



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MID-NEW YORK, INC. NOMINATES TWO
OUTSTANDING ATTORNYNS AND ONE LAW OFFICE FOR NYSBA PRO BONO
AWARDS**

(UTICA, NY) The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc. has nominated Attorney Robert H. Wedlake (6th Judicial District), Attorney Susan McNeil (5th Judicial District), and the law office of Mucci & Grace (law office under 50 employees) to the New York State Bar Association's annual Pro Bono Awards.

"We provide free legal information, advice, and representation to people who are unable to afford a lawyer. Pro Bono attorneys work in partnership with LASMNY staff to expand our ability to provide civil legal services to a larger number of clients and communities. We are so grateful for all of our volunteers," Executive Director Paul Lupia, Esq, said.

Attorney McNeil joined the Syracuse firm of Satter Ruhlen Law Firm, PLLC. There she primarily focuses on labor and employment law issues. Attorney McNeil joined our Pro Bono panel in 2018 when Legal Aid contacted her to ask if she would be willing to assist a local veteran with an employment issue. Ms. McNeil readily agreed and ultimately spent over 100 hours over eight months, diligently and zealously advocating on behalf of this veteran.

After the case was resolved, the client contacted Legal Aid to express his appreciation, stating, "Susan was great throughout the process. She went above and beyond what I expected. I want to thank you for finding me such a great attorney."

Attorney Wedlake is a partner at Hinman Howard & Kattell, LLP. He is a member of the firm's real estate department. Attorney Wedlake is a skilled litigator who represents clients in corporate, real estate, and commercial litigation before New York courts and administrative agencies. Over the years, he has preserved thousands of dollars for tenants and enabled them to avert homelessness by negotiating additional time to vacate or obtaining dismissals of defective petitions. Attorney Wedlake gives this work equal priority with private cases. He has never canceled an appearance due to other clients or commitments. With the recent expiration of the eviction moratorium, the needs have become even more significant and more urgent. Housing



Making Justice Accessible

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cases are high stakes because a family can be homeless within 72 hours if the court issues a warrant of eviction. Attorney Wedlake's services are especially vital given these circumstances.

"All New Yorkers deserve legal representation. It's gratifying to see lawyers willing to put their expertise at the disposal of those who are suffering. We know that legal representation can be a lifeline for many families and are grateful for the opportunity to provide assistance. We are thankful the network of the volunteer attorneys throughout our 13 counties in Central New York," Arlene Sanders, Esq, Director of Pro Bono Programs, said.

Mucci & Grace is a general practice firm based in Binghamton, NY. The firm practices primarily criminal defense, family, and matrimonial law. Partners Chris Grace and Michael Mucci have dedicated volunteers in Legal Aid's Private Attorney Involvement Program despite their busy schedules. Since the firm's inception in 2015, they have gone above and beyond in their pro bono service, volunteering and supporting a wide range of pro bono initiatives. Mucci & Grace has completed dozens of cases, almost all involving full representation.

To learn more or sign up to volunteer Pro Bono for Legal Aid please visit our website <https://www.lasmny.org/pro-bono-opportunities>.

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LASMNY and LSCNY have offices in Utica, Syracuse, Binghamton, Watertown, Oswego, Oneonta, Cooperstown, and New Paltz. Both organizations cover 13 counties in New York State.

Utica, New York

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