



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 & 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.

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GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTION

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Greetings! We are thrilled to welcome you back to the latest edition of the Robins Kaplan alumni newsletter, RK Alumni Connect, where we aim to reconnect, inform, and celebrate the accomplishments of our extended legal community. Since our last newsletter, the alumni program has undergone some exciting changes, including the addition of our new Attorney Recruiting Manager, Pa Houa Vue. Pa Houa rejoined the firm last October, replacing Martha Capper, who retired after 27 ½ years at the firm! Pa Houa is responsible for all aspects of attorney recruiting, including the firm's summer associate program. We are delighted to have Pa Houa rejoin the firm and look forward to her contributions. Feel free to reach out to her if you have any questions or comments.

In the following pages, we are excited to share recent firm successes, highlight community service projects we've participated in, and share a message from firm Executive Board Chair, Ron Schutz.

ALUMNI NEWS



Keala Ede, a Robins Kaplan alumnus, was recently appointed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals by Governor Tim Walz. Congratulations, Honorable Judge Keala Ede!

Several Robins Kaplan alumni attended the ceremony, including Judge Jeffrey Bryan, Judge Peter Reyes, and Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Natalie Hudson, who presided over the ceremony. The presence of so many alumni made the occasion truly remarkable.



FIRM NEWS



JAKE HOLDREITH ADMITTED TO THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS

Partner Jake Holdreith has become a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, one of the premier legal associations in North America. The induction ceremony took place during the recent 2023 Annual Meeting of the College in San Diego, California. [Read more here.](#)



ROBINS KAPLAN NAMES BRENDAN JOHNSON CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL BUSINESS LITIGATION GROUP

In September, the firm named Brendan Johnson chair of the National Business Litigation Group. Johnson, a longtime partner and co-chair of the Government and Internal Investigations Group, replaces Jason Pfeiffer in the role. [Read more here.](#)



ANNIE HUANG RECEIVES ASIAN LEADERSHIP AWARD FROM PROFILES IN DIVERSITY JOURNAL

Partner Annie Huang has been selected to receive Profiles in Diversity Journal's Asian Leadership Award. She is honored for blazing new trails, welcoming challenges, mentoring others, advancing diversity and inclusion in the workplace and the community, and excelling in her field. You can read Annie's Profiles in Diversity feature [here.](#)



CHRISTINA LINCOLN RECOGNIZED AS LAWYER ON THE FAST TRACK BY THE RECORDER IN 2023 CALIFORNIA LEGAL AWARDS

Partner Christina Lincoln has been recognized among the "Lawyers on the Fast Track" in The Recorder's 2023 California Legal Awards. This award honors lawyers in California under age 40 who are considered the next generation of legal leaders. [Read more here.](#)



TARA SUTTON SELECTED TO MINNESOTA LAWYER'S INAUGURAL TOP WOMEN IN LAW LIST

Partner Tara Sutton has been named to Minnesota Lawyer's inaugural Top Women in Law class, celebrating the outstanding achievements of women in the legal community in Minnesota. According to Minnesota Lawyer, honorees were selected based on the core principles of leadership, professionalism, accomplishment, and passion for making a difference. [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:

SECURED \$60.5 MILLION SETTLEMENT, RESOLVING THE STATE OF MINNESOTA'S YOUTH VAPING EPIDEMIC CLAIMS AGAINST JUUL AND ALTRIA

Robins Kaplan partnered with Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and Zimmerman Reed to sue e-cigarette manufacturer JUUL on behalf of the State of Minnesota for deceptively marketing its tobacco products and targeting Minnesota's youth for profit. After a three-week trial, a settlement was reached on the eve of jury deliberations. Over an eight-year period, JUUL and Altria will pay a combined total of \$60.5 million to the State of Minnesota. This is the largest per capita settlement of all 48 states and territories that have settled with JUUL. [Read more here.](#)

SECURED \$28 MILLION SETTLEMENT IN ALLEGED BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTIES LITIGATION AGAINST FORMER OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF FOR-PROFIT COLLEGE

Robins Kaplan secured a \$28 million settlement on behalf of the Receiver for Education Corporation of America (ECA), a privately held company that operated for-profit colleges across the United States. The settlement covers claims against several former officers and directors of ECA for allegedly breaching their fiduciary duties of care and loyalty to ECA for not giving students the ability to complete their education in the event the schools closed. [Read more here.](#)

SECURED \$12.2 MILLION SETTLEMENT IN DELIBERATE INDIFFERENCE JAIL CASE LEADING TO INMATE'S ARM AMPUTATIONS

Robins Kaplan attorneys secured a landmark \$12.2 million settlement on behalf of a client who suffered from the deliberate indifference of county personnel while he was detained at Scott County Jail in Shakopee, Minnesota, leading to multiple severe injuries. The settlement is believed to be the largest amount of its kind in Minnesota to date. [Read more here.](#)

BMO HARRIS ORDERED TO POST BOND FOR MORE THAN \$1,158,000,000 PENDING APPEAL OF OUR HISTORIC VERDICT

On July 25, 2023, a federal judge in St. Paul ordered BMO Harris Bank to post bond for more than \$1.158 billion as a result of the \$1 billion jury verdict and interest award Robins Kaplan secured against BMO on behalf of its client Douglas Kelley. This case arose from one of the largest Ponzi schemes in U.S. history. This ruling follows a historic November 2022 jury verdict against BMO awarding Kelley approximately \$564 million in damages, and the court's June 2023 order awarding Kelley approximately \$500 million in interest. This is the largest jury verdict in Minnesota history. [Read more here.](#)

PRO BONO

MAJOR VICTORY FOR FRIENDS OF THE BOUNDARY WATERS

Robins Kaplan LLP is pleased to announce a significant victory on behalf of its client, Friends of the Boundary Waters, in its campaign to prevent Twin Metals copper-nickel mine from developing a \$1.7 billion sulfide mining project on the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). In September, a federal judge dismissed Twin Metals' lawsuit challenging the U.S. Department of Interior's cancellation of its mineral leases along the edge of the Boundary Waters, its rejection of its mining plan of operations, and denial of its preference right lease applications in other nearby areas that were withdrawn from mineral exploration. The United States District Court for the District of Columbia allowed the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness and several other environmental groups and recreational businesses to intervene as defendants, granting their motion to dismiss Twin Metals' case in its entirety. [Read more here.](#)

OPPORTUNITIES, TRAININGS & CLINICS

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

Eviction Representation Project (Minnesota) – Advise and represent low-income tenants and landlords who are at court for their first appearance in an eviction case. [Register with the Volunteer Lawyers Network](#) to volunteer!

Veterans Benefit Appeals (Nationwide) – Help a veteran obtain denied benefits. Represent veterans before the Board of Veterans Appeals in relation to VA disability, educational assistance, and survivor benefit and pension benefit claims. [Learn more here.](#)

ABA Free Legal Answers (Nationwide) – Help low-income clients with a variety of legal issues by providing brief advice online. [Learn more here.](#)

Children's Law Center (Minnesota) – Represent children in child protection proceedings and children in foster care. [Learn more here.](#)

MMLA Special Education Pro Bono Project (Minnesota) – MMLA is training volunteers for a new pro bono project focused on helping children obtain the special education services they need. To learn more e-mail probono@mylegalaid.org.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Women of Robins Kaplan (WoRK) organized service projects throughout all major offices during the months of May and June. These service projects were dedicated to Hollis Salzman (1965-2020), a trailblazing attorney, prominent female litigator, and beloved colleague and friend. The Boston WoRK members volunteered to support high school girls participating in Advocacy Day, specifically preparing the girls to meet with their legislators. The New York office compiled over 50 thank-you bags with handwritten notes for Jumpstart's corps of college volunteers. In addition, our New York office collected donations for the organization Friends Shelter. The Los Angeles team volunteered at the Westside Food Bank, where they sorted boxes of donated corn into 199 bags to be distributed to partner agencies. The Minneapolis office packed personal care kits for the organization People Serving People, an emergency shelter for families experiencing homelessness in Minnesota.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Please join us for a webinar discussing the *In re Payment Card Interchange Fee & Merchant Discount Antitrust Litigation*, how merchants can benefit from the \$5.45 billion settlement, and steps to take in the claims administration process.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

All businesses and other entities that have accepted any Visa-Branded Cards and/or Mastercard-Branded Cards in the United States at any time from January 1, 2004 to January 25, 2019.



[Thursday, January 4 at 7:00 pm CT](#)

[Tuesday, January 9 at 12:00 pm CT](#)

[Thursday, January 11 at 2:00 pm CT](#)



HELPFUL TIDBIT

How do we rebuild relationships in a post-pandemic world? This Harvard Business Review article offers some tips on rekindling professional connections and re-engaging in networking opportunities. [Read here.](#)

NEW YEARS MESSAGE



Dear Robins Kaplan Alumni,

As we approach the end of 2023 and celebrate the firm's 85th anniversary, I am grateful for this opportunity to share the firm's successes over the past year and emphasize the significance of nurturing our connections with our esteemed alumni.

In the past year, Robins Kaplan continued its unwavering commitment to upholding justice, the law, and advocating for those in need. We achieved remarkable victories, set legal precedents, and left a positive impact on countless lives and communities, a tradition that has been upheld for 85 years.

Our alumni have played an indispensable role in shaping the enduring legacy of our firm. Many of you have ventured onto different paths, each contributing to the legal landscape in your own unique way. I'd like to emphasize the value of our alumni network. Your connections, experiences, and expertise are invaluable. We invite you to stay engaged with the firm through networking events, pro bono work, or simply staying in touch. Your continued engagement enriches our collective knowledge and reinforces the sense of belonging that defines our firm.

As we look forward to the upcoming year, we anticipate even more successes, the nurturing of meaningful connections, and the unwavering commitment to justice that has been the cornerstone of our 85-year history. I look forward to hearing your stories, celebrating your achievements, and welcoming your involvement in the extended Robins Kaplan community.

With respect and gratitude,

Ron Schutz

Chair of the Executive Board

