



SPRING 2024

RK ALUMNI CONNECT

NEWSLETTER

ABOUT RK ALUMNI CONNECT

RK Alumni Connect is a networking group for current and former Robins Kaplan attorneys. We provide forums for learning and professional development, an alumni website, CLE opportunities, development and training, community service activities, diversity and inclusion programming, pro bono opportunities, and networking and social events.

Visit us on [LinkedIn](#) or our [RK Alumni Connect](#) web page to stay current on updates from Robins Kaplan, get news about former colleagues, and receive information on a variety of legal developments, as we continue to build years of friendships.



GREETINGS

PA HOUA VUE

ATTORNEY RECRUITING MANAGER

PVue@RobinsKaplan.com

612.349.8744

Greetings! Welcome back to another edition of RK Alumni Connect, the newsletter that aims to reconnect, inform, and celebrate the accomplishments of our extended legal community.

In the following pages, we are excited to highlight alumni news, recent firm successes, including a pro bono project, and share a message from our new Executive Chair and Managing Partner, Tony Froio.



ALUMNI NEWS

Judge Jeffrey Bryan, a Robins Kaplan alumnus, was sworn into the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota on December 1, 2023, becoming Minnesota's first Latino federal judge. Congratulations, honorable Judge Bryan!



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800 553 9910
ROBINSKAPLAN.COM

FIRM NEWS



ROBINS KAPLAN NAMED MINNESOTA FIRM OF THE YEAR BY *BENCHMARK LITIGATION*

Robins Kaplan LLP has been named Minnesota Law Firm of the Year by *Benchmark Litigation* in its 2024 U.S. Awards. These awards recognize the country's most distinguished litigators and their firms for their exemplary work from the research period spanning April 2022 to April 2023. [Read more here.](#)



RONALD SCHUTZ, BRENDAN JOHNSON NAMED TO FORBES TOP 200 LAWYERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Robins Kaplan LLP is pleased to announce that Ronald Schutz and Brendan Johnson have been recognized by Forbes in its inaugural list of the Top 200 Lawyers in the United States. [Read more here.](#)



CHRIS LARUS ADMITTED TO AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS

Christopher Larus, a partner at Robins Kaplan LLP, has become a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, one of the premier legal associations in North America. [Read more here.](#)

15 PARTNERS SELECTED TO LAWDRAGON 500 LEADING PLAINTIFF CONSUMER LAWYERS LIST

Fifteen partners at Robins Kaplan have been named to the 2024 "Lawdragon 500 Leading Plaintiff Consumer Lawyers in America" guide. This guide recognizes elite plaintiff attorneys across the United States who bring justice to those harmed by violations of consumer rights. [Read more here.](#)

PRACTICE HIGHLIGHTS

The firm continues its track record of success both inside and outside of the courtroom. Here are highlights from our recent wins:

ACHIEVED \$42.4 MILLION VERDICT IN LANDMARK PATENT INFRINGEMENT TRIAL FOR INVENTOR OF INNOVATIVE PRELIT ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREES

Robins Kaplan won a jury verdict on behalf of client Willis Electric, in a competitor-v-competitor patent infringement dispute related to prelit artificial Christmas trees. The jury awarded \$42.4 million – believed to be the largest patent jury verdict in District of Minnesota history – in favor of Willis Electric, as well as a finding that the patent infringement was willful. [Read more here.](#)

ROBINS KAPLAN ACHIEVES LANDMARK SETTLEMENT IN LGBTQ DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT AGAINST SOUTH DAKOTA

Robins Kaplan LLP is pleased to announce a key victory secured on behalf of the Transformation Project, a nonprofit organization providing suicide prevention and healthcare support for transgender individuals across South Dakota, following the state's abrupt cancellation of the organization's contract for a community health worker. [Read more here.](#)

OPPORTUNITIES, TRAININGS & CLINICS

Here are a few of the pro bono projects our attorneys are working on right now. Join us!

Immigration Justice Campaign (Nationwide) – Remotely represent detained immigrants and immigrants seeking asylum through the Immigration Justice Campaign. [Learn more here.](#)

Tubman Pro Bono Safety Project (Minnesota) – Help victim-survivors of domestic violence obtain orders of protection. [Learn more here.](#)

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) (Nationwide) – Represent unaccompanied immigrant children in an immigration case. [Learn more here.](#)

Volunteer Lawyers Network Phone Advice Clinics (Minnesota) – Advise low-income clients over the phone on housing, immigration, family law, criminal expungement, or bankruptcy cases. [Learn more here.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are working on exciting programming for 2024. Stay tuned!

PRO BONO

ASYLUM WIN FOR CAMEROONIAN WOMAN ABUSED BY POLICE

Over several years, our client was severely and repeatedly abused at the hands of the Cameroonian police for her political activity in support of Anglophones. In 2018, she managed to escape from police custody and fled to the United States. In 2019, the Asylum Office did not grant her affirmative asylum application and instead referred it to immigration court based on alleged inconsistencies. All of the alleged inconsistencies were third-party factual misunderstandings and misstatements, through no fault of our client. Our firm got involved after the referral to immigration court. The case languished on the immigration docket for several years due to a COVID backlog, and our client did not even have a hearing date listed in the court system. Eventually, we were able to file a motion to schedule a hearing on the merits to fulfill our client's goal of seeking a speedy resolution and hopefully reuniting with her sons, who are back in Cameroon. Ahead of the hearing, we submitted a fulsome evidentiary packet, including an expert report on country conditions, and a supporting brief.

On January 31, 2024, the immigration judge orally granted our client asylum at the conclusion of a merits hearing. The hearing involved our client's painful testimony reliving her experiences, detailed cross-examination from the government, and expert testimony from a country conditions expert our firm found and retained. Although the government wanted to delay further to obtain additional corroborating documentation, the immigration judge agreed that she had sufficient evidence to grant asylum on the spot. The court specifically held that our client's testimony was credible and that any alleged inconsistencies in the record were not the fault of our client. The government agreed to waive appeal, providing our client a complete and final victory. We are now applying to bring her sons over to the United States as derivative asylees, and next year, for her green card. As an asylee, our client will also be able to continue working. Throughout her time in the United States, our client has worked in healthcare, providing important societal contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

PRO BONO TIP

Your *pro bono* work may be eligible for CLE credit! [Get more information here.](#)



From the desk of
ANTHONY A. FROIO

Dear Robins Kaplan Alumni,

I hope this message finds you all well and thriving in your respective endeavors. As we navigate through the ever-evolving landscape of the legal industry, I am honored and humbled to step into my new role as Chair of the Executive Board and Managing Partner at Robins Kaplan.

For those who may not know me, I joined the firm as an associate in the Boston office in 1994 and will celebrate thirty years with the firm on July 1. I have had the privilege of serving as the Managing Partner of our Boston office since 2004, have been an elected member of the Executive Board for the last eight years, and also serve as co-chair of the Corporate Restructuring and Bankruptcy practice. Throughout my tenure, I have been deeply committed to upholding our core values of excellence and client service, and giving back to our profession and community in meaningful ways.

As I assume this dual leadership role, I am excited to share my vision for the future of Robins Kaplan. We are not merely a law firm; we are a force for justice, leveraging our rich history of groundbreaking trial victories to continue to drive positive change in our clients' lives and industries while improving our communities. My goal is to build upon this legacy while fostering a culture of inclusivity and innovation.

I believe in leading with transparency and collaboration, and I am committed to working closely with our talented team of attorneys and business professionals to further elevate our firm's reputation as a premier trial firm. Together, we will continue to deliver exceptional results for our clients and make meaningful contributions to the legal profession.

Thank you to all our esteemed alumni for your invaluable contributions to the history, culture, and success of our firm. As we look ahead to the next eighty-five years, your experiences and insights remain crucial to both my work and the firm's ongoing growth. We deeply value your continued support, whether through networking events, educational opportunities, or simply staying in touch. Our partners, associates, and business professionals greatly appreciate your involvement. Please feel free to contact me anytime; rest assured that your contributions to the firm and our clients are always recognized and appreciated.

Warm regards,

TONY FROIO

Chair of the Executive Board and Managing Partner
Robins Kaplan



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