

Court Information Release



United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

Release Date:
May 12, 2011

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Twelfth Annual Awards for Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service

CHICAGO – The United States District Court’s Twelfth Annual Awards for Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service is scheduled to begin at 3:00 p.m., Thursday, May 19, 2011, in the James Benton Parsons Memorial Courtroom (2525) of the Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse at 219 South Dearborn Street in Chicago, Illinois. The program is open to all attorneys and those interested in pro bono and public interest law, and is free of charge.

Ashley L. Belleau, the National President of the Federal Bar Association, will be the keynote speaker at the May 19th awards ceremony recognizing pro bono and public interest service before the court. This annual ceremony is sponsored jointly by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

Ms. Belleau is a partner in the New Orleans office of the law firm of Montgomery, Barnett, Brown, Read, Hammond & Mintz, LLP. She has long been active in the Federal Bar Association as past president of the New Orleans Chapter, past vice president for the Fifth Circuit, deputy secretary on the Executive Committee, director on the Younger Lawyers Division Board, and a member the Governance Review and the Judicial Nominations Committees.

Ms. Belleau has advanced the Federal Bar Association’s mission to strengthen the federal legal system and the administration of justice by serving the interests and needs of the federal practitioner, the federal Judiciary, and the public.

Selected as a *Louisiana Super Lawyer* in Business Litigation, Ms. Belleau advises businesses, financial institutions, and individuals concerning bankruptcies, contracts, construction, environmental issues, insurance, professional malpractice, real estate corporation, and estate matters. She also mediates and arbitrates business disputes. As a member of the Panel of Mediators for the Louisiana Department of Insurance Hurricane Mediation Program, she has mediated over 350 hurricane wind damage disputes between homeowners and insurance companies.

On May 19th, ten “Awards for Excellence in Pro Bono Service” and one “Award for Excellence in Public Interest Service” will be presented to area attorneys for their contributions in helping people most in need of assistance before the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Award winners include: **Patricia Brown Holmes** of Schiff Hardin LLP; **Emily Mulder Milman**, of Neal, Gerber & Eisenberg LLP; **Trisha M. Rich** of Holland & Knight and **Eric Dorkin** of Clark Hill PLC; **Devlin J. Schoop** of Laner, Muchin, Dombrow, Becker, Levin and Tominberg, Ltd.; **Kal K. Shah**, **Ferlillia V. Roberson**, and **Maria A. Maras** of Kirkland & Ellis LLP and **Breana C. Smith** formerly of Kirkland & Ellis LLP; **Heath Sherman** of Leahy, Eisenberg & Fraenkel, Ltd.; and **Judge Stanley L. Hill** of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

The awards program will also feature written comments and introductions by **Chief Judge James F. Holderman** and **Maria Z. Vathis**, President of the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. **Joel Daly**, District Court Information Officer, will emcee the ceremony.