



National Veterans Legal Services Program

Twelfth Annual Benefit

Fighting for Equity and Justice



Virtual Event
November 19, 2020
6:30pm - 8:00 pm

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the National Veterans Legal Services Program's (NVLSP) Twelfth Annual Benefit. For the first time, we are holding our benefit virtually. NVLSP's Board of Directors, Executive Director, and Staff sincerely thank you for joining us tonight. It is particularly appropriate that we recognize tonight's honorees before an audience with such a strong dedication to justice for our veterans, service members, and their families.

Our theme, "Fighting for Equity and Justice," embodies NVLSP's steadfast commitment to fight for justice for every veteran. Since 1981, from each individual case to the largest class action, NVLSP's mission has been to ensure every veteran, service member, and their family is treated fairly.

Additionally, this year COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on our nation's veterans. The pandemic has created a confluence of factors that is intensifying the financial and health problems of our veterans and their families. Many of our veterans may already have been facing financial burdens because they may have been wrongfully denied benefits.

In light of the pandemic, NVLSP staff doubled down on its efforts to help our veterans receive the disability benefits to which they are entitled. While our normally bustling office is much quieter now with most of our staff working remotely, our work continues uninterrupted. In-person trainings have gone digital and NVLSP has been able to offer a full host of our valuable training resources online. We have also pivoted to hold virtual clinics and create COVID-19 tools through NVLSP's pro bono program Lawyers Serving Warriors® and our pro bono partners.

None of this would have been possible without your support – our sponsors, partner veterans' service organizations, law firms and corporate legal departments, pro bono partners, and hundreds of volunteer attorneys throughout the country. Because of you, our work on behalf of America's veterans remains strong and successful.

On behalf of NVLSP and its Board of Directors, we thank all of you for helping NVLSP ensure that our veterans, service members, and families receive the justice they deserve.

Sincerely,



Ronald S. Flagg
Chairman, NVLSP Board of Directors
President, General Counsel & Vice
President for Legal Affairs,
Legal Services Corporation



Barton F. Stichman
Executive Director



**National Veterans Legal Services Program
Twelfth Annual Benefit**

Fighting for Equity and Justice



Emcee ~ Kayla Williams

Senior Fellow and Director, Military, Veterans,
and Society Program
Center for a New American Security

Keynote Speaker

Will A. Gunn, Former General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



Will A. Gunn served as the General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs during the Obama Administration. Mr. Gunn is a retired Air Force colonel, having served as a military lawyer in the Air Force Judge Advocate General Corps.

In 2003, Mr. Gunn was named the first-ever Chief Defense Counsel in the Department of Defense Office of Military Commissions. He built a team and supervised all defense activities for detainees selected for trial before military commissions—the first proceedings of their kind to be conducted by the United States in over 60 years. Mr. Gunn won acclaim for his principled leadership and commitment to ensuring that detainees received effective representation. In doing so, he set the tone so that the military lawyers under his leadership were able to vigorously defend their clients. These efforts positively influenced perceptions about military lawyers and raised international attention on the Guantanamo prison camp.

Mr. Gunn graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy with military honors in 1980 and he is a 1986 cum laude graduate of Harvard Law School. While at Harvard, he was elected President of the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, the nation's oldest student run legal services organization. In 1990, Gunn was selected as a White House Fellow and served in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs.

Mr. Gunn currently chairs the American Bar Association (ABA) National Law Day Commemoration for 2021; the theme of which is "Advancing the Rule of Law, Now". Gunn has also chaired the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Legal Profession. He also serves on the boards of the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) and the Air Force Academy Association of Graduates.

Lawyers Serving Warriors® Excellence Award

Alexandra Magill Bromer, Perkins Coie LLP

The Lawyers Serving Warriors® (LSW) Excellence Award honors a volunteer attorney who has provided exemplary pro bono services to veterans and service members. Alexandra Magill Bromer, a Partner at Perkins Coie LLP, received unanimous support from the LSW team to receive this year's award.



Since 2014, Ms. Bromer has skillfully handled LSW research projects and multiple types of pro bono cases, such as, Combat-Related Special Compensation, Discharge Upgrades, and Military Medical Retirement. Ms. Bromer has not only been a successful volunteer attorney, but she also places pro bono cases at Perkins Coie. Additionally, she spearheaded two trainings for the firm's volunteers.

Ms. Bromer and her colleague Bria Cochran (together with former colleague, Gina Kim) successfully represented a homeless veteran who was previously denied a discharge upgrade when he applied on his own. The veteran had been raped by a Superior while stationed in South Korea. The veteran was too ashamed and afraid to report the rape. He could not take the pressure of facing his aggressor and went absent without leave (AWOL). He was discharged with an Other than Honorable characterization in lieu of trial by court-martial. Post-discharge, he was diagnosed with PTSD from MST. The brief by the Perkins Coie attorneys highlighted that the VA credited his account of MST in service and attributed his mental health symptoms to that stressor; the brief argued that he was due liberal consideration under current Department of Defense policy, because his misconduct was mitigated by MST. By a vote of 5-0, the Army Discharge Review Board held that his discharge was "inequitable" based on his post-discharge diagnosis of PTSD from MST. His characterization of service was upgraded to Honorable, and the narrative reason was changed to Secretarial Authority. This upgrade enables the veteran to obtain VA disability compensation and other benefits.

NVLSP is delighted to honor Ms. Bromer for her extensive pro bono work on behalf of our nation's veterans with our 2020 Lawyers Serving Warriors® Excellence Award.

Pro Bono Partner of the Year Award

Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP

For over a decade, Faegre Drinker has been working with NVLSP and the firm's volunteer attorneys have taken over 100 NVLSP cases.



Over that time, Faegre Drinker has become one of NVLSP's leading pro bono partners for cases involving wrongful separations for personality disorders, for veterans exposed to Agent Orange, and at the Board of Veterans' Appeals. The firm has also taken on numerous research projects and completed a manual for LSW to guide pro bono attorneys handling personality disorder cases.

In 2018, Faegre Drinker volunteers successfully appealed the denial of a medical retirement to an Army Health Care Specialist who deployed to Iraq, earning an Iraq Campaign medal, a National Defense Service Medal, a Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and an Army Service Ribbon. During his deployment, the veteran saw coalition and enemy wounded, killed, or dead, and felt he was in great danger of being killed. Upon his return from deployment, he became depressed and was placed on suicide watch. Despite clear signs that he was suffering from PTSD and depression, the Army summarily discharged him with a Personality Disorder. The pro bono team filed a brief with the Army Board for Correction of Military Records arguing that the veteran was improperly discharged for a personality disorder and should have been provided a medical retirement; they also obtained a private medical opinion which concluded that the veteran should have been diagnosed with major depressive disorder in service. The Board remanded the case for review to further assess his entitlement to medical retirement. Upon further review, the veteran was provided a medical retirement for PTSD with a rating of 50%, monthly benefits, and a back award.

Faegre Drinker is a firm designed for clients, providing exceptional transactional, litigation and regulatory services to organizations ranging from emerging enterprises to multinational companies. With more than 1,300 attorneys, consultants and professionals in 22 locations across the United States and in the United Kingdom and China, Faegre Drinker is one of the nation's top 50 law firms.

Pro bono is a core value at the firm and Faegre Drinker's colleagues are committed to giving back to the community in diverse and meaningful ways. NVLSP is pleased to honor Faegre Drinker with the 2020 Pro Bono Partner of the Year Award in recognition of exceptional and dedicated work on behalf of veterans, service members, and their families.

Corporate Leadership Award

Merck & Co., Inc. (Kenilworth, NJ, USA)

Through its outstanding pro bono services for disabled veterans and delivering exceptional employment opportunities and support for veterans,



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Merck & Co., Inc. (Kenilworth, NJ, USA) represents an outstanding example of corporate leadership supporting veterans, service members and their families.

Through the company's work with NVLSP, it has become one of our leading pro bono partners for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) cases. Through the partnership, veterans receive top-notch legal representation. Medically retired veterans are eligible for an additional tax-free monthly benefit if their disabilities result from serving in combat. Receiving these disability benefits can be life-changing for veterans and their families. Since 2015, the company's volunteer attorneys have assisted over 50 veterans with CRSC claims and military medical retirement applications.

In 2019, volunteer attorneys represented a veteran who had served in the Army, Navy and Air Force, including two tours of duty in Iraq with the Army Infantry. The veteran had earned numerous service awards, including the National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star. While in Iraq, he survived several attacks from improvised explosive devices (IED), small arms fire and rockets. , At the conclusion of the matter, the veteran obtained tax-free CRSC benefits.

In addition to its pro bono work, the company's achievements are numerous, including an active Veterans Employee Business Resource Group (EBRG) which provides development and networking forums for its members. The company is also consistently on the Military Friendly® Employer and Military Friendly® Spouse Employer lists and was named on *Military Times'* Best for Vets Employers list for 2020.

NVLSP is pleased to recognize the corporation's outstanding work for veterans by honoring it with the 2020 Corporate Leadership Award.



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School of Journalism
Author of *The Lonely Soldier, Sand
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Mission

The National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) is a high-impact nonprofit organization that has worked since 1981 to ensure that the government delivers to our nation's 22 million veterans and active duty personnel the benefits to which they are entitled because of disabilities resulting from their military service to our country.

Core Programs

- NVLSP provides free legal services to help veterans, service members, and their families secure disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Armed Forces, including appeals to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and class actions.
- NVLSP acts as a force multiplier providing training, recruiting, and mentoring lawyer and non-lawyer advocates who represent veterans, service members, and their family members on a pro bono basis on claims for benefits.
- NVLSP publishes educational materials that empower advocates for veterans and service members. Since 1991, we have produced the *Veterans Benefits Manual*, the comprehensive treatise on veterans law.
- NVLSP provides free representation through the Lawyers Serving Warriors® (LSW) pro bono program. LSW volunteer attorneys from law firms and corporate legal departments nationwide are trained by NVLSP's expert attorneys to assist veterans and service members on a number of benefits issues, ensuring that every veteran receives top notch representation.



Covington Is Proud to Support
**National Veterans
Legal Services Program's
Twelfth Annual Benefit**

Covington applauds NVLSP for ensuring that veterans and their families receive the federal benefits they need and deserve.

We extend our congratulations to each of tonight's honorees.

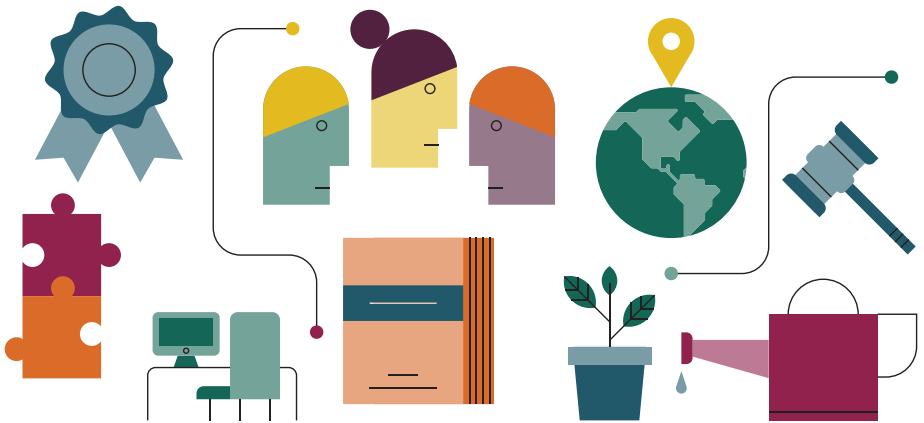
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Finnegan is pleased to support the National Veterans Legal Services Program's 12th Annual Benefit

Finnegan has an extensive pro bono program representing veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in appeals to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. More than 85 attorneys and staff participate in Finnegan's commitment to serve disabled military veterans.



*When communities
succeed, we all succeed.*

WilmerHale is proud to support
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help improve the lives of our veterans
and their families.

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The Firm commends their dedication to ensure veterans and active duty personnel receive the benefits they deserve.

**Using our legal skills to better
LIVES, COMMUNITIES and OUR PROFESSION**

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Services Program**





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Hunton Andrews Kurth is proud to support the

National Veterans Legal Services Program

in their outstanding efforts to protect
those who protect us.

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National Veterans Legal Services Program

*in its mission to ensure benefits to our nation's
25 million veterans and active duty personnel.*

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**We are honored to support the excellent work of the
National Veterans Legal Services Program.**



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A large, stylized graphic of the American flag, featuring stars and stripes, is positioned in the upper left corner. The graphic is semi-transparent and overlaps with a large, dark blue circular shape that dominates the background.

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The National Veterans Legal Services Program

We celebrate all that you do to support
our nation's heroes and their families.

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We are proud to support NVLSP

We salute your mission
to ensure that our nation
keeps its promise to care
for those who served
our country in the
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A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of the American flag, focusing on the blue field with white stars. The flag is draped, creating soft folds and shadows. The bottom portion of the image is partially obscured by a dark grey rectangular box containing text.

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Legal Services Program





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Mission

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