

Drinker Biddle

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Legal Times Honors Jerry Hartman for Pro Bono Work

Director of Drinker Biddle's Barbara McDowell Pro Bono Initiative Named "Champion" of D.C. Legal Community

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The *National Law Journal* has named Jerry Hartman, a partner with Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, as a *Legal Times* "champion" for his work as director of the firm's Barbara McDowell Pro Bono Initiative, a national pro bono program launched in April 2009 to continue the work of the late Barbara McDowell, a national leader in public interest advocacy and Hartman's late wife.

The *National Law Journal* annually honors lawyers based in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area who have upheld the legal profession's core values through public service, pro bono efforts or advocacy for civil liberties during the past year. "We congratulate Jerry Hartman on this well-deserved recognition," said Alfred W. Putnam, Jr., Chairman of Drinker Biddle. "The extraordinary work done by Barbara McDowell on behalf of the disadvantaged and downtrodden inspired the Pro Bono Initiative in her name, and I can think of no one more deserving of this award than Jerry, her husband and our partner, who, through his leadership of the Barbara McDowell Pro Bono Initiative, continues the work that was so important to her."

McDowell, the founding Director of Appellate Advocacy Project of the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia, was a distinguished lawyer and public servant. While at Legal Aid, she handled more than 70 matters and won several important cases establishing the rights of the poor in the areas of housing, public benefits and domestic violence. She also trained young lawyers, guiding their growth and honing their skills. McDowell had been a partner at Jones Day and then served as an Assistant to the Solicitor General in the U.S. Department of Justice from 1997 to 2004, where she argued 18 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. In 2008, she received the Rex E. Lee Advocacy and Public Service Award as the outstanding appellate advocate of the year. At the presentation of that award, she was aptly described as "one of the outstanding appellate advocates of her generation." McDowell died of brain cancer in January 2009.

Conceived of and directed by Hartman, the Barbara McDowell Pro Bono Initiative strives to continue McDowell's legacy by significantly and positively impacting social justice concerns faced by indigent, charitable or civic groups unable to afford legal services. It pursues litigation to remedy systemic problems – matters that are deemed

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likely to have a significant impact on important social justice concerns and with more than singular significance.

National in scope and with the volunteer help of more than 60 lawyers and professionals from all of Drinker Biddle's offices, the Initiative has undertaken a number of projects since its launch last year, including investigating a challenge against payday loan companies and a program on legal aid for children facing deportation. In Washington, D.C., the Initiative is currently assisting the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia with proposed litigation concerning public benefits programs in the District of Columbia. Litigation would seek injunctive relief as well as retroactive benefits for all those that meet the new eligibility standards under the district's expanded Food Stamp Program who are currently being denied benefits.

Another of the Initiative's ongoing matters is an action on behalf of 16 death row inmates against the state of Mississippi, seeking to enforce the inmates' right to competent counsel and access to the courts during their state post-conviction proceedings. The lawsuit seeks to compel the State to provide the plaintiffs with competent and conscientious counsel for future proceedings and to remedy the denial of those rights in past proceedings. It also requests a stay of executions for any of the inmates.

In Alabama, the Initiative is investigating the practices of a prosecutor's office in systematically exercising its peremptory challenges in a racially discriminatory manner so as to exclude African-Americans from serving as jurors in criminal cases. Depending on the outcome of investigations, the Initiative is prepared to file an action challenging the systematic discriminatory practice and seeking equitable relief to ensure that the state abides by its constitutional obligations to allow citizens to serve as jurors in criminal cases without regard to their race.

"It's extremely gratifying to have the important work we are doing in Barbara's name recognized in this way," said Hartman of the Champion Award. "This award is really not for me. I am only doing what Barbara would have done."

Hartman will be honored with the *Legal Times* Washington Champion Award at the Third Annual Awards Gala, September 30, 2010, at The Willard in Washington, D.C.

Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP is a national law firm with 675 lawyers in 12 offices providing outstanding client service in areas such as commercial litigation, corporate and securities, corporate restructuring, intellectual property, products liability and mass tort litigation, labor and employment, environmental, communications litigation, employee benefits and executive compensation, health care, government and regulatory affairs, insurance coverage, investment management, life insurance and annuities, real estate and private client services.