

Pro Bono Attorney of the Month
Karen G. Silverman

*By Ellen Krakow
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The Suffolk Pro Bono Project is very pleased to honor Karen G. Silverman as its Pro Bono Attorney of the Month for her continuing commitment to pro bono on behalf of our matrimonial and family law clients.

Ms. Silverman has a solo practice in Huntington, New York, where she exclusively represents clients in divorce and family court matters. Her law career, however, began in New York City in 1987 as a commercial litigation associate at Kronish Leib Weiner and Hellman (now Cooley LLP). She worked at Kronish Leib for three years, before moving to Long Island in 1990, where she started practicing matrimonial law at Labert Lang & Willen. It was eight years later that Ms. Silverman decided to go out on her own, establishing the Law Offices of Karen G. Silverman.

Originally from Pittsford, New York, Ms. Silverman obtained a B.A. from SUNY Albany in 1984 and a J.D. from SUNY Buffalo in 1987. Like many young attorneys who start their careers in New York City, she left Kronish Leib and the city soon after becoming a parent. She is grateful for the experience she had as a junior litigation associate with a large firm. Said Ms. Silverman, "Kronish Leib taught me how to write, and they trained me to be meticulous and careful in my work. It was a great learning opportunity for a new lawyer."

Ms. Silverman has done over 180 hours of pro bono work for the Project since taking her first case in 2003. She has also done a considerable amount of other pro bono work outside of the Project over the years. Asked why she devotes so much of her practice to pro bono clients, she replied, "It's very important that we help those less fortunate. The Project allows me the chance to use the skills I have to do that." She finds the pro bono work very rewarding, and in fact stills keeps in touch with one of her past clients. This client was nineteen years old and had been forced out of her home by her unstable mother when Ms. Silverman took her case. She helped the client obtain child support and tuition assistance. The client went on to graduate from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and now works in New York City. Noted Ms. Silverman, "That one was a *real* success story!"

Ms. Silverman has had many successes with her pro bono cases and is a loyal contributor to the Project. Maria Dosso, Director of Communications and Volunteer Services at Law Services, commented, "Karen never seems to hesitate to take a case and jumps right in. We're very fortunate to have an attorney of her caliber as an active participant in the program with a strong desire to give back."

In addition to assisting the Project, Ms. Silverman is involved with the Mariposa Foundation DR. This organization promotes the education of girls in the Dominican Republic. She has traveled to the Dominican Republic several times to see, firsthand, the work being done there.

It is perhaps the fact that Ms. Silverman is the mother of three daughters that drew her to the Mariposa Foundation. Her oldest daughter, Samantha is twenty-six and studying nursing at SUNY Buffalo. Samantha plans on specializing in geriatric care. Her middle daughter, Allison, is twenty-three and a second year law student, attending Fordham Law School on scholarship. Allison interned last summer at Chadboune & Parke and was a summer clerk for a federal judge the prior summer. Her youngest daughter, Rachel, is twenty-one and a senior at SUNY Buffalo, with plans of attending dental school after graduating.

Ms. Silverman lives in Huntington, New York and is a member of the Huntington Lawyers Club and the Suffolk County Bar Association. She is also a member, past president and former director of the Matrimonial Bar Association.

The Pro Bono Project greatly appreciates all that Karen Silverman has done on behalf of its clients over the past two years and looks forward to working together with her in the future. It is with great pleasure that we honor her as Pro Bono Attorney of the Month.

The Suffolk Pro Bono Project is a joint effort of Nassau Suffolk Law Services, the Suffolk County Bar Association and the Suffolk County Pro Bono Foundation, who, for many years, have joined resources toward the goal of providing free legal assistance to Suffolk County residents who are dealing with economic hardship. Nassau Suffolk Law Services is a non-profit civil legal services agency, providing free legal assistance to Long Islanders, primarily in the areas of benefits advocacy, homelessness prevention (foreclosure and eviction defense), access to health care, and services to special populations such as domestic violence victims, disabled, and adult home resident. The provision of free services is prioritized based on financial need and funding is often inadequate in these areas. Furthermore, there is no funding for the general provision of matrimonial or bankruptcy representation, therefore the demand for pro bono assistance is the greatest in these areas. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Ellen Krakow, Esq. 631 232-2400 x 3323.