



GPM Pro Bono Team Helps Zimbabwean Obtain Asylum

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MINNEAPOLIS (Sept. 15, 2015) - A team of GPM attorneys recently aided a young man from Zimbabwe with his years-long quest to obtain asylum in the United States and continue his studies at a local community college. SS's sister was very active in Zimbabwe's main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change ("MDC"), he was related to a prominent MDC leader, and he served as clerk of the MDC youth organization. As a result, he and his family were targeted by the ruling party, the ZANU-PF. His father has been arrested and detained many times, and his step-mother was beaten to death in 2008 by members of the ruling party. After the murder of his step-mother, SS and his family moved to the country in an attempt to escape the political persecution.

However, it soon found him again. SS was forcefully pressed into service in a youth political organization that pressured individuals to attend political rallies and vote for the ruling party. SS attempted to escape several times and finally succeeded. He remained in hiding until he finally was able to secure a student visa to come study in Minnesota.

The depth of Gray Plant Mooty's pro bono commitment was on full display throughout SS's case. When the original pro bono counsel departed, a host of other attorneys pitched in. Liz Dillon and Joy Anderson teamed up to interview SS, draft the affidavits, complete the necessary forms, and compose a persuasive memorandum. Matthew Webster and summer associate Riley Conlin prepared SS and accompanied him to the final interview.

Finally, after more than a year, SS's asylum application was finally approved. While asylum means so many things for SS, his first response was of his future. "I can't wait to focus on my classes this semester."

Gray Plant Mooty is deeply committed to community service. Read more about the firm's pro bono work.