

# *Giving Back* **to Franklin Pierce Law Center**

'Wanting to make a difference by helping others to succeed' — this theme permeates the following profiles of four alumni who have made it a priority to give back to their alma mater and their communities. In fact, the two seem to go hand-in-hand.

Hilda Fleisher JD '81 supports Franklin Pierce Law Center graduates pursuing their dreams of careers in public interest law and artists in their pursuit of making a living doing what they love. Randolph Reis JD '76 strengthens the school's capacity to provide a quality education and is a public advocate for individuals seeking justice through legal redress. Paul Homer JD '05 invests monthly in Franklin Pierce Law Center's expanding Social Justice Institute, a program that reflects his own social justice efforts in Senegal and Venezuela. And Jeffrey Kobulnick JD '03 leads pro bono work throughout Los Angeles, CA, an extension of his professional career while assisting Franklin Pierce Law Center's Admissions efforts. Through the creation of an endowed fund, contributing to efforts close to the heart and volunteering assistance to students and graduates alike, these alumni are not only empowering the mission of Franklin Pierce Law Center, they are answering the call for justice.

All who give back impact Franklin Pierce Law Center's delivery of legal education, the law and justice. "Transformative Law," a theme coined by Professor Rachel Moran of the Berkeley School of Law for the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS), writes about citizen-lawyers, members of the legal profession who embark on campaigns for change. The law is a powerful tool to challenge and reconfigure social institutions at international, national, state, and local levels. At Franklin Pierce Law Center, we see this daily in the work of our alumni. Citizen-lawyers, like the four alumni profiled here, use their professions to promote justice through transformative law and to support institutions that can bolster their efforts, like Franklin Pierce Law Center

If it takes a village to raise a child, it too takes an entire legal community to shape the future pursuits and abilities of a law student. Giving back to Franklin Pierce Law Center empowers our vision of preparing students to become change agents equipped to solve complex legal issues that inspire just and civil societies. We are grateful to all who, through a multitude of ways, are making a difference at Franklin Pierce Law Center and around the world.

—*Laura S. Chaney, Director of Development*

# Jeffrey Kobulnick JD '03

## Giving Back through Volunteerism

*pro bono* (pronunciation: \,prō-  
'bō-(,)nō\); function: *adjective*;  
etymology: Latin *pro bono publico*  
for the public good; being, involv-  
ing, or doing professional and  
especially legal work donated for  
the public good <*pro bono* work>



“Foley & Lardner has a very strong commitment to pro bono. The firm encourages all of its attorneys to work on pro bono matters, consistent with the firm’s continued efforts to give back to those in need in the communities in which we serve,” explains Kobulnick. “Up to 100 pro bono hours per year automatically count as billable, and attorneys at our firm may request additional hours as

Pro bono work allows Jeffrey A. Kobulnick JD '03 to combine his passions for law and for helping the less fortunate. An associate with Foley & Lardner LLP in Los Angeles, CA, Kobulnick is deeply involved in both pro bono legal services and charitable work with his local community, spending countless hours helping others.

Now in his seventh year of practice as an attorney, Kobulnick has already received recognition and praise for his pro bono efforts as well as his charitable work.

In 2009, Kobulnick was the honored recipient of both the Elyse S. Kline Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award from Bet Tzedek Legal Services as well as the Wiley W. Manuel Award for distinguished pro bono legal services from the State Bar of California. In 2006, he received the Lynford Lardner Community Service Award for his contributions to the community. As a captain of the firm’s National Light the Night Walk Team and an executive committee member of the Greater Los Angeles Chapter of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, he has also been recognized for his outstanding fundraising efforts for the Society’s Light The Night Walk supporting the fight against cancer. Under Kobulnick’s leadership, Foley & Lardner is the first law firm to have a national Light The Night Walk team, which so far has raised over \$100,000 for this worthy cause.

As a member of Foley & Lardner’s National Pro Bono Committee and co-chair of the Pro Bono Committee for the Los Angeles office, Kobulnick coordinates attorney participation in pro bono activities. He also encourages his coworkers to participate in volunteer work such as Lawyers for Literacy, an annual spelling bee fundraising event that benefits Everybody Wins! Los Angeles, a nonprofit literacy program that helps children to improve their reading skills and build their self-esteem.

needed. This allows all of us to provide assistance to clients of our choice who otherwise could not afford legal counsel. Our projects include a wide range of matters, including representing elderly victims of fraud, working on adoptions, asylum cases, domestic violence hearings, assisting Holocaust survivors with reparations claims and providing intellectual property and transactional work for nonprofit organizations.”

Kobulnick’s roots in pro bono work run deep and the organizations he assists quickly earn his loyalty. While attending Franklin Pierce, Kobulnick received a Public Interest Coalition Fellowship which allowed him the opportunity to work during the summer of 2002 for Bet Tzedek Legal Services, a nonprofit legal aid organization in Los Angeles, where he handled legal issues for senior citizens, the disabled and Holocaust survivors. He has continued his pro bono work for Bet Tzedek during the past seven years, including significant participation in its Holocaust Survivors Justice Network and work with its recently-developed Wills on Wheels program for low income seniors.

At the 2009 Bet Tzedek award ceremony during which he received the Lawyer of the Year Award, Kobulnick thanked the organization for allowing him the opportunity to assist those who really need the help and for the privilege of serving those who are most appreciative. In his remarks, Kobulnick continued, “Anyone who has ever assisted a Holocaust survivor complete a German Ghetto Work Program reparation application knows that there truly is no more appreciative client. Regardless of whether they will ever see any direct financial benefit, it means the world to these individuals that someone took the time to meet with them, hear their story and help them achieve some measure of justice.”

When asked about his experience in law school and how it brought him to where he is today, Kobulnick is quick to give credit to Associate Dean Susan Richey and Professor Ellen Musinsky. “While I was in school, I knew that I wanted to include pro bono work as part of my legal career. Both Susan and Ellen encouraged me to spend my summer with Bet Tzedek and I really enjoyed that experience.”

While he attended Franklin Pierce Law Center, he served on the Admissions Committee reviewing applications and meeting prospective students. He also helped to organize student trips to the theatre and formed a student Hillel organization on campus. Today, Kobulnick still helps to recruit students as well as meet with them when they call for career advice.

“I get emails from students who are thinking about attending Franklin Pierce, and calls from current students who want some insight. I meet with potential students if they are out here and answer their emails. I know what it’s like to be a student, trying to find a job in another state and reaching out to alums. It’s very difficult,” says Kobulnick.

As a student, Kobulnick also competed in the International Trademark Association’s (INTA) Saul Lefkowitz Moot Court Competition and served as an advisor for other students in the competition. For the past four years, he has

served as an active member of the INTA Saul Lefkowitz Moot Court Competition Committee and has judged that competition and others relating to trademark and copyright legal issues. Kobulnick will also be hosting a Table Topic at the upcoming INTA Annual Meeting in Boston in May 2010 on the topic of “Giving Back: Pro Bono Opportunities for Trademark Attorneys.”

*Kobulnick is a member of Foley & Lardner LLP’s Trademark, Copyright and Advertising and Intellectual Property Litigation Practice Groups and the Entertainment and Media Industry Team. He holds a BS degree in animal physiology and neuroscience from the University of California at San Diego, where he was awarded the Ernest C. Mort Award for outstanding leadership excellence. He has served as a guest lecturer at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law and Southwestern Law School on intellectual property issues. He is admitted to practice in California; before the U.S. District Courts for the Central, Northern and Southern Districts of California; and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He is a member of the American Bar Association (Intellectual Property and Litigation Sections), the Beverly Hills Bar Association, the International Trademark Association, the Los Angeles County Bar Association (Intellectual Property and Litigation Sections) and the Los Angeles Intellectual Property Law Association. He and his wife, Belinda, reside in Woodland Hills, CA.*

*Jeffrey Kobulnick JD '03 (rt.) accepts the 2009 Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award from Director of Pro Bono Wendy Levine and CEO Mitch Kamin, both of Bet Tzedek Legal Services.*

