

Chile's Fundación Pro Bono celebrates with awards dinner

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Chile's Fundación Pro Bono has celebrated 13 years of supporting pro bono work in the country with its annual dinner, in which awards were handed out to members of Carey, Bofill Mir & Alvarez Jana Abogados, Guerrero, Olivos, Novoa y Errázuriz and Albagli Zaliasnik law firms, among others.



Over 350 members of the legal community, including Chile's ministers for justice and the economy, gathered to celebrate pro bono work

The clearinghouse's pro bono dinner was held on 22 October, and attended by 350 members of the local legal community, including members of the government and social organisations and lawyers from the 38 member law firms as well as independent practitioners and in-house counsel. Justice Minister Patricia Pérez and Economy Minister Félix de Vicente were also present.

In a key note speech, the foundation's president, Pablo Guerrero, a partner at Chile's Barros & Errázuriz Abogados, highlighted the most important programmes which the institution had worked on during the year, while celebrating the news that 60 per cent of the member lawyers had undertaken pro bono work with the organisation over the past year and thanking the audience for their engagement in access to justice issues.

There was a range of entertainment during the dinner, including the "Lawyers in Action" documentary by journalist Soledad Onetto, which showcased six of the most important cases that the Fundación has worked on over the past year. Musical entertainment was provided for the audience in the form of a band featuring Alessandri Abogados partner Rodrigo Velasco and associate Felipe Schuster.

"It was a total success," says executive director of the foundation, Marcela Fajardo. "There was no extra space, 350 people came, including the minister of justice, which was very important for us because we wanted to acknowledge the support not just of private firms but also public institutions.

She adds: "The most important thing for us is to bring together member lawyers so that they feel a part of the movement, and a part of the community that shares principles and values."

Among the winners of the awards handed out at the dinner were Bofill Mir & Álvarez Jana associate Daniela Buscaglia, in the pro bono coordinator category for her work with deaf individuals and her efforts to promote pro bono work among her peers; while winner of the leading pro bono case in 2013 was the lawsuit undertaken by Carey associate Nicolás Allamand and Guerrero, Olivos, Novoa y Errázuriz partner Sebastián Guerrero to recuperate land seized from 120 families in the town of Padre Hurtado in greater Santiago.

Other winners included Albagli Zaliasnik, which was awarded best law firm for its consistent commitment to pro bono and its efforts to enshrine pro bono work in its law firm policy; notary Nancy de la Fuente, who was recognised for her support of the foundation with a pro bono career award; and lawyers Alejandra Mercado and Marianela Villarroel from Chile's family lawyers' association, who took home the family lawyers award. The recognition for pro bono work in arbitration was handed out to Rodrigo Bordachar, who has given workshops to lawyers interested in participating in the foundation's arbitration programme, and an additional special mention was given to Mario Uribe, a psychiatrist and legal expert who has worked on a number of family and criminal law cases.

Four projects were also selected as winners of the "Pro Bono Challenge 2012" award, where law students pitch pro bono projects and the winners are matched up with a law firm to supervise their work. The winning projects were "intelligent credit", which will be overseen by José Tomás Barros from Gutiérrez Waugh Jimeno & Asenjo, and will provide legal advice on debt management; "immigrant earpiece", to be supervised by José Tomás Hurley of Carey, which will support immigrants to Chile through phone conversations and emails; "everyone can", which will see Albagli Zaliasnik's Natalia Diuana assist with informing disabled individuals about their rights; and "pro children", which will see the students work to combat child bullying along with Urenda, Rencoret, Orrego y Dorr Abogados' Fabiola Schencke.

Law firms are welcome to complete Latin Lawyer and the Vance Center's joint pro bono survey, aimed at tracking the institutionalisation of pro bono in Latin American law firms, before 31 October.

Comments

There are currently no comments.



Alessandri's Rodrigo Velasco and Felipe Schuster perform for the audience