

center news

Pohl, Molino and Bernadeau Receive the 2016 M. Robert Dushman Award.

In March, Brown Rudnick announced the recipients of the 9th annual Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest M. Robert Dushman Pro Bono and Community Service Awards. These awards honor both a successful Brown Rudnick attorney and a non-attorney whose professional or work life has demonstrated the qualities and commitment to the public interest that distinguished the Firm's late partner, M. Robert Dushman. The Pro Bono Award was presented to three deserving recipients, **Steven D. Pohl, Elizabeth A. Molino and Marie Bernadeau.** Continued on page2.

More Details

Celebrating The Center For The Public Interest's 15 Year Anniversary!



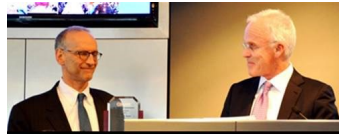
This year the Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest celebrates its 15th year anniversary. On April 15th, the Boston office marked this milestone with a celebration that brought together attorneys, staff and Foundation grantees.

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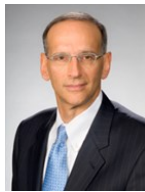


Visit the [Center Website](#)

dushman awards continued

Pohl, Molino and Bernadeau Receive the 2016 M. Robert Dushman Award .

Brown Rudnick CEO Joseph F. Ryan, “Our Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest and Charitable Foundation enhances our reputation, makes us stronger and has a positive impact on our communities. Steve, Elizabeth and Marie exemplify our commitment to pro bono legal representation, charitable giving and volunteerism and illustrate the exceptional work we do. We applaud them for their commitment to giving back to the community.”



Steven D. Pohl, is a partner in the Firm’s Bankruptcy Group in the Boston office. Since the late 1990s, Steve has provided pro bono legal representation to individuals who are overwhelmed with personal debt or are on the verge of Chapter 7 personal bankruptcy. In 2010, at the request of the judges from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Boston, Brown Rudnick, through its Center for the Public Interest, created Brown Rudnick’s Chapter 7 Debt Relief Pro Bono Project, a dedicated program to assist consumers. Working with the Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP) of the Boston Bar Association, Steve leads Brown Rudnick’s involvement with the Project in which Firm attorney’s assist, on a pro bono basis, individuals in determining whether bankruptcy is an appropriate approach for them, in preparing court forms and in representing them at the meeting of creditors, if needed. Since the program’s inception in 2010, among all participating Boston firms, Brown Rudnick has assumed a leadership position in taking on debtor relief pro bono cases. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court recognized Steve’s leadership by presenting him with their first Pro Bono Recognition Award for Eastern Massachusetts in 2013.

“I am honored to receive the Dushman Pro Bono Award. I find it deeply gratifying to be able to bring my legal skills to help individuals in their time of greatest need and allow them a fresh start. The pro bono legal representation we provide is not only personally fulfilling, but it’s the right thing to do.”

-Steven Pohl

“It is a great reward to help others in need, and I feel privileged to be able to bring education to Haitian children. Receiving the Dushman Community Service Award validates our mission, and we will increase our efforts to ensure all children have access to education in Haiti.”

-Marie Bernadeau

dushman awards continued



Elizabeth A. Molino is an associate in Brown Rudnick's Commercial Litigation Group in the New York office. As part of the Firm's work with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), Liz represented a 13-year-old girl facing deportation. Liz had to clear many difficult hurdles thrown in front of her by both an overburdened family court and an immigration court with a twenty-year backlog. Liz literally took her client by the hand and muscled her way to the front of the line.

At one point, Liz actually burst through the door of chambers and announced that it was time for a hearing when her case was being ignored. The representation also presented multiple ethical and due process issues that had to be very carefully worked through. Liz faced all these challenges and others masterfully and with extraordinary moxie.



The Community Service Award was presented to **Marie Bernadeau**, a Help Desk Support Specialist in the Firm's Boston office. Originally from Haiti, Marie is a model for community service and charitable giving, and has dedicated herself to helping those in need in her native country. Most notably, she founded the non-profit organization KOREKTHO, INC., (Committee for the Redevelopment of Thomonde) based in Mattapan, MA, which funds a scholarship program to aid children whose parents can't afford to pay tuition to educate their children. She also established LEKOL KOREKTHO (KOREKTHO SCHOOL) in Thomonde Haiti, which educates and helps feed over 400 Haitian children each year. For 15 years, Marie has served as the executive director of KOREKTHO and recently was nominated president of the organization.

"I try to prioritize pro bono work as a way of giving back to the community in New York City and maintaining my sense of civic duty as an attorney. Often, pro bono work provides an opportunity for young attorneys to get out from behind their desks to advocate for an individual, or in my case a family, that needs their help. It is incredibly rewarding work. Receiving the Dushman Award from Brown Rudnick as a junior associate has been an enormous honor for me. I deeply appreciate the Firm's dedication to pro bono work and the unconditional support I have received from my colleagues in connection with my pro bono matters."

-Elizabeth Molino



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foundation grantee news

Higginson-Lewis K-8 Community Grantee Visit.

Recently, Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Community Grant recipient, Higginson-Lewis K-8 School, hosted the Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest's Executive Director Al Wallis and Coordinator Elizabeth McGeoy as "Career Series" guests at an after-school program. This series allows student to have an informal dialogue with guests about that guest's career choices and his/her work, while developing the students' social communication skills, critical thinking and note-taking ability. The Foundation grant helped purchase iPad technology to assist students in researching and creating a school newspaper.



Pictured Higginson-Lewis after school class with Center Staff.

THE BROWN RUDNICK



Send us your photos!

There's nothing better than seeing how our Foundation Relationship Grants and Community Grants are helping educators and nonprofit organizations improve inner-city education and create positive social change. We want to celebrate and share your successes. Send us your digital photos highlighting how a Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation grant has been put into action by your organization. Your photo may appear in our upcoming newsletter, 2016 calendar or other Center report.

To participate, send your digital photo (with proper photo credit and a brief caption) to

[Elizabeth McGeoy](mailto:Elizabeth.McGeoy@brownrudnick.com)

(By submitting your photo you agree that you are responsible for ensuring that you have the right to submit the photos, including authorization for the photos use by the Foundation from anyone appearing in the photo.)

foundation grantee news



Flying Rice Krispies.

Brown Rudnick 2015-6 Relationship Grantee East Boston High School Science Enrichment Program hosted Center Executive Director Al Wallis, Firm Partner John Wadsworth, and BR's Brendan Reaney and Elizabeth McGeoy during the ninth grade mentoring program at the Umana School on Tuesday. High School Chemistry Teacher and grant applicant Kristen L. Cacciatore, Ph.D. leads the multi-year program in what has been a successful effort to increase science literacy in East Boston at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, getting students more interested and proficient in science.

During the visit, high school students tutored lower school students introducing them to the concepts and science of solids, liquids and gasses. Ms. Oluwanifemi Mabayoje's Honors Physics class led a lesson on electricity for Ms. Natalie Benson's third grade class. The lesson included a reading activity, and hands on activity using static electricity from rubbing balloons on your hair and then using the energy to create "flying Rice Krispies". **To learn more please visit: eastbosnscience.wordpress.com**



foundation grantee news

Building a Better Mousetrap.

The Brown Rudnick London office recently hosted Foundation Relationship Grantee Mousetrap Theatre Projects for a movie premier. A group of 15-17 years olds participated in over 12 workshop sessions led by Mousetrap theatre practitioners, in which they planned, wrote, acted in, filmed and edited their own short film - which is designed to challenge negative perceptions of their local area. As a culmination of this project, the students had their first public showing before a London office audience. Brown Rudnick's Peter Wozny, Omega Poole and Chris Toms managed the event.



The Unstoppable New York City Urban Debate League.

NYC Foundation Relationship Grantee, the New York Urban Debate League, traveled to Massachusetts to compete in the Harvard University competition recently. Competitors came from all over the world to debate such topics as the value of imposing carbon emission regulations.



Pictured left, Mousetrap students introducing film project. In right photo, Center Executive Director Al Wallis, Erik Fogel, Yaira Brito of NYUDL and Center Coordinator Elizabeth McGeoy.

foundation grantee news

Supporting An After-School Tutoring Program For South Boston Teens.

The Foundation awarded a Community Grant to Round Table, Inc. in Boston, MA. for the purchase of Windows-based computers for a teen after-school tutoring program. Round Table, Inc. is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that serves low-income and at-risk youth of South Boston through programs aimed at preventing alcohol and substance abuse in teenagers. *“Many students in our area do not have working computers, printers or access to the internet in their homes for school projects and homework assignments. Thanks to the Foundation grant, these teens will have the access to technology they need for homework and supplemental learning assignments.”* Grant applicant, Kevin O’Sullivan.

Helping To Build A Multi-Sensory Literacy Program For 6th Graders.

The Foundation awarded a Community Grant to Edwards Middle School in Charlestown, MA to support a literacy program that will help 6th-grade students with learning disabilities to achieve grade-level reading. Specifically, the grant will be used to purchase Lexia Reading Core5 applications, a standing desk, and phonics books to create a multi-sensory learning environment with age-appropriate content for increased student engagement and improved literacy. *“My students present with language-based learning disabilities and specific learning disabilities, which means their instruction must be systematic, multi-sensory, and explicit. The difficulty they experience with decoding text makes it very challenging for them to access text in any content area. Thanks to the support of the Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation, we can offer these students a specialized learning environment.”* Stephanie Crement, Edwards Middle School Special Education Teacher and grant applicant.



OUR FOCUS

RELATIONSHIP GRANTS

These annual grants seek to improve inner-city education by forming a relationship with a tax-exempt organization that optimally includes providing financial support, pro bono legal representation and volunteer connections.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

Created to support front-line educators who often do not have a voice in funding decisions, the Foundation’s Community Grants subsidize small, immediate, concrete projects, which will improve inner-city education.

PRO BONO WORK & VOLUNTEERING

Brown Rudnick seeks opportunities to extend its support of grant recipients through pro bono legal representation and volunteerism.

foundation grantee news

Samuel Adams Elementary School In East Boston Receives Grant For Autism Strand.

The Foundation awarded a Community Grant to Samuel Adams Elementary School in East Boston for the purchase of a variety of sensory materials for students with autism. These materials will be used in highly specialized classrooms in the school's autism strand to help comfort and guide students with autism into an appropriate learning posture.

"Some of our students with autism would greatly benefit from sensory materials to regulate their bodies, but these supplies are typically beyond a teacher's budget. With the Foundation grant, we can provide individualized materials to students that will prepare them for learning success." Michelle Lamacchia, Autism Strand Specialist at Samuel Adams Elementary, and grant applicant.



Community Grant To Children's Friend in Providence, RI.

The Foundation has approved a grant of \$2,000 to Children's Friend, a Head Start program in Providence. The children in these classes have almost no opportunity to interact with nature or the outdoors -- most of them do not even have a yard to play in. The grant will be used to build a garden station in each classroom at the Friendship Center, purchasing greenhouses, pots, tools, soil and seeds so that all eight classrooms will be participate in learning how plants grow and where food comes from.

Accepting applications for community grants

Each month the Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation accepts applications for educational grants to support inner-city educators through its Community Grant Program.

Created to support front-line educators who often do not have a voice in funding decisions, the Community Grants subsidize small, concrete projects, which will improve inner-city education within Boston, Hartford, London, Providence, New York, Washington, DC, or Orange County, California within the coming year. The grant applications and an explanation of the program can be found on the [Center for the Public Interest Website](#).

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foundation news

Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Corp. Elects Two New Board Directors.

The Foundation recently elected, Joel M. Reck, and Diana Nelson, as Board Directors. Joel and Diana will each serve a three-year term.

Joel is a retired partner from Brown Rudnick LLP, the former Chair of its Real Estate Department, and one of the founding partners of the Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation. He was the first President of the Foundation Board.

Diana oversees support staff in both the Firm's Washington, DC and Hartford offices, and coordinates community giving and volunteer initiatives involving those offices.

A longtime supporter of the Foundation, Diana was the 2011 recipient of the M. Robert Dushman Community Service Award, which recognizes a non-attorney at Brown Rudnick who demonstrates an exceptional commitment to community service.



Joel Reck



Diana Nelson

Now Available! The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation's 2015 Annual Report is now available [here](#). For more information on the Foundation please [click here](#).



Relationship Grant Process Well Under Way. At its April meeting, the Foundation Directors authorized the commencement of the 2015-6 Relationship Grant selection process. These grants are one year grants, commencing in September for programs or initiatives which promise to improve inner-city education in the locations where we have full offices. This is a highly competitive process and an exhaustive effort by the Foundation Grants Committee members in reviewing the voluminous number of applications the Foundation receives. Notices inviting initial letters of interest were posted on the Center website, Center's newsletter mailing list, various publications listing grant opportunities and to everyone in the Firm. The large volume of Letters of Interest were carefully reviewed by the Foundation Grants Committee and about two dozen applicants were invited to submit a full proposal. Those proposals are now under review. The selection process is expected to be completed in time to make recommendations to the Foundation Board at its June meeting.

community involvement

Annual Go Red Day.

In February, all Brown Rudnick offices once again participated in Go Red Day, which collects donations in exchange for a “denim day”. This year’s effort, coordinated by the Brown Rudnick’s Center for the Public Interest raised approximately \$1,000. Proceeds from Brown Rudnick’s U.S. offices support the American Heart Association; donations from the London office support the British Heart Foundation; and contributions from the Paris office support the French Federation of Cardiology.

UCL Centre For Access To Justice.

Brown Rudnick’s London office created, hosted and participated in a debate on the topic of “Whether Pro Bono Legal Representation Should Be Mandatory in the UK.” This event, which was conceived and created by Brown Rudnick London lawyer Omega Poole and the Center Executive Director Al Wallis in conjunction with London’s University College Center for Access to Justice, featured a team of two students vs. Brown Rudnick’s Shabaz Ahmed and Joseph Speakman. The event was entertaining, informative, educational and a good opportunity for the London office and UCL to develop closer connections.

Walk To The Hill Boston.

The annual Massachusetts “Walk to the Hill” by lawyers in support of state funding for legal aid programs took place on January 28th. Brown Rudnick CEO Joseph F. Ryan cosigned a letter with most other Boston Firm CEO’s, urging the legislature to increase funding to organizations providing such representation. Edward Naughton and Al Wallis lead this initiative.



Pictured from left, UCL speakers Klara Lochem, Jonathan Tan, and Surya Kumaravel, Shabaz Ahmed, Joe Speakman and Alex Riches



Pictured Center Coordinator Elizabeth McGeoy and Executive Director Al Wallis. 10

awards

Brown Rudnick Summer Associates Receive ADL's 2015 Best Legal Memo Award.

At a breakfast hosted by the Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest, the New York Anti-Defamation League (ADL) presented the 2015 Best Legal Memo award to Brown Rudnick. The award is given for exemplary work by participants in the ADL Summer Associate Legal Research Project. Brown Rudnick (2015) summer associates Marissa Calleja and Justin Cunningham, supervised by Brown Rudnick NY Partner David Molton, were honored for what one judge called their "Standout Memo," which analyzed complicated legal issues regarding whether groups that are awarded U.S. government funding contracts should provide day-to-day care to refugees and undocumented immigrant teenagers.



In photo, from left to right: Sig Wissner-Gross*, Samantha Collidge from the ADL, Irina Nica (former summer associate), Marissa Calleja & Justin Cunningham (award recipients), Andy Dash*, Seth Marlin (ADL Assistant Legal Director). *Supervising Partners for other 2015 NY office Brown Rudnick ADL legal teams.

Honoring Beth Hurley



Beth Hurley, Chief Administrative Officer of Brown Rudnick from 2001-2016 received two recent honors for her extensive contributions to Brown Rudnick.

At the annual "State of the Firm", CEO Joseph Ryan presented Beth with a coveted engraved silver bowl in appreciation for her many years of service to the Firm.

Separately, Beth was also presented with a Center Accolade by Andrew Strehle and Al Wallis, Co-chairs of the Firm's Pro Bono Committee.

pro bono

Murphy v. Educational Credit Management Corp.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit asked Brown Rudnick Partner Steve Pohl to accept a pro bono appointment in a potentially landmark case of first impression in the Circuit. The issue involved the legal test to be used in determining what constitutes "undue burden" sufficient to warrant dismissal of student loans in a c. 7 bankruptcy. On our legal team with Steve are Chris Floyd, Marek Kryzowski, Rebecca Mitchell and Carol Ennis.

The case, now pending before the US First Circuit Court of Appeals, is being closely watched across the country because it challenges the standard many courts use to determine when the burden of repaying student loans is too much and comes as more people are turning to the courts for relief. As one judge said about our client's situation during oral argument: "If this doesn't constitute undue hardship, what would?"

An Unforgettable Day: Pro Bono Representation By A "First Year" Associate.

The experience of Rebecca Mitchell as told to Al Wallis.

Twenty-year old San Marcos, Guatemala native E.L lived in a one room house with five siblings and their parents while facing hardships including E.L's spinal injury at the age of eight leaving him with a speech impediment. At fifteen, E.L dropped out of school to assist his father at work in the fields, the family had very little food. By 2012 E.L traveled from Guatemala to the United States for a better life for him and his family.

Read more on
Murphy v. Educational Credit Management Corp. via the Boston Globe's March 14th article [Bankrupt Duxbury dad battles to get student loan debt forgiven](#)

Honoring Lara Burke



DC associate Lara Burke received a Center Accolade in acknowledgement Lara's contributions to the mission of the Pro Bono Community and specifically her representation of KIND clients.

pro bono

An Unforgettable Day: Pro Bono Representation By A "First Year" Associate.



Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) referred E.L.'s pro bono case to Brown Rudnick in October 2013. At that time two former Brown Rudnick attorneys assisted E.L with numerous legal motions and proceedings in the Probate Court and Boston Immigration Court to apply for a green card in the United States. In E.L.'s case, this process was made even more complex as a result of a variety of impediments with the Immigration Court.

In April of this year E.L was granted legal permanent resident status in the United States. As a newly minted attorney, I certainly will never forget this day.

I (Rebecca Mitchell) was brought onto the case in November of 2015, with a goal of refiling the petition and asking that the hearing be re-calendared. It was then, at our first meeting that, our legal team strengthened our resolve to do everything in our power to help E.L, and to do so quickly. He had waited long enough. After re-filing petitions and re-calendar motions I finally felt that E.L was on track for a smooth hearing. The day of the hearing I was incredibly nervous, E.L met me at the firm offices wearing his finest suit, and we walked to court together. Our case was called first. Because his English proficiency is minimal (though it gets better every day), E.L was outfitted with a headset through which an interpreter would translate the judge's words verbatim.

The Immigration Judge then turned on the bench and looked and faced E.L. "Today," she said, "is April 13, 2016. You will never forget April 13, 2016, because that is the day that you became a Legal Permanent Resident of the United States. Welcome to the United States." She then spoke of the opportunity that E.L was being given, and acknowledged the difficult life that he has already endured despite his young age. She told him that no dream was too small, and urged him to finish school. E.L was so grateful, and just kept thanking the judge, smiling ear to ear.

It was one of the most profound experiences of my professional life. I am also grateful to have been given a reminder of why it is that I became a lawyer and why it is that we do pro bono work. Above all else, I am grateful for my client's patience through a never-ending series of setbacks. He deserves everything that this firm - and I - have helped him to achieve.

just us

The Queen Of Pro Bono, Esther Lardent.

Esther Lardent was an inspirational leader and a friend who did as much as anyone in modern American history to advance the concept and effectiveness of civil "pro bono publico" legal representation. I am not alone in experiencing her as a major influence on my career and inspiration in my life.

I have devoted decades to the Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association, serving on its Board and for a time serving as its President. The VLP, founded in the early 70's, was a ground-breaker in pro bono delivery, using a small-staff based organization to train, connect and mentor private attorneys to provide free civil legal representation to the poor. VLP has leveraged the service of thousands of such lawyers, providing them with a meaningful vehicle to labor altruistically and in pursuit of their ideal of achieving justice for all while working effectively to achieve justice for one. VLP soon became a national model for the delivery of legal services. It still is.

Esther was the first Executive Director of VLP. She envisioned and created the mold. I met her, as a new legal services lawyer, in the early 70s and began a continuing relationship with her in that elusive search for access to justice.

Esther went on to create the national Pro Bono Institute ("PBI"), centered in D.C. She expanded on the VLP concept, establishing national standards for law firm pro bono by developing the standard criteria defining the term, intellectual heft through which she added to programs, mentoring and written materials. She literally challenged America's large, prestigious law firms to devote the equivalent of at least 3-5% of their billable hours to pro bono legal work -- and scores & scores of firms (including Brown Rudnick) then signed on to the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge®.



Esther, The Queen of Pro Bono.



Helping you fulfill the promise of pro bono



just us

The Queen Of Pro Bono, Esther Lardent.

The annual PBI conference held in D.C. in early spring became the spring board for developing the concept of a new profession -- full time pro bono professionals within law firms directing and encouraging pro bono representation by the Firm. There were almost no such positions before Esther started PBI. Now there are 150+ full time pro bono managers in law firms (including me) and growing as well as a national organization, the Association of Pro Bono Counsel (APBCo), for such professionals. All of us, and certainly myself, are indebted to her for creating the basis for our profession, a real career path for people who became lawyers with the central goal of representing the poor and disenfranchised.

I don't know when or how Esther became known as "The Queen of Pro Bono" -- a title Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg applied to her every year at the Supreme Court event concluding the PBI conference -- but it was a bespoke fit.

At the 2016 Springs Conference, we simultaneously felt Esther's presence and her absence. She was too ill to attend but she was reflected in every element of the conference as well as in the careers of so many in attendance.

The D.C. cherry blossoms were in full bloom during the conference and during a break, I took a slow walk past them in the rain. It always amazes me. With hope and audacity, we humans stick tiny seeds under indistinguishable dirt and, if we cultivate and care, someday a whole city is brimming with gorgeous, uplifting flowered trees. It seems a miracle.

Only weeks after the conference we learned that Esther had passed. **She** was a miracle worker, and the pro bono seeds she planted are perennials blooming with color forever into the future. We have lost our Queen, but long live the Queen's life-work.

- Al Wallis

Please contact Al Wallis or Elizabeth McGeoy to discuss any matters regarding the Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest. Thanks especially to Lisa Murray, Elizabeth McGeoy, and Kate Souza for their assistance with this newsletter. And finally, apologies for any errors or unintentional omissions, which may from time-to-time occur in the Center Quarterly - maybe even this one.

- Al Wallis

Celebrating The Center For The Public Interest's 15 Year Anniversary.

After a brief presentation by Center Executive Director, Al Wallis, a panel of four Boston tax-exempt organizations who receive a grant from the Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation spoke with attendees about their grant program and relationship with Brown Rudnick. The grantees were from the Art's and Business Council of Greater Boston, College Bound Dorchester, East Boston High School, and Thompson Island Outward Bound. The event concluded with a celebratory cake. Similar celebrations may be scheduled in other Brown Rudnick offices throughout the year.



Pictured from left, College Bound Dorchester's Ed Norton , Thompson Island's Arthur Pearson, Center ED Al Wallis, VLA's Jim Grace, East Boston's Kristen Cacciatore, Shannon Morey, Thompson Island's Deborah Edison and East Boston's Amanda Dillingham.

