

## Miller Canfield Announces Richard J. Seryak Pro Bono Award Winners

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Miller Canfield is pleased to announce the winners of the prestigious 2017 Richard J. Seryak Award in recognition of pro bono service: Cara Houck and Kimberly Scott. The announcement was made by CEO Michael McGee.

The annual award was first given in 2015, in memory of Richard Seryak, who during his 40-year legal career at Miller Canfield exemplified the standard of pro bono service. Seryak's widow Dr. Helene Dombrowski and children Elizabeth Seryak and Dr. Kaitlin Seryak established the award to recognize attorneys who continue Richard Seryak's legacy. The Seryak family provides a stipend for the award winner to donate to the legal service organization of his or her choice.

"Each year, I have been deeply humbled by and tremendously proud of the meaningful pro bono service my colleagues have provided," McGee said. "The contributions that Kim and Cara—and all of the attorneys nominated for this recognition—have made are tremendous, and have changed the lives of those they serve through their pro bono work."

Houck, a principal in the firm's Real Estate Group in Chicago, works extensively with the Awassa Children's Project in Ethiopia. Serving as board president of the nonprofit, which provides food, shelter, education and community services for more than 100 children, she commits to traveling annually to Awassa, Ethiopia. There, she participates in community outreach, collaborates with local government and assists with the management of an orphanage that houses children whose parents have died from AIDS.

Houck is also active in the Chicago legal community, serving as a board member for the Chicago Bar Foundation. In this role, she helps spearhead the foundation's fundraising efforts, raising millions of dollars every year to provide legal counsel and access to justice for financially disadvantaged people in the Chicago area.

Scott, a principal in Miller Canfield's Litigation and Dispute Resolution Group in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is working on the *Hamama v. Adducci* case in cooperation with the ACLU of Michigan. In this case, Scott and the ACLU obtained an injunction to prevent the imminent deportation of hundreds of Iraqi nationals without due process in the immigration courts. Scott's clients are primarily Catholic, Kurdish and other religions and ethnic minorities, and will face persecution, torture and possibly death if returned to Iraq.

Scott was named national class counsel in the case, which has the potential to affect the lives of more than 1,400 similarly situated Iraqi nationals across the country. Since the case was filed in July, the court has repeatedly rejected the government's argument that it lacks jurisdiction to hear the matter. The court has granted her clients' request for the opportunity to access the immigration court system to present their claims against removal, including those for asylum or protection under the Convention Against Torture. The court also ordered bond hearings to determine if class members who have been in prolonged detention should be released.

Pro bono service is an essential part of Miller Canfield's culture, and the firm has earned numerous recognitions during the past year, including being named to the State Bar of Michigan Pro Bono Circle of Excellence and Michigan Community Resources' Law Firm of the Year. Stanley Stek, a principal in the firm's Grand Rapids, Michigan, office, was the recipient of the Michael S. Barnes Award, given by Legal Aid of Western Michigan, in recognition of outstanding pro bono service.