
Keith Slenkovich Honored As Recipient of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights' Robert G. Sproul Jr. Award

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On January 31, 2013, Partner [Keith Slenkovich](#) was honored with the [Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area's](#) Robert G. Sproul Jr. Award, presented to an exemplary partner who has provided outstanding legal representation for under-represented communities and marshaled the resources of his/her firm to defend the rights of the disenfranchised. Slenkovich was recognized at the Lawyers' Committee Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Luncheon for the tremendous legal advocacy and support he has provided over many years through the organization's Asylum Program and on behalf of immigrant communities.

When interviewed by the Lawyers' Committee as to why he believes pro bono work to be an important part of his practice, Slenkovich explained, "If the underrepresented who don't have resources can't have their rights protected the same way people with resources can, the system breaks down and it's not credible."

As a young lawyer in the late 1980's, Slenkovich began working with the Lawyers' Committee as a pro bono attorney on behalf of several Central American refugees. One case, that of a young Guatemalan man who feared for his life during the infamous Guatemalan Civil War, gave Slenkovich his

first experience as a first chair litigator. He won the case and recalls it as challenging, fascinating and what got him “hooked” on pro bono work. His early asylum work not only gave him the professional experience of managing these cases on his own, it also underscored his belief that all people, regardless of their financial resources, should have access to legal representation. In the ensuing years, Slenkovich’s motivation to give back to others by way of pro bono service has made a significant difference in the lives of many.

Slenkovich currently heads up the pro bono program in [WilmerHale’s Palo Alto office](#), where he regularly provides pro bono representation to under-represented individuals in cases involving political asylum and other civil rights issues. Under his supervision, the office is currently handling seven cases through the Lawyers’ Committee Asylum Program. In addition to these individual representations, Slenkovich serves as pro bono amicus curiae counsel for the Lawyers’ Committee and other organizations involved in matters of broad social impact. For example, he is the lead attorney for the Lawyers Committee on amicus briefing addressing the due process concerns raised by removal proceedings against mentally incompetent individuals. He has also led the amicus briefing in the pending matter of *De Abadia-Peixoto, et al., v. Dept. of Homeland Security, et al.*, a class action lawsuit brought on behalf of thousands of immigration detainees who are forced to appear in shackles before the Immigration Court in San Francisco.

[WilmerHale’s commitment to pro bono and community service](#) stretches back to the earliest days of its two predecessor firms. The firm recognizes that the law is a profession as well as a business and that lawyers have special obligations to the administration of justice and the development of the law. Its lawyers are encouraged meet these obligations through pro bono work, government service, service to the bar, teaching and leadership in our

communities.

WilmerHale is consistently ranked in *The American Lawyer* 200 Pro Bono listings and was recently recognized by *Law360* among its Pro Bono Firms of the Year series among the firms that received the most notable pro bono wins in 2012.