

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Baker Donelson Recognized for Pro Bono Efforts in Birmingham

October 28, 2011

(Birmingham, AL / October 28, 2011) Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, was among the honorees recently recognized by the Birmingham Bar Association Pro Bono Committee and the Birmingham Volunteer Lawyers Program (BVLP) for their dedication to providing free legal assistance to low income individuals in Jefferson County.

The awards were presented on October 26, 2011, at the 2011 Pro Bono Celebration Luncheon hosted by the Birmingham Bar Association Pro Bono Committee and the Birmingham Volunteer Lawyers to celebrate National Pro Bono Week and honor pro bono service.

The Birmingham office of Baker Donelson was recognized as the large firm 2011 Volunteer Firm of the Year for its outstanding efforts to make pro bono service to clients a priority. Baker Donelson is one of the only firms to have a Pro Bono Shareholder, Lisa W. Borden, who oversees the firm's pro bono programs. Baker Donelson also allows its attorneys to count pro bono towards their billable hours. Further, after the April 27th tornadoes when there was a backlog of pro bono cases, attorneys at Baker Donelson agreed to take on over 20 pro bono cases in one day.

Baker Donelson's Pro Bono Shareholder Lisa Borden, who accepted the award on behalf of the firm, noted, "We are fortunate to have the opportunity to partner with BVLP in providing pro bono legal services to the many Jefferson County residents who cannot afford the representation they need. Especially in these difficult economic times, BVLP provides a vital lifeline to those for whom justice would otherwise be out of reach. We are grateful for this recognition of the contributions of our attorneys and staff, but our real reward is the knowledge that we are helping to provide access to justice for those in need."

During the Pro Bono Celebration Luncheon, the Honorable Sue Bell Cobb, former chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, was the keynote speaker, and the awards were presented by the Hon. J. Scott Vowell, presiding judge of the 10th Judicial Circuit, and BVLP Executive Director Kelli Hogue Mauro. As part of 2011 National Pro Bono Week, which took place during the week of October 23rd through October 29th, a number of groups sponsored events offering free legal assistance around Birmingham including Senior Wills Clinic in Adamsville and Trussville and a General Legal Clinic at the Aletheia House.

The Birmingham Volunteer Lawyers Program operates in conjunction with the Birmingham Bar Association to provide volunteer legal services to low income individuals in the Birmingham area. The Birmingham Volunteer Lawyers Program provides volunteer lawyers to assist in a number of civil matters including, but not limited to: adoptions, bankruptcy, debt collection, family law, guardianship, landlord/tenant disputes, powers of attorney, wills and probate.

Through its commitment to pro bono representation, Baker Donelson provides legal services to groups and individuals likely to be marginalized in the legal system due to economic barriers. Over the years, the Firm's attorneys have provided a variety of counsel to many populations, including immigrants, refugees, the elderly and the impoverished. Baker Donelson's efforts include work on a wide range of matters, such as advocating for the homeless and organizations that serve the homeless, death penalty litigation, providing corporate legal services to non-profit organizations, and much more

