



## Pro Bono

Lathrop GPM considers pro bono legal service a professional responsibility and a community obligation of the firm. We believe the privilege of practicing law comes with a responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to the legal system, regardless of resources. We take pride in using our legal skills to help people in need, and are honored to work with legal service organizations and nonprofits in each of our office locations to represent the most vulnerable among us.

The firm matches our attorneys' talents and passions with the specific needs of our communities, resulting in pro bono representation across the nation in critical areas such as innocence, immigration, housing, veterans and child advocacy.

### Pro Bono Focuses

- **Innocence for the Wrongfully Convicted** - Our firm was honored to work with the Midwest Innocence Project (MIP) to help facilitate the release of Laquanda "Faye" Jacobs, who spent 26 years in prison after being wrongfully convicted of capital murder in 1993 for the shooting death of a 17-year-old in Little Rock, AR. Jacobs was freed in July 2018 after being resentenced from "life without parole" to "time served." A team of attorneys from our Kansas City and St. Louis offices began working with MIP on Jacobs' case in late 2017, filing a petition for writ of *habeas corpus* on May 11, 2018, outlining Jacobs' innocence and asking the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas to overturn Jacobs' conviction. Before the state of Arkansas was required to respond to the petition, attorneys at the Pulaski County (Arkansas) District Attorney's Office came to an agreement on Jacobs' resentencing, changing it from life without parole to 40 years - a sentence the State of Arkansas deemed Jacobs had completed given her good-time credit and exemplary conduct in prison for 26 years.
- **Asylum/Immigration** - Our firm partners with the The Advocates for Human Rights to obtain asylum for dozens of clients who are fleeing persecution in their home countries based on their race, religion, gender, political opinion, sexual orientation or other protected classes. Thanks to the work of the The Advocates and our volunteer attorneys, refugees who would be in danger of imprisonment, torture or death if they were returned to their home countries are now able to create new lives for themselves and their families in the United States. Lathrop GPM attorneys also handle deportation bond hearings, representing individuals awaiting deportation proceedings.
- **Housing** - Adopt-A-Neighborhood is a collaborative project between Legal Aid of Western Missouri, private law firms, and urban core neighborhoods in Kansas City, MO. Our goal is to address quality of life concerns in participating neighborhoods by providing high-quality pro bono legal services to qualifying individuals, neighborhood associations, and other groups that serve the neighborhoods. In addition to representing the Tri-Blenheim Neighborhood Association (TBNA) with nuisance property work, our volunteer attorneys have assisted TBNA with contract drafting, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt application, and more. For TBNA residents, volunteer attorneys have provided vital estate planning



services, which will help protect generational wealth and prevent future abandonment.

- **Veterans** - Our attorneys have voluntarily represented numerous veterans as part of a Veteran's Warrant Relief Project undertaken by Legal Aid of Western Missouri. The warrants naming the veterans and the underlying criminal charges are a significant hinderance to allowing the veterans to obtain employment, keep a driver's license, and receive other potential benefits. This representation involves many different courts in the greater Kansas City area, and helps the veterans clear their records and get a fresh start.
- **Child Advocacy** - Lathrop GPM attorneys regularly represent parents and children in juvenile court through court appointments and in partnership with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and the Children's Law Center. Our attorneys provide free legal representation to children who have been abused, neglected or are in need of protection, and give them a voice in the courtroom.

## Recognition

- **Missouri Lawyers Weekly** - In its 2019 "Up & Coming" issue, *Missouri Lawyers Weekly* named firm attorneys Sarah Lintecum and Lauren Wacker as Pro Bono Honorees for their work helping to free Laquanda "Faye" Jacobs, who spent 26 years in prison for a murder she did not commit.
- **North Star Lawyers** - Our attorneys provide pro bono counsel to numerous organizations and individuals in need of legal services. Each year, several of the firm's Minnesota attorneys are recognized as North Star Lawyers for providing at least 50 hours of pro bono legal services to low-income people during the year. In 2018, 39 Lathrop GPM attorneys were recognized by the Minnesota State Bar Association for their pro bono legal services.
- **The Advocates for Human Rights Volunteer Award** - A team of firm attorneys was recognized in 2016 for its important pro bono asylum work representing clients fleeing persecution from a variety of countries, including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Laos, Somalia, The Gambia, and Zimbabwe.

## Pro Bono Personnel

*Kate Nolen chairs the firm's pro bono committee, which also includes Katie Rooney.*