
WilmerHale Honored for Pro Bono Political Asylum and Immigration Efforts

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WilmerHale was recently honored with the 2009 Outstanding Pro Bono Law Firm Award by the Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project (PAIR). PAIR is a nationally recognized model that works to secure safety and freedom for asylum-seekers who have fled from persecution throughout the world and to promote the rights of immigrants unjustly detained.

The Outstanding Pro Bono Law Firm Award, presented to WilmerHale at PAIR's annual Gala event in Boston on June 9, recognizes extraordinary pro bono commitment and excellent legal advocacy by attorneys and staff at the firm on behalf of asylum clients referred by PAIR.

"WilmerHale's outstanding service has made a lasting difference on the lives of the clients it has so ably represented, and in PAIR's ability to fulfill its mission," said Sarah Ignatius, PAIR executive director. "Your firm embodies the finest tradition of pro bono service in the legal community."

Founded in 1989, PAIR is the core provider of pro bono legal services to low-income asylum-seekers in Massachusetts, and has over a 95% successful outcome in its cases. PAIR has provided direct legal services to more than

4,500 clients, and has trained and mentored over 900 volunteer lawyers in the state.

WilmerHale has worked with PAIR since 1998 and during that time the firm has represented a number of indigent asylum clients, including individuals who have fled from persecution in Algeria, Columbia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Lebanon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tibet, and Uganda.

WilmerHale Senior Associate [Lara Phimister](#) is currently working at PAIR for a six month period as a Pickering Fellow. The Pickering Fellowships were established in 2006 to honor one of the firm's founding partners, John H. Pickering, who is remembered as an exceptional mentor and an active participant in a range of public interest organizations and activities throughout his career. The program places approximately six associates per year in various public interest organizations in cities where the firm has offices.

WilmerHale attorneys [Steve Barrett](#) and [Dan Esrick](#) lead the firm's efforts on behalf of pro bono asylum clients, and many others at the firm have contributed to these efforts.

For more information about PAIR, click [here](#).