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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***Legal Aid Honors Key Partners at 2024 Pro Bono Publico Awards  
Ceremony***

***Anthony Perez Cassino of Milbank LLP; 31 Law Firms; and 173 Individual  
Attorneys Honored***

**(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society** held the 2024 Pro Bono Publico Awards Ceremony at the Prince George Ballroom on Monday, October 21st, honoring individual attorneys and law firms for their outstanding and sustained achievements in pro bono services.

Each year, The Legal Aid Society works with over 100 law firms and corporate legal departments across New York City. The firms recognized were nominated by Legal Aid staff in every borough for their exceptional commitment to ensure that no New Yorker is denied the right to equal justice.

The Public Interest Law Leadership Award was presented to Anthony Perez Cassino of Milbank LLP in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to The Legal Aid Society and its clients, as well as his leadership of Milbank's legendary pro bono program. For over 25 years, Cassino and his colleagues at Milbank have helped litigate matters that have made a significant and lasting impact on the lives of thousands of New Yorkers.

Most recently, Cassino has assembled a team from Milbank that co-counsels a lawsuit with the Prisoners' Rights Project and Brooklyn Defender Services against the New York City Department of Correction for its ongoing failure to provide incarcerated New Yorkers access to medical care. Last month, working with our Juvenile Rights Practice, Milbank filed a lawsuit to end the NYPD practice of illegally accessing, using, and disclosing sealed arrest-related records of youth ages 7 through 17.

Selendy Gay PLLC also received recognition for its Outstanding Pro Bono Assistance in Safeguarding Affordable Housing In New York City. Attorneys from Selendy Gay, along with The Legal Aid Society and Legal Services

NYC, helped secure a ruling in March that upholds New York’s Rent Stabilization Law, cementing decades-old protections that help to preserve affordable housing and prevent displacement and homelessness for countless individuals and families.

Garrett Ordower, an attorney with Scale LLP, was likewise honored for his pro bono work that helped secure the exoneration of Steven Ruffin, who was incarcerated after he was wrongly convicted in 1996 of manslaughter. Along with attorneys from The Legal Aid Society, Ordower’s advocacy on behalf of his client resulted in a January 2024 vacatur hearing that saw Ruffin’s conviction overturned after nearly 14 years.

“We are incredibly grateful for the extraordinary dedication and commitment of our pro bono partners, whose unwavering support has allowed us to provide the people we serve with the zealous, thoughtful representation they need and deserve,” said **Twyla Carter, Attorney-in-Chief and Chief Executive Officer of The Legal Aid Society**. “The impact of these contributions cannot be understated, and we thank each and every one of our partners for the countless hours they spent fighting on behalf of low-income New Yorkers and working toward our mission of achieving justice in every borough.”

“The individuals and firms being honored tonight are some of our most valuable partners, each of whom greatly enhance Legal Aid’s ability to advocate for the members of our community who need it most. The pro bono volunteers we are celebrating tonight have worked alongside our attorneys on numerous, critical cases that will lay the groundwork for our clients to be better protected against inequality, injustice, and discrimination of all forms. We are thrilled to be honoring these exceptional lawyers and look forward to continuing our work together in the future,” said **Lou Sartori, Chief Counsel of the Pro Bono Practice at The Legal Aid Society**.

**The Honorable Rowan Wilson, Chief Judge of the State of New York**, said: “Until we answer the call for a civil *Gideon*, people in need must depend on the private bar to volunteer to represent them—even in New York, the leader among states in funding civil legal representation for those who cannot afford it. Our legal service providers are both overburdened and underfunded, which makes it vitally important that our partners in the private bar not only continue to generously provide pro bono services but also to join in our efforts to increase governmental funding for our providers. I offer both thanks and congratulations to all those in the private bar who have provided pro bono services to improve the lives of our fellow New Yorkers—especially those whom we are recognizing tonight—and to the Legal Aid Society for its longstanding and fruitful support of the private bar’s efforts in this area.”

**Anthony Perez Cassino of Milbank LLP** said, “I have had the privilege to work with the Legal Aid Society for more than 25 years. It has been an honor for me and for Milbank to share in so many vital, meaningful wins in the fight for equal justice.”

Last year, 1,915 volunteers and interns donated 153,000 hours of legal assistance to the clients of The Legal Aid Society. But no metrics can adequately quantify what pro bono assistance means to a family facing homelessness, a client whose rights are violated by unlawful police conduct, or a child in foster care whose educational needs are not being met. For over 148 years, The Legal Aid Society has worked together with the private bar to provide life changing legal assistance and deliver “Justice In Every Borough.”

**Photos:** Credit Isseu Diouf Campbell at Afrikanspot.

- Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals Rowan Wilson.

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- Ted Hausman, Supervising Attorney at The Legal Aid Society; Adriene Holder, Chief Attorney of the Civil Practice at The Legal Aid Society; Dawne Mitchell, Chief Attorney of the Juvenile Rights Practice at The Legal Aid Society; Garrett Ordower, Counsel, Scale LLP; Twyla Carter, Attorney-In-Chief and CEO of The Legal Aid Society; Tina Luongo, Chief Attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society; Lou Sartori, Chief Counsel of the Pro Bono Practice at The Legal Aid Society.

Photo: <https://legalaidnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/The-Legal-Aid-Societys-2024-Pro-Bono-Publico-Award-Ceremony-5638-1.jpg>

- Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals Rowan Wilson and Anthony Perez Cassino, Pro Bono Counsel at Milbank LLP.
- Photo: <https://legalaidnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/The-Legal-Aid-Societys-2024-Pro-Bono-Publico-Award-Ceremony-08496-1.jpg>

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>*