



NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL

Michael A. Cardozo, Corporation Counsel

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

**MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG AND NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT
LAUNCH INNOVATIVE CORPORATE / PUBLIC SERVICE PRO BONO INITIATIVE**

***MAYOR ACKNOWLEDGES PARTICIPATING FIRMS AND FIRMS THAT AIDED CORPORATION COUNSEL'S
OFFICE AFTER SEPT. 11 WITH CITY HALL ENGAGEMENT***

Contact: Kate O'Brien Ahlers, Communications Director, (212) 788-0400, kahlers@law.nyc.gov

New York, May 17, 2002 -- The New York City Law Department has joined with more than 30 leading law firms to form a unique public service initiative, the "Corporation Counsel Public Service Program," that embraces Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's corporate/public service ideal while tackling the need for innovative solutions to the City's budget crisis. The Mayor acknowledged firms participating in this program -- along with firms that aided the Corporation Counsel's office after Sept. 11 -- with a City Hall engagement this morning. At the event, Chadbourne & Parke was honored for providing housing to over 100 City lawyers and staff for almost eight months, with Mayor Bloomberg proclaiming it "Chadbourne and Parke Day." The Mayor also acknowledged several other law firms for the assistance they provided to the Corporation Counsel's office after Sept. 11.

Mayor Bloomberg's engagement highlighted the two distinct elements of recent legal public service assistance offered to the New York City Law Department. The first initiative, the Corporation Counsel Public Service Program, is enabling New York City to better manage its mounting legal caseload while offering attorneys at major law firms a unique chance to participate in public service opportunities and bolster their legal and trial experience.

The second element noted by the Mayor today, the response of the legal, business and public service community after Sept. 11, allowed the City's Law Department to continue business -- at one point in more than 40 separate locations -- despite the devastating World Trade Center tragedy. The Law Department's headquarters, located one block from Ground Zero at 100 Church St., incurred enough damage to render it inaccessible until late this April. More than seven law firms, along with other companies and City agencies, provided housing, computer assistance and other resources to more than 1,000 displaced Law Department staff -- many for several months.

Corporation Counsel Michael A. Cardozo provided additional details on both elements:

The Corporation Counsel Public Service Program

Highlighting this venture's symbiotic nature, Cardozo said: "Everyone wins with this proposal. The City gets assistance from top-flight lawyers, presents a creative way to respond to the fiscal crisis and allows it to better manage its caseload. The firms gain valuable -- and often rare -- day-to-day trial expertise for their attorneys. They're also able to offer their associates the opportunity to work in an altruistic, public service forum."

The program calls for firms to send an associate to the Law Department for a period of six months to work in its Tort or Family Court Divisions -- areas where the associates would gain the most trial experience -- or for the firm themselves to represent the City on selected cases.

Cardozo expressed appreciation at the positive reaction of firms to the program. "It is refreshing how the legal community has rallied around the City after Sept. 11," he said. "These firms have expressed a genuine commitment to the notion of public service and shown unwavering support for the City's need for additional legal assistance during this critical time. In turn, we can offer their associates this unique training and service opportunity." He noted how the program "dovetails with Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's philosophy of encouraging corporate and public service cooperation."

The firms participating in the program include: Bingham Dana; Carter, Ledyard & Milburn; Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton; Clifford Chance Rogers & Wells; Coudert Brothers; Cravath, Swaine & Moore; Davis & Gilbert; Davis Polk & Wardwell; Debevoise & Plimpton; Dorsey & Whitney; Fish & Neave; Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto; Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson; Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher; Greenberg Traurig; Hughes Hubbard & Reed; Kasowitz, Benson, Torres & Friedman; Katten Muchin Zavis Rosenman; Kenyon & Kenyon; Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw; Morgan, Lewis & Bockius; Nixon Peabody; Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler; Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison; Proskauer Rose; Schulte Roth & Zabel; Shearman & Sterling; Simpson Thacher & Bartlett; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom; Thacher, Proffitt & Wood; Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz; Weil, Gotshal & Manges; and Willkie, Farr & Gallagher.

The Department's Tort Division, its largest with roughly 47,000 pending cases, defends tort lawsuits filed against the City, all Mayoral agencies, the Board of Education and New York City Health & Hospitals Corporation. The Family Court Division is responsible for the criminal prosecution of juveniles.

In prior years, the Law Department has offered public service opportunities that, having proved so successful, led to the development and formalization of the current program. Robert Lehrburger, now a partner at Patterson, Belknap, volunteered for four months in the Law Department's Tort Division when he was an associate in the mid-1990s. "There is great satisfaction in knowing you are performing a public service and participating in defending the City," he said.

Tammy Bieber, a seventh-year associate at Shearman & Sterling, completed six months in the Tort Division last June and credits the opportunity for helping her grow as a lawyer. "It was of great value to me, both in gaining 'on-your-feet' experience and trial expertise," she said.

Linda Young, who volunteered with the City for six months as a trial attorney in the Tort Division while an associate at Skadden Arps, enjoyed her experience so much that returned to the Law Department. She now works in Appeals.

The Sept. 11 Law Firm Responses

After the Law Department had to abandon its headquarters in the aftermath of Sept. 11, several firms provided free space, computers and other support to enable the Department to fulfill its mandate to represent the City, its agencies and the Mayor on legal matters. The firms' assistance ranged from a few weeks long to almost eight months.

"We cannot thank these firms enough for their immediate, generous response to the Sept. 11 tragedy," Cardozo said. "Their overwhelming support allowed the Law Department to continue providing aggressive legal representation to the City, its agencies and the Mayor, especially during this critical time."

In praising the efforts of all firms, Cardozo cited as an example the contributions of Chadbourne & Parke. The firm housed more than 100 lawyers and staff for almost eight months -- at no charge to the City. "Chadbourne's example symbolizes the altruistic outpouring we saw after the Sept. 11 tragedy. The firm moved quickly to provide a warm, welcoming response and enabled the Law Department to carry on despite difficult circumstances. We are very grateful to Chadbourne & Parke for its goodwill and support."

Several other law firms also housed Law Department lawyers and staff for significant periods of time. "We could not have achieved all the success of the past few months without their selfless support," Cardozo said. Other law firms that aided the City after Sept. 11 included Anderson Kill & Olick; Cravath, Swaine & Moore; Davis, Polk & Wardwell; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom; McAloon & Friedman; and Martin, Clearwater & Bell.

The New York City Law Department is one of the oldest, largest and most dynamic law offices in the world, ranking among the top three largest law offices in New York City and the top three largest public law offices in the country. Tracing its roots back to the 1600's, the Department's 650-plus lawyers handle more than 100,000 cases and transactions each year in 17 separate legal divisions. The Corporation Counsel heads the Law Department and acts as legal counsel for the Mayor, elected officials, the City and all its agencies. The Department's attorneys represent the City on a vast array of civil litigation, legislative and legal issues and in the criminal prosecution of juveniles. Its web site can be accessed through the City government home page at www.nyc.gov or via direct link at www.nyc.gov/html/law/home.html.

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