



Lowenstein Center For The Public Interest Video 5 – More Than Good Deeds: How Pro Bono Shapes Better Lawyers (and Better People)

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- Çagla Yetis:** I think it's made me a more well-rounded attorney.
- Markiana J. Julceus:** There are a lot of opportunities that I've had in my pro bono cases that I wouldn't have gotten those experiences as early on in a billable manner.
- Daniel W. Borneman:** Tons of skills: standing up in court, questioning a witness, running a case, experience dealing with individual clients and helping them through legal problems that they really don't understand. It's really rewarding.
- Matthew R. Hintz:** I think the main skill that I've developed through pro bono work is being able to learn how to talk to folks just as a regular human, so that we can have the conversation about their issues and move forward, and that then carries forward through pretty much all legal communication for all clients.
- Diane Claussen:** The skills that I've learned that I wouldn't otherwise have learned would be client communication, first and foremost.
- Nigeria S. Parrott:** Soft skills. Being empathetic with people. Being more mindful of being patient. Being open to listen. Making sure they understand that they are heard.
- Çagla Yetis:** And I've worked on matters where we've prepared court filings, for example. We've prepared motions, and this was for a name change client, and we've submitted things to the courts, so that wouldn't have been something that I would have had the chance to do if it wasn't for the pro bono work.
- Carolina G. Gordon:** In May of 2025, I was presented with the opportunity to help a client translating as he was presenting within a speech at the Pro Bono Awards. I was hesitant, but then I thought about this client who is probably going through a lot of struggles trying to speak and give this speech because he doesn't speak English, and here I am able to help him, and that was a way for me to get out of my comfort zone and help this client. And once everything was done, I was very relieved that I overcame my fears and I helped him, and he gave such a wonderful speech.

- David Cassidy:** Pro bono has offered me more immediate opportunity to engage with clients, because there is such a need for individuals. It's a very direct relationship and it has been really meaningful to me.
- Jeffrey M. Shapiro:** Working with nonprofits, you tend to have to be a little bit more creative. It's different in the not-for-profit context, because there's nobody standing behind the organizations that are, in the first instance, trying to do right by their missions. And so, you have to be more thoughtful and more creative in different ways, but I think that translates well in helping me also then try to be more creative representing for-profits. It's one of the reasons I say to younger lawyers that helping nonprofits in nonprofit type transactions is still actively practicing corporate law, and it's an opportunity to learn and perhaps think things through in a slightly different way.
- Laura Cicirelli:** I think what I love the most about the pro bono work is that it's something I don't do in my everyday legal career, so it's definitely a different skill set of sitting down with someone. It's taught me to empathize and just to be a human being and to just sit and talk and understand, and it's not always the legal answer, but it's just how to be a human.
- Daniel A. Suckerman:** With pro bono, it's an opportunity to sort of spread your wings a little bit, and what I really enjoy is doing that as a training exercise for junior associates. It's great for the firm as a whole when you can really spend your time on real world work, where junior associates can go outside their experience a little bit, outside their comfort zone on what they would be able to do on a billable matter, where you're much more concerned about the time that they're taking to do things, and same goes for the oversight time, right? So, on pro bono work, it's a great opportunity to work as a team. It gives you an opportunity to just do the great work, to spend the time thinking about it, the time you need to work together to make sure you're getting a great output.
- Yelky Perez:** It's a great opportunity, especially as a junior associate, to take ownership of a project and really feel like you were the one responsible for making sure that this happens. Pro bono has also been a great opportunity to kind of step outside of our comfort zone. So, it's definitely been really helpful in just expanding my horizon and connecting with some of the other practice groups at the firm, expanding my knowledge base.
- It gives you, very early on, the opportunity to be the one in charge to communicate to clients, sometimes very, very complex legal structures and issues that you really have to make an effort to explain it in a way that someone who normally is not in that space will have to understand. So, it forces you to think outside the box. It forces you to really be thoughtful about the work that you're doing.

Alexander Shalom:

It's interesting watching lawyers with whom I work--who spend most of their day looking at documents, working with corporate clients--to watch them interact one-on-one with clients, and most of our pro bono clients when we're interacting with them, are at their most vulnerable. Watching my colleagues, particularly my junior colleagues, interacting with those clients and showing real empathy and being good listeners. These are skills that really do translate. They make them not just better people--being empathetic is obviously good--but also better lawyers. I think that sort of client interaction, and leading with like "What are your needs," to the client, is a really important skill on the billable side or on the pro bono side.