

NEWS FROM...



Contact:
Nicole Greason
Marketing and Public Relations Administrator
Fennemore Craig
602-916-5290

FENNEMORE CRAIG AMONG FIRMS RECOGNIZED FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE EFFORT ON BEHALF OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS WITH AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION'S HIGHEST PRO BONO AWARD

Local Program Part of 30-City Push, Enlisting 100 Volunteer Law Firms and Assisting More Than 5,000 Survivors in Debut Year; Largest Coordinated Pro Bono Effort of its Kind in U.S. History

Phoenix, AZ July 2, 2009 – Fennemore Craig today announced that the Holocaust Survivors Justice Network (HSJN), a legal assistance effort in which the organization's staff volunteers locally, is a recipient of the 2009 American Bar Association Pro Bono Publico Award, the profession's highest recognition for pro bono legal work. Organized by Los Angeles-based nonprofit law firm Bet Tzedek Legal Services, the HSJN is an international initiative established to assist Holocaust survivors in obtaining reparation payments under a program established by the German government.

Fennemore Craig became a participating member of the HSJN when it expanded to Phoenix and Tucson in 2008.

Since affiliating, lawyers from Fennemore Craig have devoted time free of charge to work with survivors on the claim-filing process.

Volunteer participants in the program include attorneys Susan Stone Rosenfield and Brad Shwer in Fennemore Craig's Phoenix office, and Barney Holtzman in the firm's Tucson office.

The Phoenix and Tucson efforts are part of a broader network which now includes clinics in 31 major cities in the United States and Canada and two cities in Australia. Justice Network volunteers provide free legal services to survivors—nearly all in their 80s and 90s—in completing Germany's complex reparation application process. The groundbreaking project is the first-ever nationally coordinated reparations endeavor on behalf of survivors, and the largest pro bono initiative of its kind in U.S. history, according to Bet Tzedek.

The Justice Network was established after the German government created a new program in late 2007 to compensate survivors who performed "voluntary" labor in Nazi-controlled ghettos during the Second World War. Under the German Ghetto Work Payment Program, survivors are eligible to file claims for a one-time payment of €2,000 (approximately U.S.\$2,800).

Since its creation 18 months ago by Bet Tzedek and the law firm of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, which serves as national directing law firm for the project, the Justice Network has successfully enlisted volunteers from more than 100 law firms and corporate legal departments, as well as 30-plus social-service agency partners, to expand the program into geographic markets across North America and Australia. Over that same period, approximately 3,600 individual lawyers, paralegals and other legal professionals have donated an estimated 45,000 hours of time in local legal clinics where they interview survivors and complete the highly detailed claim forms.

Pro bono coordinators in each city use a Bet Tzedek-developed curriculum for training local volunteers to complete the technical and nuanced applications. As a result of these efforts, Justice Network volunteers have met with and interviewed about 5,000 survivors, filing an estimated 3,000 claims, worth approximately \$8 million in potential reparation payments, according to

Mitchell A. Kamin, Bet Tzedek's president and chief executive officer. Though Germany has yet to complete processing the majority of these claims, to date, 99 percent of the applications submitted from Southern California have been approved, resulting in more than \$1,250,000 in payments to low-income survivors.

"There is no greater testament to the tireless dedication of our volunteer partners or to the courage of these survivors than for the Justice Network to receive a Pro Bono Publico Award," said Kamin. "This honor belongs entirely to them and, on behalf of Bet Tzedek, we are grateful to everyone involved in the Network and deeply humbled by the recognition bestowed by the American Bar Association.

"The Network makes a significant difference in the lives of our clients. Though the individual reparation payment is modest, it often enables our aging clients to meet basic living needs—rent, food, medications. I can't emphasize enough that more than 25 percent of all survivors live below federal poverty guidelines, and many more struggle to get by, so this payment makes a significant difference in their lives," Kamin stated.

Manatt Senior Attorney and Bet Tzedek Co-Founder Stanley W. Levy, who serves as national volunteer director of the Justice Network, commented: "To be honored by the ABA with this prestigious award is enormously gratifying. This project has been, without question, one of the most fulfilling assignments with which I have ever had the privilege of being associated. Time and again—since the Justice Network was created, I have heard similar remarks from participating volunteers and survivors alike. For many of the volunteers, it is, as well, the first time they have ever met Holocaust survivors and hearing accounts of these experiences during the interview process is an emotional, deeply moving experience."

The Pro Bono Publico Award will be presented on Aug. 3, 2009 at the ABA's annual meeting in Chicago.

ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS JUSTICE NETWORK

The Holocaust Survivors Justice Network is a national coalition of attorneys and other legal professionals from more than 100 law firms and corporate legal departments, as well as 30 Jewish social service agencies, organized to provide resources and dignity to survivors. Created by Bet Tzedek Legal Services in partnership with the law firm of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, the program is the first nationally coordinated pro bono effort - operating in 31 North American cities - to support survivors' reparation claim-filing needs. The initiative was organized in response to the Ghetto Work Payment Program enacted by the German government in October 2007, which provides a one time payment of €2,000 (approximately U.S.\$2,800) to Holocaust survivors who performed "voluntary" work in German-controlled ghettos during World War II.

ABOUT BET TZEDEK

Founded in 1974, Bet Tzedek's mission is to ensure "equal justice for all." One of the nation's premier public interest law firms, Bet Tzedek, "The House of Justice" in Hebrew, provides free legal services in matters involving consumer rights, elder law, housing, public benefits and workers' rights to low-income, disabled and elderly people of all racial and religious backgrounds. Bet Tzedek is renowned as one of a handful of agencies in the world to offer free legal help to Holocaust survivors on a wide range of issues, including reparations, pensions, and benefits offered by Germany and other European countries.

#