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Attorneys, Law Students and Paralegals Are Recognized at Circuit's Third Annual Pro Bono Ceremony

CLEARWATER - One was honored for his work representing tenants in landlord disputes, sometimes when they were on the verge of an eviction.

Another was recognized for helping foster children, even going so far as to set up a non-profit organization in their interest at the law school she was attending.

And two women with the same first name were awarded for, among other things, their work advising victims of domestic violence.

What all these attorneys have in common is that, at the time, they were performing such duties without being paid to do so, or, as it's known in legal circles, they were performing pro bono work.

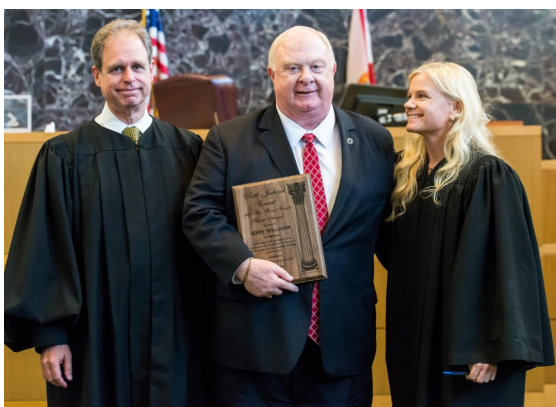
Lawyers, law students, law firms and paralegals were recognized and awarded for such work on Friday, April 21, at the Sixth Judicial Circuit's third annual pro bono ceremony. The event was established three years ago by Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Kimberly Todd, who has since relinquished her role as chair of the circuit's Pro Bono Committee to Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Susan St. John.

David Blum won the coveted Outstanding Pro Bono Service by a Lawyer award, mainly for his work advising tenants involved in landlord disputes through the Community Law Program's bimonthly housing clinic.

In one case, for instance, he helped out a single father who had been paying his rent but complained about the conditions he was living under, drawing an eviction notice. In the end, the man was allowed to stay at a reduced rate, and repairs were made.



David Blum, right, holds his plaque honoring him for pro bono work for tenants. At left is Chief Judge Anthony Rondolino.



Chief Judge Rondolino, Attorney Gary Williams, and Judge St. John.

Attorney Gary Williams won the esteemed Chair Award because, among other things, he worked more than 60 hours for free as a Guardian ad Litem in a case where neither parent had an attorney, and the couple's children were in turmoil — the daughter had attempted suicide, and the son was failing in school and had drawn felony charge. A paralegal who has worked with Gary on pro bono cases, Courtney S. McDonald, won the paralegal award.

Taylor Greenberg won the pro bono award for law students, for her work helping foster children, both as a Guardian ad Litem and as the founder of Child Advocates of Stetson Law. The law firm award went to Barnett Woolums, P.A., whose three attorneys have, for free, fought for teenagers caught in contentious divorces, single mothers owed child support, or women hoping to keep restraining orders in place. One of the three was Erin Woolums, another Erin Barnett.