

Sheppard Mullin Recognizes Mercedes Cook as Pro Bono Attorney of the Year

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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP announced today that it has awarded associate Mercedes Cook the firm's 2015 Bob Gerber Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award, which honors and recognizes a Sheppard Mullin attorney who demonstrates a significant commitment to helping those in need through the provision of pro bono work. Cook, a 2012 graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles Law School, is based in the firm's Los Angeles office and a member of Sheppard Mullin's Business Trial practice group.

Cook is being awarded for her efforts on behalf of the firm's Pro Bono Committee and her individual work on pro bono cases and projects, including overseeing and coordinating the firm's pro bono adoption program with Public Counsel, which has resulted in the creation of approximately 44 new families. Cook is also a member of the Sheppard Mullin team that partnered with the Western Center on Law and Poverty and the Legal Aid Society of Orange County to file a lawsuit against the City of Fullerton seeking to end the illegal rejection of a desperately needed shelter and multi-service center for at-risk and homeless families and individuals. In addition, Cook served as trial counsel in a pro bono conservatorship jury trial on behalf of the Public Conservator for the County of San Diego, helping to prove to 12 jurors, beyond a reasonable doubt, that an individual was gravely disabled and thus unable to provide for his basic needs.

Cook remarked, "I am honored to be recognized by the firm for my pro bono work. I can't imagine being an attorney without giving back by helping those who need legal assistance but can't afford it or are intimidated by the legal system. Doing pro bono work has allowed me to empower the less fortunate by demonstrating to them that the law, and justice, is not just for some people – it's for everyone."

"Mercedes' work on behalf of our pro bono program and her individual pro bono work is impressive and inspiring. We are pleased to recognize her accomplishments, which serve as a model for other attorneys who want to give back to the communities in which they live, and become better lawyers," said Dan Brown, Sheppard Mullin's Pro Bono Partner.

Sheppard Mullin's Bob Gerber Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award is the firm's highest pro bono honor, recognizing and rewarding the important community service work done by Sheppard Mullin attorneys. The award is named in honor and memory of Bob Gerber, the founder of Sheppard Mullin's pro bono program and its leader for over a decade.

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