

PRO BONO

at Carlton Fields



CARLTON
FIELDS

This year, we built on last year's unprecedented collaboration and took it a step further by using our national reach to touch on a wide range of areas of critical importance and leave a lasting imprint on our communities, and the causes and issues affecting them.

Our pro bono highlights show the breadth of our work across almost every subject area and the impact on those we serve, including protecting kids and families on both coasts, obtaining benefits for combat veterans, supporting conservation efforts for Florida's endangered species, and securing a rare victory in the U.S. Supreme Court.

This past year, we focused on important pro bono work in the areas of child and family programs, immigration, veterans rights, criminal justice, housing, and environmental matters.

We continue to collaborate with dozens of nonprofit organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the Citizens Crime Commission, and welcomed new partnerships with the Innocence Project of Florida and Bat Conservation International.

We invite you to learn more about our culture of pro bono at Carlton Fields, and why we find pro bono work so gratifying.

Natalie and Joe chair the firm's Pro Bono Committee. They coordinate and provide support to lawyers and staff providing pro bono legal services in all offices of the firm.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalie A. Napierala".

Natalie A. Napierala

Natalie has personally contributed hundreds of hours to secure the release of her pro bono clients on clemency and compassionate release grounds. She also leads the firm's pro bono projects with the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and the Citizens Crime Commission of New York.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph H. Lang Jr.".

Joseph H. Lang Jr.

Joe has represented death row inmate William Kelley on a pro bono basis since 2007, including his petition to the U.S. Supreme Court with Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe. He is also currently handling a motion for post-conviction relief for another pro bono client in Florida.

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OVERVIEW

Carlton Fields has a long-standing commitment to pro bono legal services, by representing the underserved day in and day out; through the leadership of our attorneys over many years in working to ensure access to justice; and by providing financial support and accommodations to pro bono organizations.

Our freedoms depend on the rule of law. To ensure that our nation can truly stand for freedom for all, our profession must play a critical role in ensuring universal access to justice. — Gary Sasso, President and CEO



A portrait of Wm. Reece Smith Jr., an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is standing outdoors with a building and sky in the background. The image is framed by a white diagonal line and blue triangular shapes.

OUR LONG-STANDING PRO BONO TRADITION

No one has done more to inculcate Carlton Fields' commitment to pro bono legal services than [Wm. Reece Smith Jr.](#), late shareholder and former chairman of the board. He fervently believed this was the obligation of every lawyer in return for the privilege of practicing law.

For decades, including his years as president of both the Florida Bar and the American Bar Association, Reece devoted much time and attention to the need for pro bono services and for funding for legal services agencies. His national awards for his work are too numerous to list, but include the ABA's Pro Bono Publico Award and the William Reece Smith Jr. Special Services to Pro Bono Award, established by the ABA and the National Association of Pro Bono Professionals.

Reece's impact on our law firm is ongoing today as we strive to live up to his high expectations of our pro bono obligations and thereby obtain the satisfaction that comes from providing legal services to those in need.

HOW WE HELP Actions, Not Just Words



185 pro bono matters



7,600+ total pro bono hours



8% of timekeepers working on pro bono matters with more than 100 hours



100% of office locations with active pro bono matters



160+ Carlton Fields lawyers providing pro bono service

The firm's first formal Pro Bono Committee chair was **Sylvia Walbolt** (Tallahassee), who worked closely with Reece Smith to further pro bono services by the firm's lawyers. She has received numerous prestigious awards for her pro bono contributions, including the John Paul Stevens Guiding Hand of Counsel Award from the ABA Death Penalty Representation Project, among others. She is an inaugural fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers' Access to Justice Distinguished Pro Bono Fellows Program and a member of the Access to Justice and Legal Services Committee.



Sylvia currently represents death row inmate William Kelley alongside Joe Lang. She also mentors young lawyers in a wide range of matters, including handling post-conviction appeals.

Carlton Fields is a charter signatory to the ABA's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge and pledges to contribute 3% of its total billable hours to pro bono work.

In support of this commitment, attorneys and paralegals are provided substantial "billable hour credit" for their pro bono legal services.

The firm's attorneys and paralegals, supported by our staff, provide millions of dollars in legal services annually to those less fortunate in society and to organizations that serve the disadvantaged. We celebrate their pro bono achievements through annual firm-sponsored awards recognizing individuals and groups of attorneys who have made the most significant contributions to pro bono efforts during the prior year.

PARTNERING WITH CLIENTS

We actively promote partnerships with our clients and prospective clients to provide legal services to those in need and to charitable organizations that provide legal aid to those of limited means.

We seek these partnerships in our ongoing pro bono litigation and transactional matters. These matters include high-profile litigation engagements involving important constitutional issues, individual cases such as landlord-tenant disputes or veterans benefits appeals, and transactional work for nonprofit and charitable organizations.

The benefits of partnering with us are many. Our firm has long-standing referral networks in the legal services community, and we have a steady flow of opportunities to serve those in need. We have pro bono cases at all stages of a case's life cycle, from brand-new matters being opened on a weekly basis to mature cases that offer opportunities to handle discrete issues that arise.

Moreover, corporate counsel can freely assume some responsibility in meaningful pro bono cases, knowing that they will have the full support of our firm's lawyers and resources in the matters. If their circumstances change in the future, in terms of either responsibilities or geographic assignment, they can rest easy that the case will be covered fully by our firm's attorneys.

As each matter is being handled in partnership, junior corporate counsel will have opportunities to work with more senior lawyers in our firm and learn from their experience. And prospective clients can become familiar with our law firm and its attorneys' work ethics, work product, and professionalism.

The satisfaction that comes from providing pro bono legal services is enhanced by the benefits of doing so in partnership with lawyers at Carlton Fields. If interested in pursuing this, please contact **Natalie Napierala** or **Joe Lang**.

Criminal Justice and Prisoners' Rights

Carlton Fields routinely represents the interests of federal criminal defendants in pro bono prisoner civil rights matters. These cases often present important and complex issues of constitutional law with far-reaching effects, as well as challenging factual or procedural issues.

The firm has partnered with the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers to petition federal courts across the country to secure compassionate release for vulnerable federal prisoners.

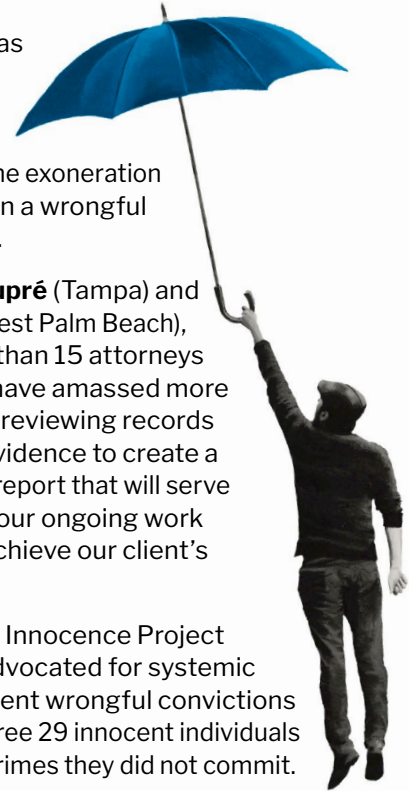
After a steadfast effort lasting over 18 months, in August 2023, Carlton Fields' compassionate release team successfully secured the early release of our elderly and ailing client. This client had been incarcerated for two decades in the Western District of Texas.

Natalie Napierala (New York) and **Ashley Drumm** (West Palm Beach) led the firm's efforts in this area, overseeing a team of attorneys and staff from across the country, including **Austin Jackson** (Los Angeles), **Jimmy Pham** (Orlando), **Stephanie Chau** (Los Angeles), **Sean Hughes** (Miami), **Kyle Soch** (West Palm Beach), **Aubrielle Cuccuini** (Washington, D.C.), **Katherine Biltz** (Tampa), **Pam House** (West Palm Beach), and **Melissa Singh** (New York). The team also partnered with the Medical Justice Alliance, a national nonprofit dedicated to ensuring medical care rights for incarcerated individuals.

Carlton Fields has partnered with the Innocence Project of Florida to seek the exoneration of an individual in a wrongful conviction case.

Led by **Steve Dupré** (Tampa) and **Derek Harris** (West Palm Beach), a team of more than 15 attorneys and paralegals have amassed more than 500 hours reviewing records and analyzing evidence to create a comprehensive report that will serve as the basis for our ongoing work and efforts to achieve our client's exoneration.

Since 2003, the Innocence Project of Florida has advocated for systemic changes to prevent wrongful convictions and has helped free 29 innocent individuals imprisoned for crimes they did not commit.



In a unanimous ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court sided with Carlton Fields client Joseph Percoco, overturning his conviction for honest-services fraud for actions taken when he was a private citizen serving as a campaign manager, not a public official.

Percoco served as executive deputy secretary to former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and managed his reelection campaign in 2014.

The Supreme Court rejected the theory that all private citizens with mere influence or de facto control over government decisions owe a fiduciary duty to the public. It held that such a rule was too vague and could encourage arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement.

Michael Yaeger (New York) and a team of lawyers represented Percoco pro bono before the Supreme Court.

Working across the country, **Sylvia Walbolt** (Tallahassee), **Natalie Napierala** (New York), **Stephanie Chau** (Los Angeles), and **Benjamin Stearns** (Tallahassee) partnered with the Citizens Crime Commission of New York City on the Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act of 2002.

Stephanie and Ben tackled the challenging topic of the Safety Act's application to intervention protocols and broke down complex legal issues to help practitioners navigate this underdeveloped area of the law. Their exemplary work led to an invitation to present at the prestigious McCain Institute and the Eradicate Hate Global Summit, the latter of which focused on the current legal framework that provides protection for therapists who work with extremists.

Carlton Fields received the 2022 Outstanding Pro Bono Service Award from the Citizens Crime Commission in recognition of the firm's contributions to the commission and our leadership and service in the criminal justice field.

Sustainability and Environmental Matters

Carlton Fields filed a lawsuit on behalf of pro bono clients Bat Conservation International, Tropical Audubon Society, and a citizen of Miami-Dade County against Miami-Dade County for leasing environmentally sensitive county-owned land to a water park, hotel, and retail developer in direct violation of a voter-approved referendum that prohibits commercial use and development on “environmentally sensitive” lands. The proposed development site, adjacent to Zoo Miami, is part of a critical area that supports dozens of rare animals, plants, and insects, and some of the most highly endangered species in the United States, including the Florida bonneted bat and the Miami tiger beetle.

The firm, led by attorneys **Enrique Arana**, **Brian Hart**, **Neal McAliley**, and **Dennis Olle** (Miami), continues to represent the three plaintiffs as the lawsuit continues in the courts.



Military and Veterans' Rights

Led by **Coy Stull** (Tampa), the firm has partnered with the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program to assist unrepresented veterans and their families in their appeals to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and host trainings on pro bono appellate advocacy for Carlton Fields lawyers and clients. Several attorneys from Carlton Fields have represented veterans with appeals cases referred by the Veterans Consortium.

Most recently, **Alexandra Blye** (West Palm Beach), **Stacey Sutton** (Washington, D.C.), and **Barry Weissman** (Los Angeles) represented a U.S. Army veteran in the successful appeal of his disability claim for injuries he sustained while serving as a tanker in the 1980s. Due to the extraordinary work of our team, the government agreed on appeal that vacatur and remand were warranted because the Board of Veterans' Appeals failed to provide an adequate statement of reasons for denying our client's claim.

Founded in 1992, the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program is the leading national charity providing free legal services in federal venues for veterans in need.



Housing and Homelessness

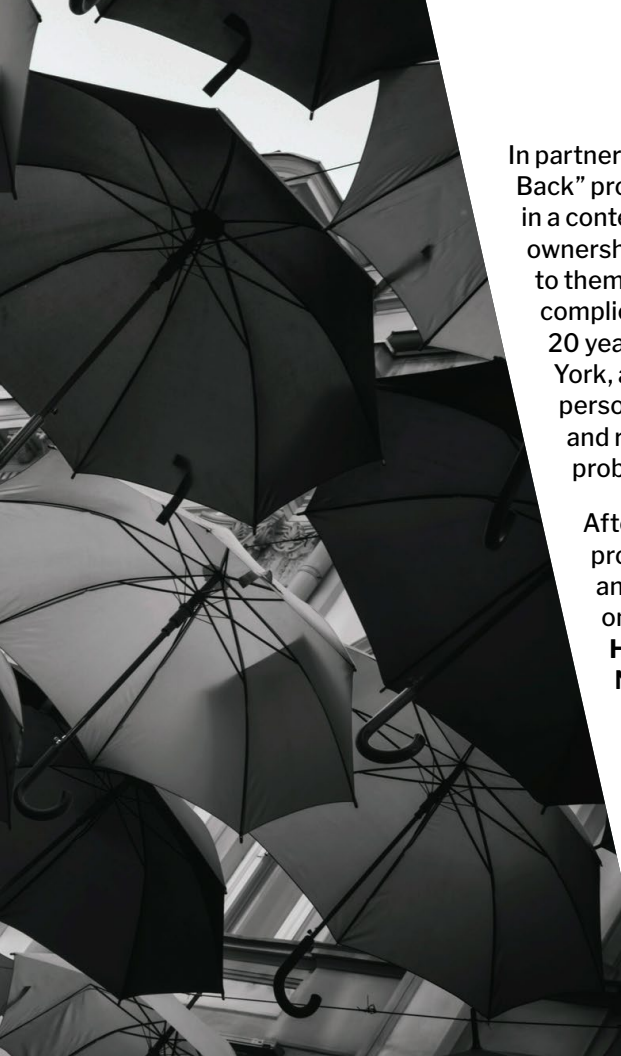
Through our yearslong collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, our firm has connected attorneys across offices and practices to help families build strength, stability, and self-reliance through affordable home ownership.

Our lawyers regularly assist Habitat with an array of legal needs, including contracts, labor and employment, local government, real property, and litigation matters.

Most recently, our firm assisted Habitat to resolve a claim asserted by a recipient of a Habitat home who was forced to vacate due to significant termite damage. **Jason Quintero, John Lamoureux, Tyler Derr, and Diane Dickey** (Tampa) helped Habitat resolve the homeowner's claims and in a subsequent lawsuit by Habitat against the insecticide company that served as the termite treatment subcontractor. Through the settlement, Habitat was able to recover its costs in resolving the claims of the Habitat homeowner.

In July 2023, Habitat for Humanity of Hillsborough County recognized Jason Quintero as a top volunteer with its Millard Fuller Lifetime Achievement Award. Jason was honored for his "transformational impact," including serving a six-year term on the board of directors and helping the organization achieve long-term success and consistent growth.





In partnership with the Dade Legal Aid “Put Something Back” pro bono program, the firm represented two sisters in a contentious property dispute in order to protect their ownership interest in a Miami Beach condo unit left to them by their late father. The litigation involved a complicated fact pattern covering a period of more than 20 years; complex legal issues spanning Florida, New York, and New Jersey law; the actions of a number of persons deceased at the time the lawsuit was filed; and required substantial litigation, real estate, and probate law expertise.

After lengthy and intense litigation involving the production of many hundreds of documents and the depositions of a number of witnesses on behalf of all parties, **Chuck Rosenberg, Heather Jonczak, Matt Jacobson, and Nader Amer** (Miami) secured a settlement that preserved the sisters’ financial interest in the property and enabled them to move forward in their lives with greater financial security.



Lowell Walters (Tampa) provides pro bono legal assistance on employee benefits and executive compensation arrangements for charitable and nonprofit community organizations of limited means and that serve the indigent.



Child and Family Programs

Through nonprofit Crossroads for Florida Kids, Carlton Fields attorneys provide pro bono legal services and advocacy for children in complex dependency, delinquency, and criminal proceedings.

For two years, **Katie Heckert** and **Jason Quintero** (Tampa) represented a foster child who was detained on pending charges after being trafficked by her mother. She was eventually ordered to competency training on her charges and held at a secure facility. When the two-year deadline for the state to establish competency was approaching, Katie worked with the public defender to secure our client's release. After essentially being held for two years on charges for which she was never tried nor convicted, our client was released and her charges were dropped. Our client, now 18, is finally able to restart her life.



After a monthslong effort, **Troy Mainzer** (Tampa) helped obtain a transfer of custody for a 13-year-old child who had been mistreated by his mother for many years. Through Troy's dedicated advocacy and compassionate counsel, our client was able to return to his home state under the care of his paternal grandparents.

"This case has been a humbling reminder that opportunities are not easy to come by for many, often due to circumstances out of their control. If I can change that for at least one person, the world will be a better place. I'm thankful for my colleagues and mentors at Carlton Fields, who encourage and embrace pro bono. I likely would not have had this opportunity right in front of me if I were not at Carlton Fields." – Troy Mainzer

Troy not only served as pro bono counsel for the client but also as a trusted mentor and friend, meeting with him at a county facility to throw a football, have lunch together, and support and counsel him through several months as he awaited his outcome.

Brendan Gooley (Hartford) serves a diverse range of pro bono clients, including the Connecticut State Association of Math Leagues, a criminal defendant in pro bono prisoner civil rights litigation, and indigent children in the care of Connecticut's Department of Children and Families.

Barry Weissman and **Florence Druguet** (Los Angeles) focus their pro bono efforts on child advocacy by serving as pro bono volunteers with Advokids, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting California foster children.

This past year, Barry and Florence helped their clients adopt four young siblings after serving as loving caregivers for many years. Despite the stable, healthy, and loving environment offered by our clients for years, and the eldest child's wishes to remain in her current home, the Department of Children and Families instigated removal proceedings for the children to be placed with an estranged aunt. Based on the conflict between the government's position and the child's apparent best interests, Barry and Florence stepped in to represent the caregivers and prevailed on their behalf.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Ken Tinkler (Tampa) resolved an administrative inquiry in favor of The Spring of Tampa Bay, Hillsborough County's only certified domestic violence shelter. The resolution allowed the shelter to showcase its extensive anti-discrimination policies designed to protect survivors of domestic violence, demonstrating the vital role that it serves in our community.





Immigration and Deportation

Carlton Fields has partnered with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), a nonprofit dedicated to protecting immigrant and refugee children, to represent a Guatemalan teenager who had endured abuse, abandonment, and neglect while living with his parents. **Novera Ahmad** (Orlando), **Chad Dunham** (Orlando), **Federico Maciá** (Miami), **Jimmy Pham** (Orlando), and **Miguel Rodriguez** (Orlando) obtained a temporary custody order on his behalf, submitted a special juvenile immigrant status petition, and will continue to represent him as he seeks permanent residency and a chance at a brighter future. The team was selected as KIND's 2023 Pro Bono Team of the Year for its exceptional contributions and service in this matter.

The firm also represents a Syrian asylum seeker and leader of the Syrian opposition movement whose initial grant of asylum, by another country, was later revoked due to pressure from the Syrian government. Arrested and tortured for his opposition to the Syrian regime, he fled his home country and ultimately arrived in the United States after being awarded a prestigious fellowship. **Federico Maciá** (Miami) and **Amrit Singh** (New York) are representing our client in his application for asylum in the United States.



Joel Giles (Tampa) serves as pro bono counsel to the nonprofit Friends of Albert Whitted Airport, which offers scholarships to young aviation hopefuls and helps educate the community of the Albert Whitted Airport. The historic airport is a key piece of Florida's regional transportation network and a central hub for emergency response. Joel helped form the nonprofit organization, including obtaining its 501(c)(3) designation, and reviews and prepares numerous contracts for its continued operation and growth.



Kim Zeldin (Los Angeles) is a pro bono mediator in two cases on behalf of the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, where she has served as a pro bono panel mediator for nearly 10 years.



PRO BONO PIONEERS

We have long viewed pro bono service as not only our professional responsibility to help those in need but also a unique opportunity to make a lasting impact on critical social issues affecting individuals and causes around the globe. Over the years, we have successfully contributed to several high-impact projects related to civil and human rights, civil liberties, discrimination, religious freedoms, criminal justice, and more. These matters are an intrinsic part of our firm's history while also helping to shape the history and culture of the world around us.

In two back-to-back **voter protection** cases with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, we helped secure important voting rights in rural Georgia to combat discrimination against minority voters — providing African American voters in the county an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice — and helped restore the voting rights of dozens of eligible voters in one of Georgia's most-populous counties. **Gail Podolsky** (Atlanta)

As an integral part of the Lawyers' Committee's effort to protect minority voters in our country, we contributed to a nationwide state-by-state report documenting ongoing voting discrimination across the United States. **Natalie Napierala** (New York) and **Erin Hoyle** (Tampa)

We filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union demanding documents about the on-the-ground implementation of the 2017 presidential executive order on **immigration and travel**. **Gail Podolsky** (Atlanta)

Leading the fight for **marriage equality**, the firm made history by successfully challenging Florida's ban on same-sex marriage. In partnership with Equality Florida, we represented six same-sex couples who were refused marriage licenses from their county clerk's office. Following the judge's ruling against the ban, two of our clients were the first same-sex couple married in Florida. **Jeffrey Michael Cohen** (Miami) and **Sylvia Walbolt** (Tallahassee)

The firm is also known for leading other notable **racial, ethnic, gender, and LGBTQ+ discrimination** cases, including challenging bans on adoptions by same-sex couples in Florida and defending ordinances banning the dangerous and discredited practice of "conversion therapy" for LGBTQ+ minors.

In California, we partnered with the ACLU SoCal in a class action lawsuit urging reforms to the state's **education** system based on the novel theory that equal education is founded on "equal time" — namely, that the failure to provide substantive educational hours comparable to other California schools in more affluent areas is a denial of a constitutional right to basic educational equality. **Mark Neubauer** (Los Angeles)

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Carlton Fields practices law in California through Carlton Fields, LLP.

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