

VMware Citizen Philanthropists Celebrate the American Bar Association's Pro Bono Week

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Core to VMware's Citizen Philanthropy ethos is the belief that we can all learn and grow through service. With this, all VMware people can contribute their time and talent to nonprofits with 40 hours of paid Service Learning each year.

In October 2017, VMware's Legal Leadership Team sponsored the creation of the Legal Pro Bono Giving Network, formalizing the Legal team's existing Service Learning engagement. Since then, the Legal team has committed over 2,000 hours to pro bono and overall Service Learning opportunities, contributing to VMware's positive impact in our communities around the world and VMware being recognized by Forbes and Just Capital on the Just 100 list, and Fortune's Change the World list.

The Legal Pro Bono Giving Network has also been recognized externally. In 2018, the team was invited to an in-house pro bono roundtable with other companies including

Facebook, Google, and Oracle to share advice and support on running in-house pro bono programs and was invited to present an overview of our program in 2019 at the Pro Bono Institute's Annual Conference.

This month we checked in with members of the Legal Pro Bono Giving Network to learn more about their recent Service Learning:

Establishing VMware Legal's Pro Bono Giving Network – Chelsea Brooks & Jane Jue

Chelsea: "Prior to 2017, the Legal team was devoting time to pro bono work, but there was not an organized list of pre-vetted pro bono opportunities for them to choose from, nor an internal network to support them. I helped to launch the Legal Pro Bono Giving Network, leveraging the Pro Bono Institute for benchmarking, best practices, advice, and support on how to launch and maintain a successful program. Our program provides a platform for the Legal team to get involved with the causes they are most passionate about.

As a Mexican American living in Austin, Texas, I have always felt passionate about supporting immigrants that come to the U.S. seeking asylum from past or future persecution in their home countries. In 2018, I began volunteering with American Gateways helping women detained at the Don Hutto Detention Center prepare for their asylum interviews. These interviews determine whether detainees are granted asylum and allowed to stay in the U.S. or are sent back to their home country. While I will never find out the result of these interviews, it is incredibly rewarding to prepare women for these interviews, so they have the best chance at being granted a better life."

Jane: "I joined VMware through an acquisition in 2019, and one of the things I noticed right away was VMware's strong culture of community engagement and its commitment to giving back. As a Legal team member who is not an attorney, it has been rewarding for me to participate alongside my fellow Legal eagles in Citizen Philanthropy efforts such as helping Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients renew their applications. Volunteering my time to help undocumented immigrants and learn about their struggles has been truly humbling. Currently, I serve as the Pro Bono Program Coordinator, working with program leads around the world. It is an honor to be able to serve in this capacity because I get to see all the time and expertise our fellow team members donate to important causes in their communities. Way to go, VMware Legal!"

Supporting Fair Elections – Padma Choudry, Danielle Coleman, and Catherine Dunwoodie

In 2020, Stanford and MIT joined forces on the "Healthy Elections Project," aimed at assessing and promoting practices that would ensure the election would proceed with

integrity, safety, and equal access. The Stanford-MIT team reached out to attorneys across the U.S. to track the election-related litigation and legal challenges that were a direct result of COVID-19 and to help catalog and review cases.

Through the support of VMware attorneys such as Padma Choudry, Danielle Coleman, and Catherine Dunwoodie, and others from around the country providing case summaries and issue tags, the Stanford-MIT project launched the comprehensive **COVID-Related Election Litigations Tracker**. This pro bono work promoted public awareness of the stress the pandemic placed on election and voting laws and supported a 39-page memorandum regarding COVID-related election litigation for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to review.

“Last year, there were so many stressors placed on the election—and on all of us. It felt like a small thing I could contribute, even while not being able to leave my house—to help maintain the integrity of such a foundational principle for people’s voices to be heard.” ~ Padma Choudry

“As a Pro Bono Office Lead, it was a pleasure to coordinate VMware attorneys partnering with law firm Morrison & Foerster to help the Stanford-MIT healthy elections project and positively impact voting rights in the U.S. It was gratifying to see the project culminate in a tracker featured on the Election Law Blog, the most prominent blog in that space, and become part of a comprehensive memo. Our contributions supported accessible, inclusive, and fair elections during a litigious election season amidst a pandemic. I feel fortunate to work at VMware—a company that encourages Citizen Philanthropy and champions the power of collective impact through Service Learning.” ~ Danielle Coleman

“For me, helping election officials, journalists, advocates, and members of the general public follow developments in rapidly evolving election laws is a crucial step in shoring up the fundamental right to vote. With this information, more people are enabled to identify vulnerabilities and patterns, highlight concerns, and call to question changes that may impede or be used to deny voting access. It’s not a big thing I did, but I do think every little effort in this area matters.” ~ Catherine Dunwoodie

David Tim: “In 2020, the State of Georgia conducted a primary election that made national news. It was not the election’s results that were particularly interesting but the systemic meltdown—due to a perfect storm of unfortunate events—that caused lines of four to five hours and confusion across the state.

With a record turnout expected for the November 2020 general (and presidential) election, Fulton County, Georgia piloted a new absentee ballot cancellation process with assistance from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Georgia. This program

ensured every Fulton County polling location was staffed by an on-site attorney who was sworn in as a Deputy Registrar and could support voters who arrived to vote in person and needed to cancel an absentee ballot.

I was proud to be just one of those attorneys who served as Deputy Registrars. The program was a great success: wait times dropped to an average of less than 30 minutes. The results of the election underscored the importance of ensuring a smooth voting process. The presidential race in Georgia was ultimately decided by about 12,600 votes, showing that every vote matters.”

Supporting LGBTQ+ Communities – Matt Marquis & Shawn Fenwick

Matt: “I’ve been with VMware for more than 11 years, and in 2002 I began my relationship with the San Francisco AIDS Foundation by raising a minimum of \$3,000 fundraising commitment and riding my bicycle from San Francisco to Los Angeles. My desire to do more for the cause culminated in my serving on the Board of Directors from 2014 to 2020, first as the Chair of the Finance Committee and ultimately as the Chair of the Board.

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation has a storied history as one of the first organizations providing direct assistance and political advocacy for a pandemic that was primarily affecting gay and bisexual men. Sadly, as so many people were dying from this terrible disease, the political establishment largely ignored their plight. It is through the hard work of organizations like the AIDS Foundation that governmental resources and public compassion eventually led to treatments that offered promise. It is important to remember in these days of COVID-19, we are still seeking a cure for AIDS 40 years on...

VMware has been extremely supportive of my work with the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. Throughout the years, from a time commitment, financially and more generally, the culture of service truly made it possible for me to give back in a substantial way to my community.”

Shawn: “Each year, thousands of LGBTQ+ individuals seek asylum in the United States, after fleeing their home countries where they face persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and in some cases, both. To win asylum, an individual who has fled persecution must provide evidence of persecution in their home country, including evidence that the government either supports the persecution or will not do anything to stop it.

My VMware Legal team colleagues and I have teamed up with San Francisco-based Oasis Legal Services and outside counsel firm Morrison & Foerster to document the treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals in their home country. While Oasis is based in the San Francisco area, they will not only use this work locally but will share it with other

organizations serving the LGBTQ+ community, thus having an impact far beyond the San Francisco Bay Area. I'm happy to be able to share some of my time to help others seek a better, safer life!"

Supporting Dreamers – Judy Snyder

Judy: "I joined VMware's Global Legal Services' Team in 2019, after working as Outside Counsel for VMware. The culture at VMware was a huge factor in my decision to leave private practice and come back in-house. We have all likely experienced the feeling of working within an organization that is not a good fit. Now that I am at VMware, the energy that I spent fighting against that feeling in other organizations can now be directed elsewhere. In my case, I was drawn to working with individuals seeking asylum in the United States. I have been working with Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN) for several years in a pro bono capacity and was thrilled to have the opportunity to work with DACA recipients at a recent pro bono event sponsored by Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA) and supported by VMware. I was paired with another Colorado attorney to virtually assist a DACA recipient in renewing her application. It has been eye-opening to see how difficult the processes are for those already struggling, so to be able to use my skill set to be of assistance has been incredibly rewarding."

Supporting Reentry – Michelle Bazu & Danielle Coleman

Michelle: "During my time as a criminal prosecutor, I represented the U.S. Attorney's Office in the local reentry court program in the Northern District of California (NDCA). It was then that I thought the reentry population could benefit from closer engagement with high tech companies in the Bay Area to develop professional skills that could help reentry individuals in their job searches, find employment and retain employment.

VMware supported development of this initiative, which was implemented with support and assistance from the NDCA alternative courts program coordinator and which matches company volunteer mentors with mentees participating in the alternative courts program. The program has expanded to other judicial districts, including the District of Columbia (DCD) and the Central District of California (CDCA).

I'm thrilled to be working for VMware, which truly demonstrates support for Citizen Philanthropy and encourages employees like me to follow our passions and to have a positive impact on our community."

Danielle: "Through our partnership with NDCA, I mentored a participant in the reentry program. In our first meeting, we bonded over our love of cooking and food. I also listened with empathy as he described his journey and his goals for the future. I was

impressed with his commitment to reenter the workforce and overcome past hurdles after formerly being incarcerated. For the professional mentorship program, my mentee set goals to improve his communication skills and get a job. We regularly met and worked on his job readiness skills, including revising his resume and role-playing for interviews. The mentorship experience was gratifying as I saw firsthand his increased confidence and professional growth week after week. He not only obtained a job, but he also became a volunteer delivering food to those in need, as he wanted to see others in his community thrive. I watched his virtual graduation ceremony with pride as he finished the reentry program, having fulfilled his goals.

I am grateful to VMware for supporting employees' participation in meaningful programs such as this one where we can help individuals be successful in their reentry."

Supporting Veterans – Karen Moir

Karen: "VMware provides a true gift to employees where we can volunteer and participate in a wide variety of pro bono activities. Many of my VMware Legal team members assist the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP) to prepare documentation that will help veterans of all eras fight for the military benefits they earned. Some service members leave the military with disabilities, suffer from PTSD, have substance addictions, or may have experienced traumatic brain injury (TBI) or military sexual assault (MSA). Those traumas may lead to discharge from the military, but veteran benefits, including healthcare coverage for such traumas, are denied if the service member's discharge is characterized as less than honorable. VMware Legal volunteers comb through veterans' military records to build the case for a discharge upgrade to secure veterans' benefits. With the help of volunteers, NVLSP's success rate for discharge upgrades is above 90 percent.

While I'll never know the result of a particular hearing, the time I spend reviewing a veteran's file history and preparing their hearing documentation is my individual way of (silently) thanking them for their service and wishing them well. It is an honor for me to read each veteran's story. My understanding about topics such as mental and physical disabilities, racism, and environmental (e.g., hazardous chemical) impact has deepened, especially in relation to potential inadequate historical resources."

Supporting Teachers and Students: Brooks Beard

Brooks: "I have been at VMware for over seven years now, and I currently serve as a Board member of the nonprofit organization, RAFT, which stands for Resource Area for Teaching. I currently sit on the Board's Executive Committee, Audit Committee, and Nominations and Governance Committee.

Founded in San Jose in 1994, RAFT is a nonprofit providing educators with engaging hands-on learning resources that focus on STEAM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics) learning. RAFT's mission is to help educators transform a child's learning experience through hands-on education to one that inspires the joy and discovery of learning. With two young kiddos of my own at home, RAFT's focus on hands-on STEAM learning and projects truly resonates with me, as I see how much my kids enjoy that approach to learning. For many years, VMware people have supported RAFT, most often with team building Service Learning during which they put together "build-it" kits for RAFT.

I have always felt it is important to give back and contribute to our communities, particularly for those of us who are fortunate enough to be in a position to help others in need. As a lawyer, some of the most rewarding work I have done over the years is pro bono work, where I have been able to help others by providing them with free legal services and helping them resolve a legal issue they are facing. I was fortunate enough to spend 17 years of my legal career at Morrison & Foerster, which has had a robust pro bono program for decades. For those individuals I have represented on a pro bono basis, it is rarely about the legal issues they are facing. Rather, providing them with support in that moment often helps them to feel empowered and can serve as a stepping stone to giving them the strength and confidence they need to thrive in all aspects of their life. I have stayed in touch with some of the people I have represented over the years. It is so rewarding to see what they have gone on to accomplish and to know that I played a small role in helping them get there.

I am so proud to be a part of a company that incorporates "community" into its overall corporate values and that provides so much support to employees who want to give back to their communities. When I have opportunities to give back—through Service Learning, pro bono opportunities, or the like—it helps me feel more connected to my community and like I am making a difference in the lives of those who live and work around me."

VMware Legal's Pro Bono-Citizen Philanthropy Team

With thanks to our pro bono leads for their work championing pro bono and Citizen Philanthropy around the globe, and dedicating time and expertise to address law-related and societal challenges in our communities:

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