



When I first started practicing law, my local district court judge assigned pro bono divorce clients to attorneys in our county bar by just going down a list of attorneys. We were expected to handle the cases he assigned to us regardless of our particular skillset. Although that method did not always produce an ideal match, it provided invaluable experience in litigation and client management. More importantly, it raised an awareness of the pro bono needs in our community.

It was nearly 25 years ago that Crowley Fleck established its pro bono program in Montana—a program that leads the legal industry in our region. Just 8 years ago, Crowley opened its first Wyoming office and provided us an opportunity to expand our pro bono work into a regional program. Our firm should be serving all the communities within our footprint and that requires deliberate efforts by all our attorneys. Having been a Wyoming practitioner for my entire career, I appreciate that our firm has the unique opportunity to create a pro bono program that makes an impact in all the communities in which we live. Frankly, I see it as our obligation. It is with this perspective that a priority in 2020 is to expand our pro bono services into Wyoming in keeping with the quality and breadth of the pro bono program that we have established in Montana.

Crowley Fleck’s founding attorney could not have imagined in 1895 that this firm would still be in existence 125 years later, let alone that it would be an AMLAW 250 regional law firm with 11 offices and more than 170 attorneys. Reaching a milestone like our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary not only speaks to the quality of the legal work we provide, but also to our commitment to move Crowley Fleck forward by evolving in a constantly changing legal landscape.

Crowley’s pro bono program has been a major part of that evolution. It is not only a program that was started by the very partners who have built the firm into what it is today, it is why many attorneys (associates and laterals like myself) are drawn to Crowley Fleck. We are proud of the firm that we built, and that pride is in no small part due to our pro bono program. As we celebrate the firm’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we carry forward the principles of service exemplified through our pro bono program and commit ourselves to giving back to the communities in which we live and work.

**Lori McMullen**

Executive Committee Member / Partner, Sheridan

### Our Star Quilt

The pattern of a star quilt is inspired by the Morning Star, the last and brightest star in the eastern horizon before dawn. The star quilt’s tradition of honor grew as the quilts were draped around the shoulders of Lakota warriors and hunters when they returned from battle, a successful hunt, or at the start of a vision quest.

This fall, a star quilt was given as a gift to a Billings partner Peter Habein for his fight in a pro bono matter. It remains in his office as a cherished reminder of the symbolism of the star quilt and in memory of S.S.F.N.



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## FIRM HIGHLIGHT: SHERIDAN'S CASEY TERRELL SHINES A LIGHT ON PRO BONO



Casey Terrell is at the forefront of pro bono work in Wyoming, contributing more than 140 hours to pro bono causes in 2019 alone.

In August, Casey represented a pro bono client in a bench trial in the Sheridan County Circuit Court with partner Jim Mowry. The client faced a lawsuit related to the rental of a trailer house lot and was facing a judgment in excess of \$35,000 at trial. Ultimately,

Casey achieved a great outcome for the client.

Casey has also been serving as the president of the Sheridan and Johnson County Bar Association which has recently undertaken

several exciting pro bono initiatives. In celebration of national pro bono week, the association held a pro bono night to provide legal assistance to the Sheridan community. Casey also spearheaded a partnership with the local VA Justice Outreach Coordinator which will allow the bar to hold legal clinics at the VA campus for veterans who are unable to leave the grounds for medical and other reasons. They hope to hold these clinics on a quarterly basis.

Casey serves as an invaluable example of the impact pro bono attorneys make when they think outside the box to tap into the local needs of our communities.

Thank you for all your contributions Casey!

## THE MILLENNIAL IMPACT: CROWLEY'S FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

It should not take anyone by surprise that Crowley's latest incoming class of associates is taking center of the pro bono stage. Jeff Fromm, millennial expert, describes millennials as "the most collaborative and inclusive generation to date."

In order to create the most millennial friendly workforce, Fromm thinks you should know this about millennials:

1. They want to grow;
2. They want a coach;
3. They don't want to waste time; and
4. They want balance and democracy.

A 2016 study surveying millennials employed at large corporations found that 64% would refuse a job from a company that does not have strong corporate social responsibility practices. According to the same study, 88% said they would find their job more fulfilling if provided opportunities to make a positive impact on social and environmental issues.

Pro bono is one way to fulfill these workforce demands. It gives young attorneys experiences they may have to wait several years for, such as the opportunity to work with more senior attorneys, appear in court, learn new areas of the law, and work with other new attorneys. In turn, this work helps them develop their own practices.

Our latest class, millennial or not, is proving the point.



*Montana Funk, Marina Horsting, and Gabby Gee at their swearing-in to the Montana State Bar in Helena, Montana.*

Bismarck associate Maggie Brockel joined Crowley based on its commitment to pro bono work. She quickly joined the pro bono practice group and is working with Ben Sand to develop pro bono efforts in our North Dakota offices.

Missoula associate Gabby Gee worked with Adrienne Maxwell on an adoption, making the local news for her efforts. Gabby is actively seeking more opportunities for pro bono work and is a go-to for pro bono in Missoula.

Williston associate Emily Ramage has been working with Helena partner Greg Dorrington and Bismarck associate Ben Sand on a complex immigration matter necessitating an immediate dissolution.

Billings associate Marina Horsting worked closely with Monique Voigt on a guardianship involving a young man following a cerebral event.

Bozeman associate Peter Taylor has taken on two pro bono matters in his first few months at Crowley, working with partner Dave Wagner on a contested divorce, and with partner Whitney Kolivas on a guardianship of an autistic young man.

Billings associates Luke Forcella and Michael Klepperich worked with Montana Aging Services Bureau attorney Susan Gobbs and devoted their services to the Kelly Moore Memorial Document Clinic—Senior Financial Defense.

Helena associate Isaac Smith has been working with partner Alissa Chambers on a parenting plan matter with a competing grandparent rights claim and jurisdictional issues. Isaac is also coordinating with Montana Legal Services Association to provide trust and estates limited scope advice with former Crowley partner, Dan McLean.

Billings associate Montana Funk is slated to work with pro bono associate Morgan Dake to pilot a family law clinic at the Montana Women's Prison.

Crowley is proud of these new associates and is confident the firm will continue to find opportunities to collaborate across practice areas—and eras—to promote equity, equality, and opportunity.



## **SPOTLIGHT: *Suda and Hernandez v. U.S. Customs and Border Protection***

After two women were illegally detained in Havre, Montana by a C.B.P. agent for speaking Spanish, Kalispell partner Danielle Coffman joined four other ACLU attorneys to bring suit. The suit cites 1) a violation of the Fourth Amendment because there was no legitimate reason to seize them; and 2) a violation of equal protection because they were racially profiled for speaking Spanish. The case is currently pending before the U.S. District Court in Great Falls, Montana. As a long-time member and supporter of the ACLU, Danielle feels strongly that supporting the ACLU benefits Americans on all sides of the spectrum.



## **SPOTLIGHT: Guardians ad litem**

Guardians ad litem (GALs) are court appointed attorneys tasked with investigating the best interests of children. GALs are appointed when courts suspect parenting issues involve a child’s safety or a judge would like a qualified person to investigate and make recommendations on the child’s best interests. Judges do not have to follow GAL’s recommendations, but because the stakes for these children are high, their recommendations are taken seriously. Having served as GAL to a non-verbal first grader, Helena partner Chris Oliveira shares that “when you think about who you are doing it for and why” it makes the experience much more rewarding. Thanks to Chris Stoneback, Chris Oliveira, Brett Clark, Gary Connelley, Morgan Dake, Caleb Kaywood, Megan McCrae, Lara Guercio, and Renee Coppock for serving as GALs in 2019.



## **SPOTLIGHT: Saving a home**

Last fall, Billings partner Bill Lamdin saved his disabled client’s home from foreclosure, brought about by her inability to make full payments while caring for her terminally ill mother. Bill successfully negotiated a full reinstatement of the loan and dismissal of the foreclosure with the assistance of the U.S. Attorney’s office in Montana and the cooperation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Housing Services. Big Sky Senior Services agreed to assist the client with her money management, so her loan will be properly serviced and paid going forward. Bill’s client is convinced his efforts truly saved her life.



## **UP NEXT: Wyoming and North Dakota**

Crowley’s Wyoming pro bono practice group members are actively working to establish signature projects for the Wyoming offices and are coordinating with judges and strategic community partnerships to identify how our Wyoming attorneys can best serve.

Crowley’s North Dakota pro bono practice group has been regularly consulting with North Dakota Legal Services, offering our assistance and finding mentorship in return. Due to lack of reliable funding sources, North Dakota Legal Services has significantly more need than it can address. The practice group is considering establishing a signature program to assist in drafting wills and other legal documents for the elderly.



## **Legal Aid Helps Break the Cycle of Intimate Partner Violence**

In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Helena partner Alissa Chambers was invited to write an op-ed for the Billings Gazette. Alissa highlighted the importance of providing pro bono services to victims of domestic violence: (excerpt)

Too many domestic violence survivors are unable to access legal representation, and instead are forced to live in danger and instability as the need for civil legal aid far outweighs the funding available to provide these critical services. Resources are stretched too thin to provide civil legal aid to all Montanans, but unfortunately there is only enough funding and volunteers to provide limited services to most victims rather than the full representation that they need and deserve.

Our community can do more for survivors, and while intimate partner homicides are on the rise, we must protect victims and provide what are often life-saving services to those suffering from domestic violence. We can make the promise of America real – with Liberty and Justice for All.

**We are committed to reaching 10,000 by the end of 2020!**



## **CERTIFIED LOCAL GROWN: Pro Bono that Supports Your Community**

Pro bono associate Morgan Dake was invited to write an article highlighting the importance of local pro bono work for the American Bar Association’s Young Lawyer’s Division publication, TYL: (excerpt)

It is easy to feel intimidated by pro bono work. Big law firms highlight thousands of pro bono hours and extensive resources spent on natural disasters, emergency situations, and other large-scale pro bono projects. They pump serious resources into addressing imminent catastrophes unfolding all over the world. It is flashy, important work worth highlighting because those attorneys are truly helping people when they need it the most—when they are in a crisis. Yet, there is no universal pro bono program model that can or will be effective for all attorneys or law firms. For most attorneys, the best way to make an impact through pro bono work is simple: look to the local needs of your community.

The measure of your pro bono success will not come down to number of hours or dollars spent during a pro bono assignment. Look to the real human implications to measure the quality of your own pro bono commitment. Start to fulfill your duty by helping just one person. You may not make the news, but you could change a life.

## Pro Bono Newsletter • Winter 2020



Crowley Fleck PLLP has been ‘quietly making noise’ since 1996 when it formally established an in-house pro bono program and retained a full-time pro bono attorney, Gary Connelley.

In 2018, Helena partner Alissa Chambers joined the program as the pro bono coordinator. In 2019, Morgan Dake joined the law firm as a full-time pro bono associate in Billings, and the firm also established a practice group with volunteer partners and associates from each of our Wyoming, North Dakota and Montana offices that focuses on our local pro bono efforts in all the communities where we work and live.

### Practice Group members:

Matt Baldassin—Missoula; Maggie Brockel—Bismarck; Alissa Chambers—Helena; Brett Clark—Helena; Danni Coffman—Kalispell; Gary Connelley—Billings; Morgan Dake—Billings; Pam Garman—Billings; Matt Hibbs—Bozeman; Trevor Hunt—Williston; Liisa Johnson—Intake; Bill Lamdin—Billings; Lori McMullen—Sheridan; Ben Sand—Bismarck; Becky Schupp—Intake; Charlie Smith—Butte; Susan Stubson—Casper; Tim Woznick—Cheyenne



*Megan Bailey, Dalthorp Clerk Rob Belle, Partner Alissa Chambers, and associate Isaac Smith representing Crowley at Alexander Blewett III School of Law’s pro bono fair in celebration of national pro bono week.*

**Please contact our pro bono practice group to learn more about our program at [probono@crowleyfleck.com](mailto:probono@crowleyfleck.com).**