

WilmerHale Attorneys Receive 2013 Outstanding Achievement Award from Washington Lawyers' Committee

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WilmerHale attorneys recently received a 2013 Outstanding Achievement Award in the area of Equal Employment Opportunity from the [Washington Lawyers' Committee](#) (WLC). Former WilmerHale Partner William J. Kolasky, Counsel [Stephen T. Smith](#), and Associates [Alex White](#) and [Brian A. Dupré](#) received the award as a result of the successful outcome they achieved in their representation of a client who had been referred to the firm by the WLC. The WLC annually presents the Outstanding Achievement Awards to a select number of firms for exceptional work accomplished with the committee.

The team of WilmerHale attorneys, along with WLC's Equal Employment Opportunity Project and the DC Prisoners' Project, began representing the client in 2010 after he was suddenly dismissed from his job. The client, a youth counseling professional, was fired after a District of Columbia agency conducted an "audit" on his background which disclosed a 10-year-old criminal conviction. However, the client had successfully counseled troubled youth in the city for two years, and had been promoted twice.

The legal team took on the case, despite the challenge of the sparse legal protections that are offered to ex-offenders. The attorneys soon discovered that the client's termination had violated a DC statute called the Criminal Background Checks for the Protection of Children Act of 2004. After a two-year court battle, the team of attorneys were successful in their representation and the client was reinstated to his job.

Over the course of two years, the case involved successful litigation before the DC Commission on Human Rights and protracted negotiations with several District government agencies. The victory comes on the heels of the passage of DC's Ban the Box law, which WilmerHale, through its partnership with WLC and other civil rights organizations, helped to draft and implement.