



25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

NATIONAL IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER

HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
*Awards*

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25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
NATIONAL IMMIGRANT  
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HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
*Awards*

TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024  
12:00 – 1:30 P.M. CT

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*Honoring*

Edwidge Danticat

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Brian Casey, Barnes & Thornburg LLP

Latino Policy Forum

#HUMANRIGHTSAWARDS

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## WELCOME

Thank you for joining the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) for a truly momentous celebration.

Today we welcome you to the 25th Annual NIJC Human Rights Awards, a milestone that not only coincides with the 40th anniversary of NIJC's founding, but also just over one month since NIJC became an independent, nonprofit organization.

We are excited for this opportunity to celebrate NIJC's legacy and renew our collective commitment to continuing our mission to uphold justice for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

NIJC was founded in 1984 by a group of Chicagoans who recognized the need for immigration legal services for migrants arriving to the city from Central America and Haiti. Originally known as the Midwest Immigrant Rights Center, the organization served about 82 people in its first year through a mostly volunteer network of 60 attorneys. Since those early years, NIJC has expanded into a nationally recognized leader in immigrant rights with offices in Chicago; Goshen and Indianapolis, Indiana; San Diego; and Washington, D.C. Today, NIJC has a staff of more than 160 professionals and a network of about 2,000 pro bono attorneys. Last year, we provided legal services for more than 12,000 people, and we expect that number to remain high as the need to defend access to justice becomes ever more urgent. NIJC staff and pro bono attorneys also continue to be on the vanguard of federal impact litigation and policy advocacy, striving to set positive precedents for people seeking protection within our borders and holding the federal government accountable for upholding human rights and due process for all immigrants.

Immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers face growing obstacles to justice in the United States. NIJC's courageous clients, expert staff, and invaluable network of legal advocates and volunteers have shown that achieving justice is possible, and necessary. The stories you hear today offer a small glimpse of the greater good we can accomplish when we join together with a shared mission of justice.

We are so grateful you are part of NIJC's story. My hope is that you will help us write the next chapter by participating in today's paddle raise. Our goal is to raise \$200,000 in honor of the NIJC Human Rights Awards' 25th anniversary, and we cannot achieve this milestone without your generous support.

With gratitude and hope for the future,

Mary Meg McCarthy

*Executive Director, National Immigrant Justice Center*

---

## NIJC'S MAJOR VICTORIES FOR IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

### *In 2023, NIJC:*

Provided more than  
**12,000**  
people life-changing  
immigration legal services

---

Achieved  
**97%**  
success rate overall in  
securing legal relief

---

Helped more than  
**5,500**  
people seek asylum

---

Secured work  
authorization in  
**99%**  
of cases, helping clients  
gain meaningful access to  
employment opportunities

---

Defended nearly  
**1,700**  
people in removal  
proceedings

---

Recruited, trained, and  
partnered with volunteer  
attorneys to represent  
more than  
**2,200**  
cases

### *Notable recent victories:*

Provided legal assistance  
to **HUNDREDS OF NEWLY  
ARRIVED MIGRANT FAMILIES**  
through asylum workshops,  
change of venue clinics, and the  
Immigration Court Helpdesk

Settled a class action  
lawsuit to **ENSURE TIMELY  
ADJUDICATION OF ASYLUM**  
applications for 20,000 Afghans  
seeking asylum in the United  
States

Advocated for the **RETURN  
OF UNJUSTLY DEPORTED  
INDIVIDUALS**, successfully  
returning seven people to their  
homes and families in the  
United States

Represented **FAMILIES FACING  
EXPEDITED PROCESSING**  
under a new program in which  
asylum-seeking families must  
present their asylum claims days  
after arriving in Chicago

Defended the **DUE PROCESS  
RIGHTS OF U.S. CITIZENS IN  
MIXED-STATUS MARRIAGES**  
before the Supreme Court

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Our congratulations and gratitude to this year's Human Rights Awards honorees.

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Katten congratulates the  
**National Immigrant Justice Center**  
on the Silver Anniversary of the Human Rights Awards  
event and for relaunching as an independent  
nonprofit organization.

We are honored to partner with you  
to ensure human rights protections, and  
we thank you for giving us the privilege of  
contributing to this invaluable work.

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**We are so proud to work alongside NIJC and support their critical work in the community.**

**Our deepest congratulations to this year's award recipients. May you all continue to advance justice in our community.**





## Protecting Human Rights

Faegre Drinker supports NIJC in its mission to protect human rights and provide access to justice for all immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Congratulations to each of today's honorees, including Faegre Drinker's **Jackie McDonnell!**

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be wrongs, and if no man objected and no man  
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**CHEERS TO  
90 YEARS**

## **THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO.**

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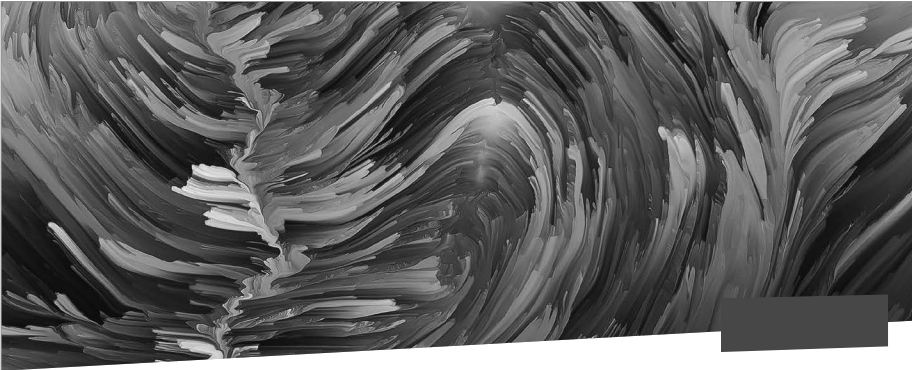
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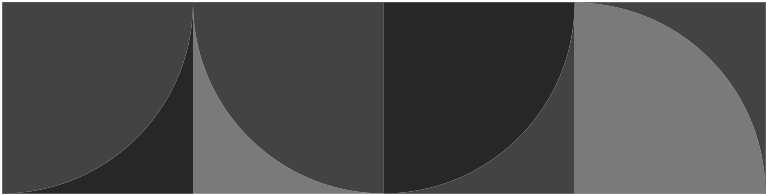
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# NIJC'S HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

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**WE PROUDLY CONTINUE OUR SUPPORT OF  
THE NATIONAL IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER  
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COLLEAGUE,  
ELIZABETH OLIVERA, A MOST WORTHY RECIPIENT  
OF THE RISING STARS AWARD**

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## Justice for all

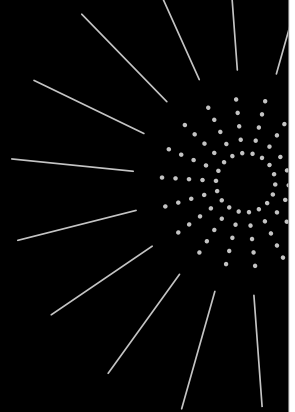
We proudly support the National Immigrant Justice Center and applaud its commitment to providing high-quality legal assistance to immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Congratulations to the 2024 honorees on their well-deserved recognition.

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Human Rights Awards and congratulate  
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We are honored to support the **National Immigrant Justice Center** and their ongoing commitment to human rights. Congratulations to our fellow honorees.

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Congratulations to the **National Immigrant Justice Center** on its 25th Annual Human Rights Awards and a special salute to this afternoon's awardees.

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*25<sup>th</sup> Annual Human Rights Awards!*

**BFKN is honored to partner with NIJC in its quest to ensure access to legal representation and the protection of human rights for all**

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Barnes & Thornburg is proud to support the National Immigrant Justice Center and congratulates our own Brian Casey on his momentous award.



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## Congratulations on 25 Years of Human Rights and Justice for All.

Chapman is proud to support NIJC and to celebrate the Silver Anniversary of NIJC's Human Rights Awards. We congratulate and thank all of this year's honorees for their profound impact on ensuring human rights protections and access to justice for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

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Jones Day proudly supports the 25th Annual National Immigrant Justice Center Human Rights Awards. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Accenture for being recognized with the Human Rights Corporate Award, and we commend all of this year's honorees for their unwavering commitment to human rights advocacy.

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We are honored to support  
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Awards and congratulate  
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Human Rights Awards honors.

We salute tonight's honorees.

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and congratulates the honorees of the  
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## PADDLE RAISE

Today's paddle raise provides an opportunity for you to bid on various levels of support to help sustain NIJC's mission. Here's how it works:

1. **Each of you has a paddle card on the table** with a large number and your name.
2. **When the amount you would like to give is called, raise your paddle** and keep it raised until your number has been recognized from the stage.
3. NIJC will record all bids and **charge your credit card if a card is on file.**
4. **If you did not register your payment information but provided a cell phone number or email address at registration,** you will receive a text or email prompting you to self-checkout.
5. **If you did not provide a cell phone number or payment information** and wish to participate in the paddle raise, please visit the checkout table as you leave the event to make your gift and get your tax receipt.

*Thank you for your generosity! Your gift and all proceeds from the Human Rights Awards provide critical legal services and advocacy for immigrants and refugees today and in the future.*

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## GIVING LEVELS

\$10,025	Helps an asylum seeker win a complex case
\$5,025	Defends someone against deportation in immigration court
\$2,525	Sponsors a legal clinic for asylees & refugees to obtain lawful permanent residence
\$1,025	Educates 10 unaccompanied immigrant children about their legal rights
\$525	Files a Temporary Protected Status application for a recently arrived neighbor
\$125	Provides a legal consultation to keep a family together

# PROGRAM

## 25th Annual Human Rights Awards

### WELCOME

Abiman Rajadurai, *McDonald's Corporation*  
John M. Skakun III, *Sidley Austin LLP*  
Co-Chairs of Human Rights Awards Committee

### RISING STARS AWARDS

### LUNCH

#### **Human Rights Corporate Award**

Accenture  
Accepted by *Maria Maras*  
Presented by *Karima Umutoni*

#### **Community Change Award**

Latino Policy Forum  
Accepted by *Sylvia Puente*  
Presented by *Montserrat Arreola*

#### **Human Rights Practitioner Award**

Brian Casey, *Barnes & Thornburg LLP*  
Presented by *Ada Mejia Hernandez*

### PADDLE RAISE & CALL TO ACTION

#### **The Jeanne M. and Joseph P. Sullivan Award & Keynote**

Edwidge Danticat  
Presented by *Josué Saint-Jean*

### CLOSING REMARKS

Mary Meg McCarthy  
Executive Director, *National Immigrant Justice Center*

#HumanRightsAwards

## HONOREES

### KEYNOTE & JEANNE M. AND JOSEPH P. SULLIVAN AWARD

#### **Edwidge Danticat**

Edwidge Danticat is the author of several books, including *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, an Oprah Book Club selection, *Krik? Krak!*, a National Book Award finalist, *The Farming of Bones*, an American Book Award winner; the novels-in-stories, *The Dew Breaker*, *Claire of the Sea Light*, and *The Art of Death*, a National Book Critics Circle finalist for Criticism. She has written seven books for children and young adults, a travel narrative, *After the Dance*, and a collection of essays, *Create Dangerously*. Her memoir, *Brother, I'm Dying*, was a 2007 finalist for the National Book Award and a 2008 winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography. She is the editor of *The Butterfly's Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States*, *The Beacon Best of 2000*, *Haiti Noir*, *Haiti Noir 2*, and *Best American Essays 2011*. She is a 2009 MacArthur Fellow, a 2018 Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow, a 2018 winner of the Neustadt Prize, a 2019 winner of the Saint Louis Literary Award, a 2020 United States Artist Fellow, a 2020 winner of the Vilcek Prize, and a 2023 winner of the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in the Short Story. Her story collection, *Everything Inside*, was a 2020 winner of the Bocas Fiction Prize, The Story Prize, and the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Prize. She is a Member of the New York Writer's Hall of Fame and The American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is currently teaching at Columbia University.

### HUMAN RIGHTS CORPORATE AWARD

#### **Accenture**

The Accenture Sustainability Value Promise is to embed sustainability into everything Accenture does. Accenture Legal strives to engage the company's 3,000 legal professionals in this effort via Legal Access, Accenture's global pro bono program. Accenture team members serve their local communities across areas such as humanitarian response, racial justice, financial inclusion, refugee support, and fair and equal access to justice. Through Legal Access, Accenture volunteers have been proud to provide more than 400 hours of pro bono service to NIJC clients seeking asylum and applying for U.S. citizenship.

### HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTITIONER AWARD

#### **Brian Casey**

Brian Casey is a partner in the Litigation Department of Barnes & Thornburg's South Bend, Indiana, office. His practice focuses on business litigation, particularly class action, ERISA, and appellate litigation. Since joining NIJC as a volunteer attorney at its first Indiana Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) clinic in 2012, Mr. Casey has argued and secured positive outcomes in

## HONOREES

two cases at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, filed two federal habeas claims to advocate for an asylum-seeker's release from ICE detention, and secured asylum for a Central American family. Currently, he represents an immigrant youth in a case that recently was added to NIJC's federal lawsuit involving delays in the adjudication of bona fide determinations for U visa applicants and represents another client seeking withholding of removal.

### COMMUNITY CHANGE AWARD

#### **Latino Policy Forum**

The Latino Policy Forum was founded in 2009 with the mission to build the power, influence, and leadership of the Latino community. Through advocacy and analysis, the Forum pursues public policy that promotes equity and justice for the more than 2 million Latinos in Illinois in the areas of education, immigration, housing, and leadership. In 2022, seeing the need for a coordinated response to the arrival of migrants in Chicago and the state from the Texas-Mexico border, the Forum convened the Welcome to Illinois Coalition, which brings together community, organizational, government, and philanthropic leaders to exchange information and resources and provide compassionate, holistic, and culturally competent support for new arrivals. The National Immigrant Justice Center has been an invaluable member of the coalition, providing legal expertise and services to migrants.

## RISING STAR AWARDS

The Rising Star Awards recognize early career attorneys who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to ensuring access to justice for immigrants by devoting substantial time to NIJC pro bono work, serving a significant number of NIJC clients, and/or representing clients with complex cases. Congratulations to this year's awardees!

Mary Kennedy, Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
Jackie McDonnell, Faegre Drinker  
Elizabeth Olivera, Cozen O'Connor  
Leigh Brissenden, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP  
Matthew Hartzler, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP  
Rachel Cheng, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP  
Marques Winick, Goldberg Kohn  
Laila Khan, Kirkland & Ellis LLP  
Tommy Hoyt, Sidley Austin LLP  
Joseph Glynn, Munger Tolles & Olson LLP

## PRESENTERS & SPEAKERS

### MONSERRAT ARREOLA

Monserrat Arreola arrived in the United States with her family when she was three years old and settled in the Chicago suburbs. As a survivor of domestic violence who has experienced first-hand the trauma of long-term incarceration, she has become a mentor and an advocate for the rights of immigrant victims of violence. In 2023 she testified before a Federal Communications Commission hearing that has resulted in new federal regulations requiring jails to make phone calls more accessible to people in immigration detention. She now works at Organized Communities Against Deportation, where she assists in fundraising efforts such as grant writing, and coordinates Know Your Rights workshops for newly arrived migrants.

### MARY MEG MCCARTHY

Mary Meg McCarthy is NIJC's executive director. Under her leadership, NIJC has grown from a \$1 million to a \$16 million organization with 160 staff and a network of over 2,000 pro bono attorneys and volunteers in five offices throughout the United States. Through its unique approach integrating advocacy, impact litigation, legal counsel, and public education, NIJC has responded to the ever-changing immigration environment. Mary Meg is an internationally recognized immigration law expert who has testified before Congress and at the United Nations and is frequently quoted in major news outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and CNN. Her honors include the Justice John Paul Stevens Award from the Chicago Bar Association, the Chicago Inn of Court 2015 Don Hubert Public Service Award, the Pax Christi 2013 Teacher of Peace Award, the Federal Bar Association Chicago Chapter 2021 Kathryn Smith Matkov Award, the Damen Award from Loyola University Chicago, and the Dr. Thomas J. Dooley Award from the University of Notre Dame Alumni Association. In June 2018, she received an honorary degree in law from Knox College (Galesburg, IL).

### ADA MEJIA HERNANDEZ

Ada Mejia Hernandez recently won asylum protection following a clinic organized by awardee Brian Casey of Barnes & Thornburg LLP in Indiana.



## PRESENTERS & SPEAKERS

### ABIMAN RAJADURAI

Abiman Rajadurai is senior counsel, global labor & employment law, at McDonald's Corporation, and serves as general counsel for McDonald's Operating Company. He actively participates on the legal department's pro bono and DEI committees. Abiman is a long-time NIJC pro bono attorney. He is a member of NIJC's Leadership Board and co-chairs the Human Rights Awards Committee.

### JOSUÉ SAINT-JEAN

Josué Saint-Jean was a well-known radio journalist in Haiti until he learned his name had been placed on a death list by political gangs in Port-au-Prince. He and his wife fled to the United States, and soon afterward welcomed their first child. They have since become U.S. citizens and are raising two daughters near Chicago, where he works as a food safety manager for a grocery store chain.

### JOHN M. SKAKUN III

John Skakun is a partner at Sidley Austin LLP. He advises companies, boards of directors, and executives in high-stakes litigation, corporate crises, and risk management. He leads Sidley's Political Asylum & Immigrants' Rights Pro Bono Project, and has led and overseen dozens of asylum cases, appeals, and impact litigations. He successfully argued an asylum case before the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals that has served as precedent in numerous other asylum cases. He serves on NIJC's Leadership Board and co-chairs the Human Rights Awards Committee.

### KARIMA UMUTONI

Karima Umutoni is a refugee from Rwanda who, along with her family, applied to become a U.S. citizen through an NIJC naturalization clinic hosted by Accenture. She currently works as a housekeeper for a hotel and is a mother to a three-year-old daughter.

# HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS – A BRIEF HISTORY

The Human Rights Awards is Chicago's premier event to honor human rights advocates and bring together business, civic, and philanthropic leaders committed to promoting human rights in our community and beyond. The event benefits the National Immigrant Justice Center.

## 2023

**KEYNOTE:** Javier Zamora, poet and author of *Solito*

**AWARDEES:** Wade Thomson, Muslim Women Resource Center, AbbVie

## 2022

**KEYNOTE:** Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Princeton University professor and author

**AWARDEES:** Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights; Elizabeth Lopez, United Airlines; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

## 2021

**PANEL:** Ella, Gabriela, Samer, Maria Hinojosa (moderator)

**AWARDEES:** Allstate; Johannes Favi; Sara Ghadiri, Chapman and Cutler LLP

## 2020

**KEYNOTE:** Aarti Shahani, journalist and best-selling author

**AWARDEES:** Ankura; Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP

## 2019

**KEYNOTE:** Julissa Arce, author and immigrant rights activist

**AWARDEES:** Kirkland & Ellis, Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants, Margaret Balsley-Cross

## 2018

**KEYNOTE:** Dolores Huerta, labor leader and civil rights activist

**AWARDEES:** Jones Day, Microsoft Corporation

## 2017

**KEYNOTE:** Minnesota House Representative Ilhan Omar, first Somali-American legislator and former refugee

**AWARDEES:** Aon, Dr. Zaher Sahloul, Reed Smith LLP

## 2016

**KEYNOTE:** Monica McWilliams, Professor of Women's Studies, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland

**AWARDEES:** John "Jay" Reidy III, AT&T Inc.; the Loyola University Chicago Student Body; Walgreen Co.

## 2015

**KEYNOTE:** Ishmael Beah, *New York Times* bestselling author and president of the Ishmael Beah Foundation

**AWARDEES:** Carol Brook, Federal Defenders Program; Mark Flessner, Holland & Knight; JPMorgan Chase

## 2014

**KEYNOTE:** Jose Antonio Vargas, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist

**AWARDEES:** Linda Coberly, Winston & Strawn; Daniel Olmos; United Airlines, Inc.

## 2013

**KEYNOTE:** U.S. Senator Richard Durbin

**AWARDEES:** AT&T Inc.; Immigrant Youth Justice League; Brian Murray, Jones Day

## 2012

**KEYNOTE:** Maria Hinojosa, correspondent for PBS FRONTLINE, host of NPR's Latino USA

**AWARDEES:** Caterpillar Inc. Legal Services Division; Jesús G. Chuy García, Cook County Board of Commissioners; Lawrence S. Schaner, Jenner & Block LLP; Jon Stryker, Arcus Foundation

## 2011

**KEYNOTE:** Chief Justice Margaret Marshall, former Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court

**AWARDEES:** Albany Park Theater

Project; Terry Yale Feiertag, Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym, Ltd.; McDonald's Corporation

## 2010

**KEYNOTE:** Lt. Cmdr. Charles Swift, defense counsel in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*

**AWARDEES:** Duane Sigelko, Reed Smith; Sisters of Mercy; Exelon Corporation

## 2009

**KEYNOTE:** António Guterres, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees

**AWARDEES:** Luol Deng, Chicago Bulls; James Morsch, Butler, Rubin, Saltarelli & Boyd; Winston & Strawn LLP

## 2008

**KEYNOTE:** Harold Hongju Koh, former dean, Yale Law School; former assistant secretary, U.S. Department of State

**AWARDEES:** The Chicago Community Trust; The Chicago Public Library; Chicago Public Radio; *The Chicago Reporter*; WTTW11; Melville Washburn, Sidley Austin LLP

## 2007

**KEYNOTE:** Joseph Margulies, former assistant director, MacArthur Justice Center, Northwestern University Law School

**AWARDEES:** Jenner & Block LLP; Carlos M. Sada, former minister for Congressional Affairs, Embassy of Mexico; Tibetan Alliance

## 2006

**KEYNOTE:** Seymour Hersh, journalist, *The New Yorker Magazine*

**AWARDEES:** Levi Strauss & Co.; Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture; Irené Martínez, M.D.; Lee Ann Russo, Jones Day

## 2005

**KEYNOTE:** Richard J. Goldstone, former justice, South African Constitutional Court

**AWARDEES:** Joseph Margulies, assistant director at MacArthur Justice Center; Natalie Spears, Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal

## 2004

**KEYNOTE:** Paul Hoffman, civil and human rights attorney

**AWARDEES:** Margaret Blackshere, former president of the Illinois AFL-CIO; David Berten, attorney; Ariel Investments

## 2003

**KEYNOTE:** Mary Robinson, former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, former president of Ireland

**AWARDEES:** Juan Mendez, University of Notre Dame; Bob Glaves, Chicago Bar Foundation; Aon Corporation

## 2002

**KEYNOTE:** The Honorable Abner J. Mikva; Peggy Kuo, attorney, UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

**AWARDEES:** Chicago Tribune Editorial Board; Edwin Silverman, Illinois Department of Human Services; Jeanne and Joseph Sullivan, philanthropists

## 2001

**KEYNOTE:** David S. Weissbrodt, University of Minnesota Law School

**AWARDEES:** Jacqueline Bhabha, the University of Chicago; Baxter International Foundation

## 2000

**KEYNOTE:** Juan Garcés, attorney and leader of the legal team prosecuting Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet

**AWARDEES:** Robert Kirschner, physician and human rights leader; U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky

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— Gretchen Wolf



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honors the legacy of  
Jeanne M. and Joseph P. Sullivan  
for their dedication to refugees  
and asylum seekers.*

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## BE AN NIJC PRO BONO ATTORNEY

The National Immigrant Justice Center's (NIJC) Pro Bono Program partners with legal volunteers to provide free legal representation for low-income immigrants seeking family- or protection-based relief.

NIJC pro bono attorneys defend the legal rights of immigrants regardless of background and transform the immigration system to one that affords equal opportunity for all.

### Pro Bono Opportunities with NIJC:

- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) Predicate Orders
- Clinics:
  - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
  - Naturalization
  - Asylee/Refugee Family Petitions and Petitions for Permanent Residence
- Detained and non-detained asylum, including for adult, child, family, and LGBTQ asylum seekers
- VAWA and U Visa
- Pro se workshops to support asylum seekers

To set you and your client up for success, NIJC provides in-depth training, attorney support, document review, and technical assistance throughout the life of the case.

Join our network of more than 2,000 active pro bono attorneys who represent thousands of people each year.

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