

Pro Bono Attorney of the Month April 2016

Veronica Renta Irwin, Esq.

Nassau Suffolk Law Services Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP) and the Nassau County Bar Association are privileged to honor Veronica Renta Irwin, Esq. as our Pro Bono Attorney of the Month for April, 2016. Ms. Irwin, a partner at the Manhasset firm of Irwin & Streiner, LLC, has been an enthusiastic and dedicated pro bono attorney since she first volunteered with the VLP in 2013.

Ms. Irwin's zealous advocacy assisting indigent clients who have come to the VLP has been nothing short of remarkable. Over the past two and a half years, she has represented three matrimonial clients, volunteering over 300 hours of legal assistance in 2015 alone. In addition to representing needy matrimonial clients, she feels it is important to dedicate a substantial portion of her time training associates in her firm to do the same.

Ms. Irwin received her Juris Doctor Degree from Hofstra University School of Law in 1999, and her Bachelor's degree in Political Science from SUNY University at Albany in 1996. She was admitted to practice in Connecticut in 1999, New York in 2000, and Pennsylvania in 2013. She is also admitted to practice in the Eastern and Southern Districts of the United States Federal Court, and is a member of the Nassau County Bar Association.

From 2001-2007, Ms. Irwin worked at New York's largest plaintiff's no-fault firm. Also during that period, she was a member of the Town of Islip Planning Board. Prior to that, Ms. Irwin worked for a firm as an associate specializing in the areas of medical malpractice, products liability and personal injury litigation.

This varied litigation background has enabled Ms. Irwin to hone the necessary legal skills to be a successful and formidable advocate for needy individuals. Irwin is also fluent in Spanish, which is extremely helpful due to the increasing number of Spanish speaking clients needing pro bono assistance.

After ten successful years in her own practice, she is grateful for her firm's success. She feels that since the law has given her so much, she is determined to give back by representing pro bono clients.

She states, "I litigate my Pro Bono matters with the same enthusiasm utilizing the same creative problem solving skills as I do with my paying clients. Everyone should have access to representation, especially the client in the weaker financial position. I am not afraid to get my hands dirty on their behalf."

Ms. Irwin recalls a particularly meaningful matrimonial case she recently handled for the VLP. The client was a defendant who had suffered traumatic brain damage as a result of a prior accident. The client needed more time to digest and understand the proceedings than most attorneys were able to give her. Ms. Irwin was thankful that the matter was pro bono, since she did not feel comfortable billing the client for all of the extra hours needed. She was inspired by the client's resiliency and perseverance despite her disability, and considers herself lucky to have been able to represent her.

"Pro Bono work gives me the opportunity to help in a way that can be even more meaningful than with a paying client," states Ms. Irwin. "It can be liberating to have an additional conversation with a client without the thought of whether the client must be billed for it. This enables me to be a better lawyer and a better person. "

According to Susan Biller, Pro Bono Coordinator of the VLP, "Ms. Irwin is one of those rare volunteers who can be counted on to take the most difficult and contentiously contested matters. She brings her enthusiasm and passion for the practice of law to every case she handles. We are incredibly fortunate to have her assist our most needy clients."

In addition to the practice of law, Ms. Irwin enjoys spending time with her husband and two children.

The Volunteer Lawyers Project is truly fortunate to have Veronica Renta Irwin on board and honor her as our Attorney of the Month.

***The Volunteer Lawyers Project** is a joint effort of **Nassau Suffolk Law Services** and the **Nassau County Bar Association**, who, for many years, have joined resources toward the goal of providing free legal assistance to Nassau County residents who are dealing with economic hardship. **Nassau Suffolk Law Services** is a non profit civil legal services agency, receiving federal, state and local funding to provide free legal assistance to Long Islanders, primarily in the areas of benefits advocacy, homelessness prevention (foreclosure and eviction defense), access to health care, and services to special populations such as domestic violence victims, disabled, and adult home residents. The provision of free services is prioritized based on financial need and funding is often inadequate in these areas. Furthermore, there is no funding for the general provision of **matrimonial or bankruptcy representation**, therefore the demand for pro bono assistance is the greatest in these areas. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Susan Biller, Esq. 516-292-8100, ext. 3136.*

