

Miller Canfield's Wendy Richards Wins Cummiskey Award for Pro Bono Service

June 13, 2024

Miller Canfield is pleased to announce that Wendy Richards will be awarded the prestigious 2024 John W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award, which is given annually by the State Bar of Michigan to recognize outstanding pro bono service.

Richards has served as Miller Canfield's pro bono counsel since 2016. She leads the firm's pro bono efforts, which have included:

- Road to Restoration driver's license clinics throughout the state, which she helped to develop in partnership with the Michigan Department of State, the Michigan Attorney General's Office, DTE Energy, and the Detroit Justice Center, to assist Michigan residents with taking the steps required to restore driving privileges after their licenses have been revoked or suspended.
- In cooperation with ACLU of Michigan and others obtained an injunction in a national habeas class action to prevent the imminent deportation of hundreds of Iraqi nationals without due process in the immigration courts. Clients are primarily Catholic, Kurdish and other religious and ethnic minorities, facing persecution, torture and possibly death if returned to Iraq. The team also successfully obtained an injunction ordering bond hearings to determine if the roughly 300 class members that have been in prolonged detention should be released.
- Took the lead role among 14 firms nationwide in coordinating a 50-state poll worker guide project on behalf of The Brennan Center for Justice, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Association of Pro Bono Counsel, providing information on application, scope of duties, and high priority state-specific issues. Building upon the work of the guides, coordinated with the Stanford-MIT Healthy Elections Project and Association of Pro Bono Counsel encouraging lawyers and law students nationwide to apply for the critical job of serving as poll workers on Election Day in 2020.
- To address COVID-19's devastating economic effects, Richards established the remote COVID-19 Small Business Clinic in Detroit with Michigan Community Resources and the Lawyers for Good Government Foundation. The clinic continues to assist small businesses and nonprofits to this day. She co-created and has chaired the Small Business Legal Academy Detroit, which partnered with Detroit Start-up Week to hold clinics where would-be entrepreneurs can obtain pro bono legal assistance with common business questions and issues.

Richards is active in professional and civic groups such as the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law Executive Committee, the Michigan State Bar Foundation's Access to Justice Statewide Steering Committee, Goodwill Detroit, Tau Beta Association, and the Association of Pro Bono Counsel. Richards also is the co-chair of Miller Canfield's Election Law group and is the Resident Director of the firm's Detroit office.

Richards has earned numerous honors and recognitions for her work, including:

- The Fellows of the Michigan State Bar Foundation

Continued

- 2021 *Crain's Detroit Business* Notable Women in Law
- Detroit Bar Association Pro Bono Award
- *DBusiness* Magazine, Top Lawyers, Commercial Litigation, 2021-present; Nonprofit/Charities Law, 2022
- State Bar of Michigan Pro Bono Honor Roll, 2020-present
- *Michigan Lawyers Weekly*, Women in the Law, Class of 2018
- Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, Exceptional Achievement honorarium, 2018

Richards will be recognized at the State Bar of Michigan awards luncheon in September.