

Attorneys and Firms *Honored for Support* of Civil Pro Bono Panel

by *The Honorable Leslie E. Kobayashi and Steven K. Uejio*

Chief District Judge J. Michael Seabright, District Judge Leslie Kobayashi, and Magistrate Judge Kenneth Mansfield honored dozens of attorneys and law firms for their support of the Civil Pro Bono Panel during a recognition ceremony at the federal courthouse in late November. Five attorneys were singled out for their extraordinary efforts. Stephanie Thompson (pictured right) and Maile Miller (pictured left) of Starn O'Toole Marcus & Fisher received the Outstanding Pro Bono Service Award for their work on behalf of Scott Lee Gordon. Patricia McHenry of Cades Schutte, Jordon Kimura of McCorrison Miller Mukai MacKinnon LLP, and Linda Farm of Farm Benedict Sugihara LLLP received the Pro Bono Service Coordinator Award for their efforts in support of the Panel. Many other attorneys and law firms were also recognized for their work. Judge Seabright said during the ceremony that the pro bono program has been a great tool to help young lawyers gain experience in federal court and thanked those who have been so willing to provide their time and effort on behalf of the court.

Civil Pro Bono Panel

In general, there is no right to appointed counsel in a civil case. In certain circumstances, however, the district court may request that an attorney represent a litigant who is unable to afford counsel. In response to the growing number of cases involving pro se parties, the district court established the Civil

Pro Bono Panel in 2017, to help match indigent litigants with counsel when appropriate.

The Panel includes attorneys and law firms who have agreed to accept pro bono appointments to represent indigent, self-represented litigants. Appointments may be limited to specific issues or specific tasks—for example, filing an opposition to a single motion. Although Panel members must be willing to serve without compensation, they may seek fees from an opposing party in certain circumstances.

Panel members may also seek reimbursement for certain litigation costs and expenses.

Panel appointments provide attorneys opportunities to develop oral and written advocacy and trial advocacy skills.

In fact, when an attorney or law firm accepts an appointment, judges in this district have agreed to hold a court

