

## Pro Bono – Organizations

# Lawyers Alliance For New York: Exemplary Pro Bono Commitment

*The Editor interviews Edward F. Greene, General Counsel of Citi Markets and Banking and Chair of the Board of Lawyers Alliance for New York, and Jill L. Rosenberg, Partner, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, and Vice Chair of the Board of Lawyers Alliance for New York.*

**Editor: Please tell us about your professional backgrounds.**

**Greene:** I graduated from Harvard Law School in 1966, and after teaching at two law schools, I joined Willkie Farr in 1968. I joined the Securities Exchange Commission in 1978 as Director of the Division of Corporation Finance and became its General Counsel in 1980. I joined Cleary Gottlieb in 1982, and in 2004 I became General Counsel of Citi Markets and Banking. I have served as Trustee of the Practising Law Institute and co-chairman of the Annual Securities Regulation in Europe program sponsored by PLI. I have also been a member of the NASD's Legal and Compliance Committee and a member of the advisory and editorial boards of several legal education publications and institutes. I have been an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania and Georgetown University Law Center, held the Nomura Chair of International Securities Regulation at the University of Tokyo, and been a Lecturer at the Harvard Law School.

I have also served as Chairman of the Legal Advisory Board of the New York Stock Exchange and was a member of the SEC's Advisory Committee on Capital Formation and Regulatory Processes and of the Financial Accounting Standards Advisory Council from 1986 to 1987.

**Rosenberg:** I am a partner at Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe in New York. I have been at Orrick since 1991. I am in the employment law area so I represent companies in their disputes with employees and unions. I also represent a number of nonprofit institutions, like, colleges, universities, foundations and cultural institutions. I came to Orrick from another law firm, Baer Marks & Upham where I worked for five years after graduating from the University of Chicago Law School in 1986. I am the Partner-in-Charge of pro bono at Orrick. We have a full time pro bono coordinator who handles most of the day-to day responsibilities; my role is more oversight of our pro bono activities. I am also on the firm's Community Responsibility Committee, which helps to determine what charitable donations we are going to make and what organizations we will support.

**Editor: How did you become interested in Lawyers Alliance?**

**Greene:** In 1969, I was among the original group of founders of the Council of New York Law Associates, which later became Lawyers Alliance for New York. We were a group of young law firm associates who came together at a time when there were far too few opportunities for lawyers to interact with peers at other firms and, especially, to participate in meaningful public service work.

**Rosenberg:** When we started getting involved in pro bono work in Orrick's New

York office, Lawyers Alliance was one of the first organizations with whom we made a connection. A number of years ago one of my partners was on the Lawyers Alliance board, and when his term ended I was asked to join the board. Lawyers Alliance has always had a close relationship with our firm so having a continued presence on the board was important to both Lawyers Alliance and Orrick. As pro bono partner at Orrick, I have worked to get other lawyers involved in Lawyers Alliance projects and am able to let others in the firm know about the pro bono opportunities available to them at Lawyers Alliance.

**Editor: How is Lawyers Alliance organized to meet its numerous clients' needs?**

**Greene:** Lawyers Alliance's programs are designed to have the maximum impact on our nonprofit clients and the neighborhoods that they serve. In the past year, we served more than 500 organizations on more than 800 legal projects, organizations that are creating affordable housing, stimulating economic development, and delivering vital services to children and young people, the elderly, and immigrant communities all over New York.

Lawyers Alliance is organized to meet the needs of both clients and volunteer attorneys. Our extensive outreach programs to the nonprofit sector help to identify the best pro bono opportunities. We then prepare our clients to work with volunteers through careful screening, and we serve as co-counsel on every legal matter placed with a volunteer.

**Rosenberg:** A number of lawyers on staff have various specialties; there are experts in employment law, in nonprofit tax issues, in economic development and in housing development and real estate. Lawyers Alliance also organizes by programmatic needs. Recently, serving immigrant organizations has become a priority area. Organizations that work with children and with the aging population have also become important areas of focus. Those are programmatic priorities for Lawyers Alliance and there are lawyers specifically assigned to work in those areas.

**Greene:** I should add here that Lawyers Alliance understands the importance of appreciating and publicly recognizing volunteers' outstanding work, through individual gestures and our annual pro bono awards ceremony, the Cornerstone Awards.

**Editor: Could you share how you bring your expertise to the table at Lawyers Alliance, and perhaps an example of the work you and your colleagues have done?**

**Greene:** As a senior lawyer at Citigroup and as a former partner at a law firm, I understand the motivations and challenges of the entire community of Lawyers Alliance's volunteers, at both law firms and corporations, when they participate in pro bono service.

On an individual case level, recently one of our attorneys worked on a multifaceted case for Fort Washington Houses Services for the Elderly. The work centered on reviewing and amending their by-laws and covered a broad scope: a new conflict

of interest policy, whistleblower policy, document retention policy, as well as clarifying the role of the Committees on the Board of Directors.

Cases of this nature are particularly satisfying for volunteer attorneys, both in terms of the depth of the legal work and the tangible impact their expertise has on clients' policies and procedures. The finished product represents a state-of-the-art, modern governance structure that should result in the accountability and transparency all nonprofits should strive toward.

**Rosenberg:** Because my practice area is employment law, I am able work with many not-for-profits who need help in this area. What has been rewarding for me about these matters is that they usually start with a client who is referred to us for a particular issue that may take a few hours of work, but then I form a relationship with the client because employment law needs are ongoing. Two clients with whom that has happened are the New York Asian Women's Center and Food Change. Both groups came to Orrick with a discrete employment law issue and we have since developed an ongoing relationship such that they call whenever they have an employment issue. That is one of the great things about Lawyers Alliance. You get to understand how a nonprofit operates; you can add value because you know them and they know you. Outside lawyers often become the pro bono general counsel for these organizations.

**Editor: When discussing pro bono, people often think of litigation matters. It seems that Lawyers Alliance provides opportunities beyond the litigation arena.**

**Rosenberg:** That is what is different about Lawyers Alliance. The legal work that is being done for their clients is exclusively business law. It includes advice and counsel, transactional work, tax, employment, etc. We do not litigate.

**Editor: What is your firm's and your company's philosophy vis-a-vis pro bono work?**

**Rosenberg:** We have a strong commitment to pro bono here at Orrick. Our program has been recognized in the legal community and we have an expectation that all lawyers will commit at least 20 hours per year to pro bono work. Most exceed that. We have a high percentage of lawyers who have billed at least 50 pro bono hours in a year. We keep a close eye on our pro bono work and look to our practice groups and office leaders for accountability. Our pro bono effort has been a top-down and across-the-globe initiative.

**Greene:** At Citigroup, we believe our employees have a responsibility to take an active role in the communities around the world in which we live and work. That notion is included in a set of "Shared Responsibilities" that have become embedded in our corporate culture. Our CitiLegal Pro Bono Initiative actively encourages legal staff to perform pro bono work. The Pro Bono Initiative is something I have aggressively supported and encouraged, along with Michael Helfer, the Citigroup General Counsel, and each of the other

business general counsels.

In many of our pro bono projects, we partner with outside law firms. There are some practical reasons for doing so, such as sharing some of the administrative burdens or tapping into particular legal expertise. More importantly, it allows us to get involved in larger projects that might otherwise be difficult to staff, it helps us build relationships with our outside firms and it is a way for us to leverage additional legal resources that might not otherwise be as engaged in pro bono work.

**Editor: You have been with Lawyers Alliance for several years. How have you seen the organization grow and change?**

**Rosenberg:** The organization has grown to meet the needs of the groups in the New York City area. For instance, nonprofits serving immigrant communities has recently become a very important area in which we work. Likewise, affordable housing is an important issue that is reasonably new to Lawyers Alliance. Lawyers Alliance reacts to the needs in the community, identifying them and growing with them by adding lawyers with expertise in the areas they want to develop.

**Greene:** My involvement with the organization goes back 38 years, but I've been a board member for the past several years. During that time there's been an explosive growth in the interest of law firms in doing pro bono work. More recently, we've seen an increasing interest on the part of corporations in doing this as well. In both cases, they recognize that it's a positive for the institutions that are in a position to make a difference, as well as for the attorneys who find the experience personally and professionally rewarding.

**Editor: Where do you see the organization headed in the next five years?**

**Rosenberg:** I am looking forward to making the most of my term as vice chair and continuing to do pro bono work and serving as a liaison for the firm. The organization is continuing to look at the needs in the community – needs which will only become greater – as well as thinking forward to new areas where legal services will be needed. Lawyers Alliance is always in touch with the nonprofit community to find growing areas of need. In addition, as a national leader in this area, Lawyers Alliance continues to serve as a model for similar legal services organizations in other urban centers.

**Greene:** Being a board leader with a long perspective on the history of Lawyers Alliance and how far we have come gives me the confidence that this organization is an enduring part of both the City's legal community and the nonprofit sector. Lawyers Alliance has a central role to play in both the expansion of pro bono service and the impact of the nonprofit sector on New York City, because we're able to harness the talent of the overwhelming majority of lawyers who are business lawyers and not litigators, as Jill pointed out earlier. A fundamental challenge in the years to come will be to refine our business model to connect with an even greater number of nonprofits that can benefit from the services Lawyers Alliance and its volunteers can provide.

*Please email the interviewees at [info@lawyersalliance.org](mailto:info@lawyersalliance.org) with questions about this interview.*