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April 23, 2010

Pro Bono Project
State Bar of Georgia
104 Marietta Street, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30303

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the nomination of the **Atlanta Bar Association** for the *State Bar of Georgia William B. Spann, Jr. Award*. The Atlanta Bar Association has developed multiple pro bono programs, each one of which has helped to satisfy previously unmet needs and helped to extend services to underserved segments of the population. Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta has benefited directly and substantially from one of those programs: the Atlanta Bar Association's Pro Bono March Madness.

Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta (PBPA) matches nonprofits in need of free legal assistance with transactional lawyers from corporations and law firms with the appropriate expertise. Our clients are typically small, community-based nonprofits that serve the poor. The Atlanta Bar Association and its Sections have been instrumental in our efforts to recruit volunteer attorneys to assist nonprofits, both by spreading the word about our pro bono opportunities and by training attorneys to provide pro bono services.

PBPA was invited to participate in the first March Madness in 2006. At the time, we were unable to assist all of the start-up nonprofits that requested assistance with formation because we did not have enough volunteers with the appropriate expertise. We developed a training for attorneys providing pro bono representation to start-up nonprofit organizations and presented it as part of March Madness program from 2006 through 2009. During that time, almost 200 attorneys attended the program and many of the attendees went on to volunteer

for us. Since that first March Madness program in 2006, we not had any problems with recruiting volunteers to assist start-up nonprofits.

In 2009, the Atlanta Bar Association Labor & Employment Section recognized that many of our nonprofit clients need employment-related pro bono assistance and that we lacked a sufficient number of volunteers with the appropriate expertise. The Section developed a training for attorneys on employment-related legal issues common to our nonprofit clients and presented it as part of March Madness 2009 and 2010, and at an additional training in the fall of 2009. Through the trainings, the L&E Section has prepared about 70 attorneys to assist our clients and several attendees have already taken on pro bono matters for our clients. Our backlog of employment-related pro bono matters has disappeared.

The Atlanta Bar Association Tax Law Section approached us in late 2009 about developing a tax-related March Madness program. All of our clients are 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations and, as such, are subject to complicated and strict IRS regulations. Since very few attorneys specialize in the area of tax-exempt law, the Section offered to present a training on "Tax-Exempt Law for Non-Tax Lawyers". The inaugural training, which was attended by 46 attorneys, gave attorneys an overview of tax-exempt issues that pro bono nonprofit clients face so that they may assist them with compliance. Having volunteer attorneys with some familiarity of tax-exempt law will be incredibly helpful to our organization and our clients.

The Atlanta Bar Association's assistance of Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta has not been limited to the March Madness program. Several Atlanta Bar Sections have helped Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta and our clients.

Examples of the Section efforts include:

- In the last two years, the Construction Law Section has conducted a series of four free webinars geared towards the legal needs of nonprofit organizations that are involved in construction projects. By addressing legal questions and concerns of nonprofit developers, the Construction Law Section has enabled these organizations to operate more effectively and to focus on their mission of serving low-income individuals and communities.
- Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta has partnered with both the Business & Finance Section and the Corporate Counsel Section to present CLE trainings to attorneys on Pro Bono Opportunities for Transactional and In-House Attorneys. The two CLEs, attended by 85 attorneys, helped to spread the word about PBP and bring in additional volunteers for our organization.
- Multiple Sections, including those Sections listed above as well as the Intellectual Property Section, have forwarded our monthly email with pro bono opportunities to their members, thereby generating much-needed additional volunteers for us.

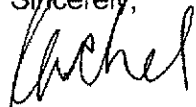
The Atlanta Bar Association has repeatedly come to the aid of Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta by finding needs (in this case, attorneys in particular areas of expertise to assist nonprofits on a pro bono basis) and then working to fill them (by recruiting and training

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volunteer attorneys). It is difficult for me to imagine an organization that is more deserving of *State Bar of Georgia William B. Spann, Jr. Award* than the Atlanta Bar Association.

Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Epps Spears
Executive Director

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April 29, 2010

Pro Bono Project
State Bar of Georgia
104 Marietta Street, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Members of the Access to Justice Committee:

This letter is to support the nomination of the Atlanta Bar Association for the State Bar of Georgia's William B. Spann, Jr. Award for pro bono projects sponsored by bar associations, law firms or community organizations.

The nominating letter authored by Rita Sheffey begins by noting the long history that the Atlanta Bar has in creating and supporting pro bono projects. It cites the three times the Bar has won the Harrison Tweed Award from the American Bar Association for its work to create the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, its development of the Volunteer Lawyer Program for Cuban Detainees and its support of the Truancy Intervention Project. These three efforts illustrate the Bar's long standing and multi-faceted support of pro bono efforts in Atlanta.

To that list must be added the historic support the Bar has provided the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, from the very beginning of our history in 1924. It was in fact 17 prominent Bar members who created Atlanta Legal Aid and six former Atlanta Bar presidents were also president of Legal Aid's Board of Directors. More particularly in 1982, when Legal Aid was facing drastic cuts in support from the Legal Services Corporation, whose funding amounted to 75% of our budget, the Bar started a fund raising campaign among its members to save the program. Of course, Legal Aid survived with the Bar's help, and our annual bar campaign now raises about \$1.6 million a year.

It is hard to envision new projects which would rival this long history of pro bono work. Yet Rita's letters set out in great detail the numerous and diverse pro bono projects that the Atlanta Bar has recently taken on. They range from support of immigration projects, to work with Appleseed, to the creation of a pro bono bankruptcy project. They involve financial support to pro bono organizations (from the Atlanta Bar Foundation and from its Lawyer Referral and Information Service), promoting pro bono work through the Celebrating Service

Luncheon and Pro Bono Fair, recognizing individual pro bono service through the Community Service Award, and training hundreds of pro bono lawyers on a wide variety of topics through March Madness. It is an extraordinary compilation of efforts based on newly adopted Strategic Plan which makes pro bono and community service a key goal of the organization.

In short, the Atlanta Bar has actually outdone itself. For that reason it should be recognized with William B. Spann Jr. Pro Bono Award from the State Bar.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Gottlieb', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Steve Gottlieb
Executive Director