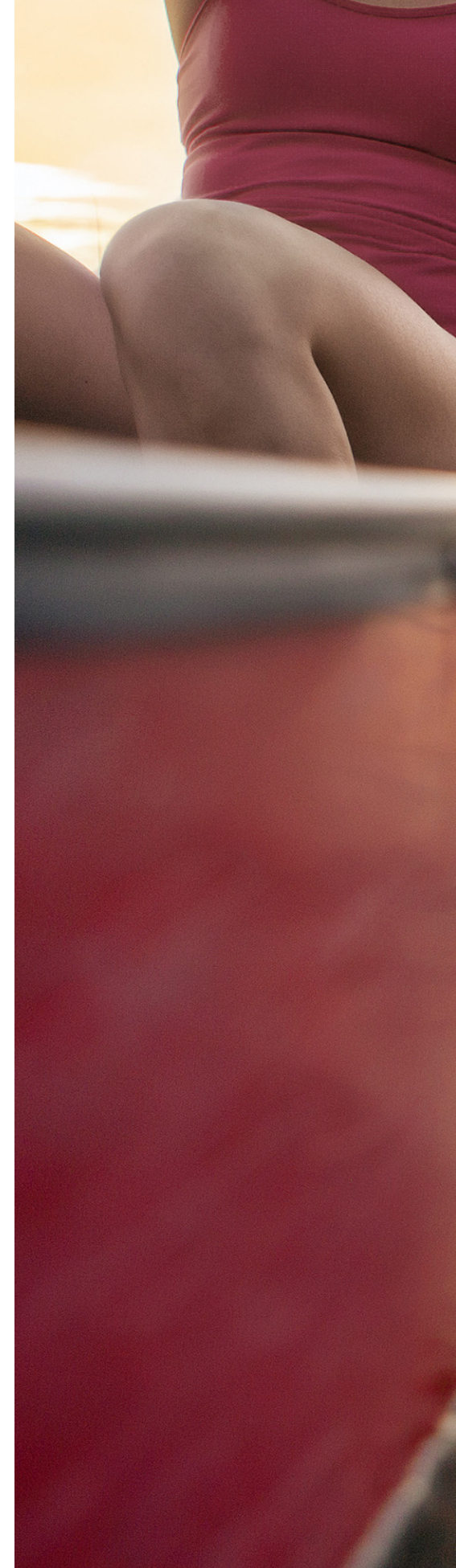
On January 26, 2022, the Interior Department announced the cancellation of the mineral leases, based on a legal determination by its solicitor general that the leases had been renewed in violation of multiple legal authorities, including by failing to recognize the Forest Service's consent authority and failing to conduct an adequate environmental review. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland explained, "After a careful legal review, we found the leases were improperly renewed in violation of applicable statutes and regulations, and we are taking action to cancel them."

"The Interior Department's action heralds a complete victory in our long-running effort to preserve and protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness," said partner Steve Safranski, counsel to the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. "We are proud to have partnered with the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness to ensure the future of this area, which has been a national ecological treasure and an iconic destination in Minnesota for generations." This decision was hailed by Minnesota Congresswoman Betty McCollum as a "monumental victory for the Boundary Waters."

Protected by federal law for more than 100 years, and now by federal statute, the BWCAW is the largest wilderness area east of the Rocky Mountains. It is renowned for its water quality and provides an abundant habitat for thousands of species of wildlife, including three threatened or endangered species, and offers opportunities for ecological studies and exceptional wilderness experiences. The National Geographic Society recognized the BWCAW as one of the planet's "50 Places of a Lifetime."

On August 22, 2022, Twin Metals filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, seeking to reverse the cancellation of its mineral leases. The Robins Kaplan *pro bono* team continues to represent Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness in this matter.

**ATTORNEYS:** Richard Allyn, Bryan Mechell, Stephen Safranski, Eric Barstad, Siobhan Jamsa





“We are proud to have partnered with the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness to ensure the future of this area, which has been a national ecological treasure and an iconic destination in Minnesota for generations.”

- PARTNER STEPHEN SAFRANSKI, COUNSEL TO THE FRIENDS OF THE BOUNDARY WATERS WILDERNESS

PRESERVE + PROTECT



Since 2012,  
Robins Kaplan  
has provided  
3,000 hours of  
*pro bono* services  
to Jeremiah  
Program  
participants.

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**3,000 hours**



# JEREMIAH PROGRAM

## HOLISTIC LEGAL SERVICES

The Jeremiah Program helps low-income single mothers enrolled in higher education overcome poverty by providing housing, life skills training, and early childhood education. In 2012, partner Stacey Slaughter, a Jeremiah Program board member, began partnering with the Volunteer Lawyers Network to hold regular legal clinics for Jeremiah Program participants. Today, the firm continues to provide monthly legal services programming for mothers enrolled in the Jeremiah Program, including know-your-rights trainings and legal advice clinics. When our volunteer attorneys like Stacey Slaughter and Caroline Moos identify a client in need of additional legal services, they often recruit other firm members to help out.

A Jeremiah Program participant came to the legal clinic because she learned of a default judgment entered against her in 2019 that prevented her from renewing her driver's license. The client was unaware of the judgment because the plaintiff had never served her with the complaint and because the complaint arose out of a car accident that occurred after she sold the vehicle at issue. Our attorney, Marcus Guith, prepared a compelling motion to vacate the judgment for improper service and negotiated a stipulated order vacating the judgment and lifting the suspension of the client's driver's license. This client also received public benefits and estate planning advice from Matt Frerichs and the firm's trusts and estates practice.

**ATTORNEYS:**

Marcus Guith, Matt  
Frerichs, Stacey  
Slaughter, Caroline Moos

**PARTNER**

**ORGANIZATION:**  
Volunteer Lawyers  
Network



## PRO BONO WIN

### ROBINS KAPLAN AND LEGAL RIGHTS CENTER

A Robins Kaplan fellow at the Legal Rights Center (LRC) recently partnered with other Robins Kaplan attorneys to represent a client who was grossly overcharged with first-degree assault. The client - a single mother working on her GED who grew up in foster care - was facing approximately seven years in prison because of the prosecuting authority's erroneous reading of medical records. Our attorneys volunteered their expertise and located a medical expert whose work allowed our fellow at LRC to challenge probable cause. Ultimately, rather than spending seven years in prison, the client received a year of probation and a few days of work-crew service.

**ATTORNEYS:**

Morgan Voight, Brandon Vaughn

**PARTNER ORGANIZATION:**

Legal Rights Center

Robins Kaplan employs two full-time attorneys at the Legal Rights Center and a full-time attorney at Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. The Legal Rights Center is a nonprofit public defense corporation that provides free legal representation to low-income juvenile and adult clients. The mission of the Legal Rights Center is to work with the community to seek justice and promote racial equity for those to whom it has been historically denied. The firm has employed one Legal Rights Center fellow since 2005 and two fellows since 2014. Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid provides free legal representation to low-income clients. Our attorney at Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid represents low-income clients in family law cases with a focus on representing victim-survivors of domestic violence.



4,000 HOURS

# GREEN CARD FOR IMMIGRATION CLIENT

In 2015, the firm began representing a *pro bono* client who was facing deportation. In 2022, our client obtained a green card, thereby securing his path to U.S. citizenship! Our client grew up in an impoverished Caribbean country. He suffered from a painful and disfiguring medical condition that got worse as he grew up. His doctors were unable to provide treatment. On top of that, our client faced physical attacks because of his appearance, and he feared for his life. He came to Minnesota on humanitarian parole in 2011 for life-saving medical care. After a corrective surgery, his physical appearance remained altered, and our client was scared for his life if he had to return to his home country. He applied for asylum but was denied.

Robins Kaplan stepped in to represent the client when his asylum and removal case went before the immigration court. We overhauled his asylum application, engaged experts, and prepared to try the case. In 2017, we reached an agreement with the Chief Counsel for the Department of Homeland Security in Minnesota to have the immigration court administratively close the case. This allowed our client to remain in the United States indefinitely and preserved his asylum claim, but it paused all immigration court proceedings. In 2020, administrative closure was eliminated, and the client's case was re-calendared. Our team explored all avenues to help our client continue his life in the United States. Ultimately, in 2022, we secured Temporary Protected Status for the client, successfully moved the immigration court for another administrative closure of his asylum and removal case, and coordinated with his employer to obtain an employment-based visa and finally, a green card. With that green card, our client is on a path to apply for U.S. citizenship.

Since arriving in the United States, our client learned to speak English, earned a high school degree, earned an associate's degree, earned a bachelor's degree, and obtained employment in the medical field. He is a caring, intelligent, and determined individual. We are proud to have helped our client navigate his tumultuous immigration journey.

**ATTORNEYS:**

Benjamin Linden,  
Emily Niles,  
François Ecclesiaste,  
Patricia Yoedicke,  
Heather Chang, and  
Jake Holdreith

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**In 2022, the firm provided 4,000 hours of *pro bono* service to immigrants who otherwise could not afford an attorney.**



# 300 HOURS

Since mid-2020, the firm's Boston office has provided more than 300 hours of *pro bono* service to clients through the Lawyers Clearinghouse Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Sealing Clinic.

# REMOVING BARRIERS

## HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT

### ATTORNEYS:

Pam Berman, Rob Callahan,  
Matt Cardosi, Lauren Coppola,  
Michele Detherage, Peter Foundas,  
Tony Froio, Laura Lee,  
Manleen Singh, Chris Sullivan,  
and Tim Wenger

### PARTNER ORGANIZATION:

Lawyers Clearinghouse

Many members of our Boston office worked with the Lawyers Clearinghouse to seal or expunge aged criminal records that were severe impediments to employment and advancement for individuals who had either not been convicted or had long ago completed their sentences. Our attorney, Tim Wenger, recently obtained for his client expungement of marijuana possession charges from the late 1990s. The record of the case created barriers for the client – a Dominican American, husband of 16 years, and father of three – despite the offense no longer being a crime under state law. In granting expungement, the judge noted the client’s deep commitment to his community. Tim also successfully petitioned the Department of Probation to seal the client’s related records. And recently, another Robins Kaplan attorney, Peter Foundas, helped seal a client’s 25-year-old misdemeanor offense record that had resulted in a denial of the client’s job application.

# VICTORY

## PRO BONO WAGE THEFT CASE

### ATTORNEYS:

Greta Wiessner,  
Tom Hamlin, and  
David Prange

### PARTNER ORGANIZATION

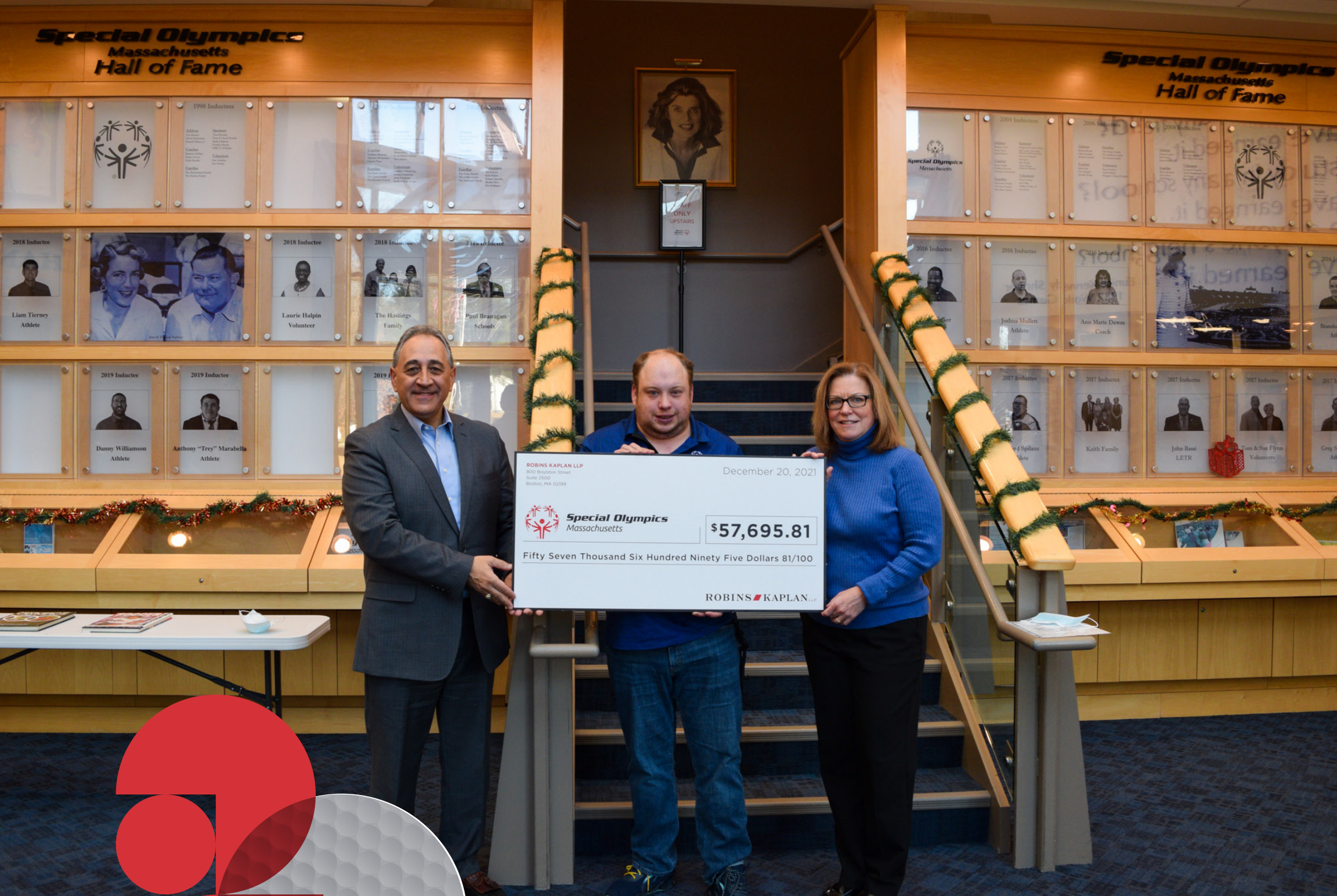
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid

In October 2022, the firm favorably settled a wage theft, breach of contract, and defamation case for a *pro bono* client. The client, a single mother and a professional caregiver, entered into an employment agreement to care for her ailing estranged biological father. The defendant, the father’s longtime domestic partner, promised our client she would pay for the client’s personal care services. However, a few months into the agreement, the defendant abandoned the father in the client’s care and refused to pay. When the client tried to assert her rights, the defendant filed a false report accusing the client of abusing her father.

After succeeding on a motion to compel discovery and filing a motion for partial summary judgment, our attorneys reached a favorable settlement for the client. The defendant agreed to pay our client \$45,000 and release all claims to a vehicle the defendant had purchased for the client’s use as a caregiver.

**Special Olympics  
Massachusetts  
Hall of Fame**

**Special Olympics  
Massachusetts  
Hall of Fame**



TWENTIETH  
ANNUAL  
GOLF TOURNAMENT  

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2002-2022

**ROBINS  KAPLAN** LLP



**Special Olympics  
Massachusetts**

For 20 years, Robins Kaplan has proudly hosted a golf tournament to benefit Special Olympics Massachusetts.

**This year, we raised \$54,516 - bringing the total amount raised over the past two decades to \$1 million.**

Thank you to the golfers and sponsors who helped us reach this milestone number!

# COMMUNITY & PRO BONO

## 245

Robins Kaplan has hosted its name change clinic for transgender individuals since 2019, when the firm partnered with LGBTQ advocacy group OutFront Minnesota. Since then, at least 245 clients have received legal assistance to help change their name.

**“Especially now, people come to us afraid because maybe they present one way, then when they show their ID, it creates a lot of questions, and they start to feel unsafe. They come to us wanting a solution for that. And to be able to give that to them helps them feel they’re starting on this process towards safety.”**

- PARTNER HOLLY DOLEJSI,  
INTERVIEW WITH *MPR NEWS*



**Adopt-A-Family**  
HOLIDAY GIFT PROGRAM

**In November, the firm sponsored two families who were part of Avivo’s Adopt-A-Family Holiday Gift Program.**

Avivo serves individuals and their families who face complex barriers to success such as poverty, homelessness, unemployment, chemical addictions, or mental health concerns.

## 60+

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS WE  
PARTNERED WITH IN 2022 TO PROVIDE  
*PRO BONO* LEGAL SERVICES.

## THE ROBINS KAPLAN PRIVATE FOUNDATION

# 2022

AchieveMpls  
Alliance For Children's Rights  
American Antitrust Institute  
American Bar Foundation  
American Cancer Society  
Amicus Society  
Angel City Sports  
Atlanta Legal Aid Society  
Best Buy Foundation  
Bet Tzedek  
Books For Africa  
Boston Bar Foundation  
Boys & Girls Club of Venice  
Breakthrough Greater Boston  
Breakthrough Twin Cities  
California Rural Legal Assistance  
Camp Ronald McDonald For Good Times  
Can Do Canines  
Children's HeartLink  
Children's Law Center Of Minnesota  
Children's Theatre Company  
Citizens League  
City Harvest  
Concord Youth Theatre  
East River Legal Services  
Economic Club of Minnesota  
Epilepsy Foundation Of Minnesota  
Equal Justice Works  
Firefighters For Healing  
Foundation of the Federal Bar Association  
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness  
Georgia Innocence Project  
Gigi's Playhouse Twin Cities  
Global Rights for Women  
Great North Innocence Project  
Greater Boston Legal Services  
Greater Twin Cities United Way  
Guthrie Theater  
Haiti Outreach  
Heilicher  
Hennepin County Bar Foundation  
House of Charity

Hudson River Community Sailing  
Illusion Theater  
Immigrant Law Center Of Minnesota  
Interfaith Outreach & Community Partners  
JDRF  
Jeremiah Program  
Jewish Family and Children's Services of Minneapolis  
Jumpstart For Young Children  
Justice4Katie  
Kids In Need Of Defense (KIND)  
Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers  
Lawyers for Good Government  
Legal Aid at Work  
Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota  
Legal Rights Center  
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys  
MedtechWomen  
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid  
Minneapolis Institute Of Arts  
Minneapolis Jewish Federation  
Minnesota American Indian Bar Association  
Minnesota Assistance Council For Veterans  
Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers  
Minnesota Council on Economic Education  
Minnesota Justice Foundation  
Minnesota Orchestral Association  
Minnesotans' Military Appreciation Fund  
Mitchell Hamline School Of Law  
Mixed Blood Theater  
Mount Zion Temple  
Myopia Hunt Club  
National LGBTQ+ Bar Association  
Native American Rights Fund  
Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County  
Norway House  
Opportunity for All Kids  
OutFront Minnesota  
Pacer Center  
Page Education Foundation  
Pro Bono Net  
Project Success

Public Counsel  
Ramsey County Bar Foundation  
Regents Of The University Of California, Berkeley  
RIA House  
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra Society  
Science Museum of Minnesota  
Shine A Light Foundation  
Shout Out Loud  
Silicon Valley Urban Debate League  
Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services  
Special Olympics Massachusetts  
Tee It Up For The Troops  
The Advocates For Human Rights  
The Home for Little Wanderers  
The National Judicial College  
The New York Bar Foundation  
The Redemption Project  
The Sanneh Foundation  
The Sedona Conference  
The Sikh Coalition  
Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund  
Tubman  
Tufts Medical Center  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of Minnesota Mock Trial Association  
University of St. Thomas  
USC Gould School of Law  
Veterans Defense Project  
Volunteer Lawyers For The Arts  
Volunteer Lawyers Network  
Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association  
Walker Art Center  
Wanton Injustice Legal Detail (WILD)  
Women's Bar Foundation  
YMCA of the North  
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights  
Young Voices  
Youth Frontiers  
YWCA of Minneapolis



# CONTRIBUTIONS

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In 2022, Robins Kaplan provided **16,586 HOURS** of *pro bono* services to clients who cannot afford legal presentation, nonprofit organizations, and clients in civil rights and public interest cases.

RISE UP

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# 2022 BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

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Advocates for Human Rights

Agate Housing and Services

American Association for Justice

American Board of Trial Advocates

Boston Bar Association

Boys & Girls Club of Venice

California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

Center for Immigrant Career Advancement

Center of the American Experiment

Children's Theatre Company

ChIPs, Twin Cities Chapter

Civil Justice Research Initiative

Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

Friends of Big Bear Valley

Great North Innocence Project

Gunflint Trail Historical Society

H2O for Life

HCPA

Hennepin County Bar Association

Holy Cross Varsity Club

Hudson River Community Sailing

Infinity Project

International Academy of Trial Lawyers

Jeremiah Program

Jerry Brown Farm Association, Inc.

Jumpstart

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

Kappa Kappa Gamma

Kimble Lake Homeowners' Association

Legal Rights Center

Lion's Harvest

Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Mandarin Academy

Massachusetts Bar Foundation

Massachusetts Insurance & Reinsurance  
Bar Association

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid

Minnesota American Indian Bar  
Association

Minnesota Asian Pacific American Bar  
Association

Minnesota Association for Justice

Minnesota Women Lawyers

MNTech

Mount Alvernia Academy

Move to Heal South Dakota

National Association of Former U.S.  
Attorneys

National Civil Justice Institute

National Judicial College

New England Bar Association

New Stage Community Theatre

Norway House

Public Counsel

RIA, Inc.

Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation

Rotary Club of San Carlos

Rotary Club of San Carlos Community  
Services, Inc.

Sieff Family Foundation

Springboard for the Arts

St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

Talmud Torah of Minneapolis

TearRestore

Tee It Up for the Troops

The Black in Biglaw Pipeline

The Clemency Project

The Fund for Legal Aid

The Sanneh Foundation

The Women's Bar Association of  
Massachusetts

The Young Center

Topanga Coalition for Emergency  
Preparedness

Town of Shrewsbury Personnel Board

Tufts Medical Center Governor's Society  
Board

Twin Cities Cardozo Society

Twin Cities Diversity in Practice

University of Minnesota Law School

University of St. Thomas School of Law

Volunteer Lawyers Network

Benefactor's Board

Volunteer Lawyers Network

Winona State University Foundation

Women Lawyers Association  
of Los Angeles

Women Lawyers Association  
of Los Angeles Foundation

A L W A Y S  
**BETTER**  
B E I I E R  
B E I I E R  
B E I I E R  
*together*

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**KAPLAN** LLP