Overview

(May 23, 2018, Washington, DC) — Steptoe & Johnson LLP has received the 2018 Pro Bono Partner Award from DC Law Students In Court (LSIC) for the firm’s participation in LSIC’s expungement project. The award was presented to Steptoe Chair Phil West at LSIC’s Celebration of Service reception in Washington on May 17.

Via a referral from LSIC, West recently secured a victory for a client who, in 1990, was arrested and charged with disorderly breach of peace. Though the case was later dismissed prior to a criminal complaint even being lodged, the client was nonetheless burdened by the record of arrest. West moved to seal the criminal record in the District of Columbia Superior Court, based on the client’s actual innocence of the offence. The government did not oppose the motion, and on May 11, it was granted by the court. West recently secured two other wins in related expungement cases referred by LSIC; LSIC told Steptoe that the government opposition and complexity in these cases was rare.

West and Steptoe’s Public Service Counsel Barbara Kagan discussed their commitment to pro bono work in an LSIC video featured at the Celebration of Service reception. Click here to watch the video.

Law Students in Court was launched in 1968 to provide free civil and criminal legal services to low income residents of the nation’s capital. The organization carries out this mission primarily through pairing local law students with seasoned lawyers, who instruct and supervise the student attorneys throughout the representation of their clients. LSIC also relies on law firm pro bono volunteers to further the reach of its program. Since its founding, LSIC has defended thousands of men and women threatened with eviction or facing criminal prosecution, while simultaneously transforming hundreds of law students into the next generation of committed social justice attorneys.

Steptoe has a long and rich tradition of providing pro bono services. The firm was a charter signatory to the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge, and was one of the first law firms to establish a full-time attorney position to manage the firm’s pro bono program. In addition to West’s contributions to the firm’s public service program, each member of Steptoe’s Executive Committee is involved in a pro bono matter.

About Steptoe

In more than 100 years of practice, Steptoe has earned an international reputation for vigorous representation of clients before governmental agencies, successful advocacy in litigation and arbitration, and creative and practical advice in structuring business transactions. Steptoe has more than 500 lawyers and other professional staff across offices in Beijing, Brussels, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, San Francisco, and Washington. For more information, visit www.steptoe.com.
Moses Cook, LSIC executive director, with Steptoe Chair Phil West.

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