

McDermott Awarded the 2010 Adams Pro Bono Publico Award

Lawyers Melissa Nott Davis and Edward Leibensperger Receive Special Recognition For Their Individual Work

BOSTON (September 29, 2010) — McDermott Will & Emery is delighted to announce that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services selected the Firm to receive one of three 2010 Adams Pro Bono Publico Awards for outstanding pro bono work performed by McDermott lawyers. Boston partners Melissa Nott Davis and Edward Leibensperger received special recognition for their individual efforts. The awards ceremony will be held on October 27, 2010 in the main courtroom at the Adams Courthouse, Boston, MA.

Ms. Davis, co-chair of the Boston Pro Bono & Community Service Committee, said of the award: "Every year lawyers, staff and senior management at McDermott Will & Emery dedicate countless hours to providing pro bono services. Giving back to our community and assisting those who are unable to afford legal representation is one of McDermott's core values and we are honored to be recognized by the Committee for our commitment to pro bono and the community."

In particular, the award honors the Firm's long-standing local and national collaboration with the Medical-Legal Partnership | Boston and the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership; its extensive work with the Children's Law Center of Massachusetts; and its work on *Dwayne v. Granholm*, a case brought on behalf of 19,000 children in Michigan's foster care system.

Head of McDermott's Pro Bono & Community Service Committee, Guy Collier, commented: "I would like to congratulate Melissa and Ned for their personal recognition, and all the Boston lawyers. We consider it our unique privilege and professional responsibility to ensure that low income and disadvantaged individuals have access to justice. It is truly remarkable to be honored by the SJC's Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services."

Since 2005 McDermott has been collaborating with the Medical Legal Partnership | Boston (MLP | Boston) at Boston Medical Center, a groundbreaking program that addresses social determinants of health and seeks to eliminate barriers to healthcare in order to help vulnerable populations meet their basic needs and stay healthy. Medical-legal partnership allows lawyers to practice preventive law alongside practitioners of preventive medicine. McDermott and MLP are working to shape a new model of legal practice and health care delivery. Now replicated at more than 200 sites across the United States and Canada, the model ensures that vulnerable patients' basic needs (for food, housing, education, health care and stability/safety) are met as part of a comprehensive public health strategy. More than 70 McDermott lawyers, summer associates, paralegals and staff have donated over 1,800 hours valued at more than \$600,000 to MLP projects.

Ms. Davis has led the McDermott team working on the McDermott/MLP partnership and on a two year project with Children's Law Center of Massachusetts (CLCM). The CLCM project involved an extensive study on the impact of life without parole sentencing of juveniles in Massachusetts under the current law and resulted in the publication of the report, *Until They Die a Natural Death: Youth Sentenced to Life Without Parole in Massachusetts*, released September 2009. Melissa coordinated the work of McDermott attorneys and staff, totaling more than 2,300 hours of professional time. Additionally, the McDermott Will & Emery Charitable Foundation donated \$10,000 to support the publication and distribution of the report.

In 2008, Mr. Leibensperger led McDermott's partnership with Children's Rights, a not-for-profit, advocacy organization, in a federal class action in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan against the Governor of the State of

Michigan and three officials of the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) in their official capacities. This case, *Dwayne B. v. Granholm*, charged the state with violating the constitutional rights of the approximately 19,000 children in its foster care system by failing to protect their safety and well-being and to find them permanent homes. McDermott and Children's Rights obtained a settlement on the eve of trial that mandated top-to-bottom reform and federal court oversight of Michigan's long-failing child welfare system and resolved the constitutional claims. Mr. Leibensperger personally devoted more than 600 hours to the case.

For more information about McDermott's pro bono program, please see <http://www.mwe.com/info/probono/>.

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