

## The Bar Association of San Francisco to Focus On Pro Bono Service in 2015

NEWLY-RELEASED PRO BONO PLEDGES ENCOURAGE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA FIRMS AND BASF MEMBERS TO TAKE ON AT LEAST ONE PRO BONO MATTER IN 2015

**February 26, 2015 – San Francisco** -- The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) Board of Directors recently issued a call to action encouraging members and law firms to give back with pro bono service. A set of pro bono pledges, one aimed at law firms and one at individual attorneys, urges 50 hours of pro bono service or taking one pro bono matter in 2015. The pro bono pledges are unique in that they call on every BASF member to integrate pro bono service into his or her practice. Law firms signatories are being asked to pledge to developing the infrastructure and policies needed for each of one of their attorneys to fulfill their individual pro bono commitment.

2015 BASF President Timothy Moppin, Kaufman Dolowich & Voluck, announced the pro bono pledges during his installation speech in December saying, “There are 4.3 million unrepresented litigants in California alone. Our goal is to encourage all members to participate in at least one pro bono opportunity in 2015. We would like to have our members work directly with low-income litigants to address their legal needs. That is the only way that we can improve access to justice for the millions of people who go to court without a lawyer because they cannot afford one.”

Board Member John Worden, Schiff Hardin, co-chair of BASF’s Justice Gap Committee, was instrumental in getting the pledges launched and said, “It has been a privilege to be one of the leaders in this process, but we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the contributions of many, especially James Brosnahan of Morrison & Foerster and Mairi McKeever, Director/Managing Attorney, Pro Bono Legal Services Programs of the Justice & Diversity Center. For years Jim has been leading the ‘Civil Gideon’ charge to ensure that all have fair access and representation in civil cases involving the loss of a substantial need, such as child custody and housing. Mairi has similarly contributed much to this and many efforts led by JDC and BASF, national leaders when it comes to access for all, regardless of income, status, walk of life or otherwise. This is simply another step within that tradition. Now we need our lawyers and firms to volunteer to do the work, and many have already answered the call.”

JDC, San Francisco’s largest provider of pro bono legal services to low-income people and the nonprofits that serve them, always welcomes new volunteers. JDC offers a variety of pro bono opportunities focusing on cases involving basic human needs including housing, child custody, and sustenance. JDC’s programming includes projects that appeal to transactional attorneys and litigators, as well as the newly licensed and those with decades of experience. Substantive law trainings, mentors, and malpractice coverage are provided through JDC’s pro bono projects.

Signatories to the pledge are asked to keep track of their service and will be recognized on the BASF website and in publications.