

Pro Bono Attorney of the Month
Mark A. Murray

*By Ellen Krakow
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The Suffolk Pro Bono Project is very pleased to honor **Mark A. Murray** as Pro Bono Attorney of the Month. Mr. Murray has been providing critical pro bono legal services for the Project for nearly twenty years in a wide range of matters, and he continues to regularly accept new pro bono cases. “Mark has been a constant and dedicated contributor to the work of the Project for many years, and we’re grateful for the all the work he’s done,” says Maria Dosso, Law Services’ Director of Communications and Volunteer Services. Mr. Murray’s most recent, outstanding work has earned him this distinction.

Mr. Murray’s work with the Project began in 1995, assisting pro bono clients in foreclosure matters. Later, he started accepting matrimonial and Chapter 7 bankruptcy cases, along with other types of matters. Mr. Murray has become one of the Projects go-to attorneys for the out-of-the-ordinary pro bono cases. In one pro bono matter, Mr. Murray represented a disabled client receiving public benefits who was about to inherit from his father’s estate. Mr. Murray created a Special Needs Trust for the client, so his eligibility for critical benefits would not be impacted. In another pro bono matter, Mr. Murray defended a client in a personal injury matter. The client was sued for injuries allegedly sustained by a child who had been involved in a playground altercation with his son. The client had very limited income, rented him home, and had no liability insurance. He was greatly relieved when Mr. Murray settled the matter on satisfactory terms prior to trial.

Mr. Murray believes it is the Project’s matrimonial clients that are in the most desperate need of legal assistance. As he explains, “The typical client is usually the non-monied spouse, often with young children, who have been placed into dyer conditions due to the actions of their spouse.” Mr. Murray is happy to assist them, and will often help them get immediate financial support through *pendente lite* motions. In some of his pro bono matrimonial cases, Mr. Murray has been able to recover attorney’s fees from the client’s spouse.

Mark Murray has a general legal practice in West Sayville - The Murray Law Group, PC. He is a sole practitioner with a staff of ten paralegals and interns. His general practice includes bankruptcy, foreclosure, matrimonial, employment litigation, estate planning and estate litigation. Mr. Murray is proud of his foreclosure defense work which includes a case he took on in 1998, in which his client is still in possession of the home after Mr. Murray defeated the lender’s summary judgment motion. The litigation is still ongoing.

When asked why attorneys in small, busy law practices should take on a pro bono client, Mr. Murray responded, “Nobody has less time than me. I believe you can always find the time.” He added, “Although you’re not paid to do the work, you are definitely rewarded

because you've helped someone with nowhere else to go, and you've helped to reverse a reputation our profession sometime has." He strongly encourages those contemplating doing pro bono work to take a case. Says Mr. Murray, "It'll be just one more case for you to do. And it's worth it!"

Mr. Murray graduated from Niagara University in 1984 and Touro Law Center in 1989. After graduating law school, he joined the Garden City firm, White Quinlan & Stanley, an insurance defense firm, where he litigated labor law and construction accident cases, along with a variety of other matters. After six years there, with a desire to control his own destiny, Mr. Murray started his own practice together with his wife, attorney Olga Hopkins Murray, in West Sayville. That firm became the present law firm, Murray Law Group after Ms. Murray left to serve as Town Clerk of Islip in 2012, an office she still holds today.

In addition to his pro bono work, Mr. Murray is involved in many civic projects. He serves on the Islip Town Republican Committee. He is also is a board member of The Rollstone Foundation (an organization that helps raise money to offset the cost of adopting children with special needs), a board member of Natasha's Justice Project (an organization that raises money to expose the backlog of rape kit processing around the country), and a board member of Long Island Imagine Awards (an organization that gives awards to non-profits serving Long Islanders that are models to other non-profits). Mr. Murray has three daughters, Maggie, Brigid and Alanna, all of whom assist him in his work with these community service organizations.

For all the essential work he has done over the past several years for the Project, and for his continued commitment to pro bono service, we are very pleased to recognize Mark A. Murray 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.*