The Tobias Simon Pro Bono Service Award
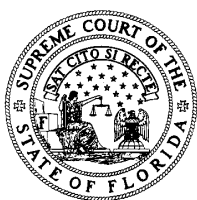
Presented by The Chief Justice

and

The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Awards

2015 Recipients

THE FLORIDA BAR PRESIDENT'S PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD

The Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award was established in 1981. Its purpose is twofold: "to further encourage lawyers to volunteer free legal services to the poor by recognizing those who make such public service commitments; and to communicate to the public some sense of the substantial volunteer services provided by Florida lawyers to those who cannot afford legal fees."

This award recognizes individual lawyer service in each of Florida's specific judicial circuits. It is presented annually in conjunction with the Tobias Simon Pro Bono Service Award given by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Florida.

THE FLORIDA BAR PRESIDENT'S PRO BONO SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS
2015

Elizabeth S. Baker – Miami
Andrew R. Boyer – Sarasota
Kenneth Brooks, Jr. – Milton
Samuel G. Crosby – Lakeland
Jimmy Allen Davis – Deltona
Michelle L. Farkas – Gainesville
Garrett A. Fenton – Washington, D.C.
Robert "Bob" Goldman – Key West
Bonnie Green – Lake City
Elizabeth L. "Betsey" Hapner – Tampa
Anne E. Hinds – Fort Lauderdale
Gregory T. Holtz – Estero
Michael G. Howard – Melbourne Beach
Jay Kim – Fort Lauderdale
Blane McCarthy – Jacksonville
Steven A. Messer–Port St. Lucie
Richard A. Perry – Ocala
Elizabeth Ricci – Tallahassee
Douglas L. Smith – Panama City
Frank C. Wesighan – Orlando
Brent A. Woody – Tarpon Springs

Robert "Bob" Goldman

16th Circuit
Key West

Almost 20 years after he graduated from the College of William & Mary's Marshall-Wythe School of Law, and after developing a private general practice in Springfield, Ill., Robert "Bob" Goldman made a major change in his life and moved to Key West.

That move has worked to the benefit of his pro bono clients, many of whom are of the four-legged or winged variety as he assists the Florida Keys Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Mediation is Goldman's forte. In one notable case, he negotiated a truce between two parties battling over the right to use the phrase "Conch Republic." "The Conch Republic is whole once again, from Key West to Key Largo," said the president of a business group. It's the sort of battle that could happen only in the Keys.

Goldman also represented a group of Key West residents who were fighting the development of a luxury condominium complex. Goldman, who termed his barely paid status in that case "naivete pro bono," even spent time analyzing sunset patterns and how the development would affect neighbors. In the end, the residents won and the development wasn't built.

Goldman, who does about 20 hours of pro bono work each month, helps ease the county court's small-claims caseload by assisting with mediation in pretrial hearings. He also handles mediation in county civil cases. And he volunteers to help with emergency visitation mediation at Christmas, when divorced couples might be fighting over when and how long their children can visit.

But most of his pro bono work is with the SPCA, which, he says, has the thankless job of trying to protect animals in the close confines of Key West. Whether it's a neglected parrot or a dog-bite case or some other instance of abuse, the SPCA will act on a report, seize the animal and take the owner to court. But it's not just about removing animals from their owners. "Some people don't know how to care for a pet," Goldman said. So, often, a condition of getting the animal back is that the SPCA be allowed to go into the home and teach the owner how to take care of the pet.

In 2006, Goldman was given a Certificate of Appreciation from the 16th Circuit for volunteer mediation in the Small Claims Court. He also was named Co-Activist of the Year by the Keys environmental group Last Stand.

Occasionally, Goldman will miss Springfield, Ill., where he was born and raised. But Key West suits him well. "Nov. 1 takes care of any pining I might have to go home to Springfield," he said.