

## ABA Tax Section Names Partner Craig Bell a Pro Bono Attorney of the Year

February 23, 2023

The American Bar Association Section of Taxation selected McGuireWoods Richmond partner [Craig Bell](#) as a winner of the 2023 Janet Spragens Pro Bono Award, which honors outstanding and sustained achievements in pro bono activities in tax law.

Bell has represented pro bono low-income taxpayers in more than 300 U.S. Tax Court cases. He has volunteered for the Community Tax Law Project (CTLP) in Richmond for more than 30 years, providing thousands of hours of services to hundreds of taxpayers. He served on the CTLP board from 1994-2004, served as its president for two years, and assists with fundraising and financial contributions. Bell also started a tax clinic at William & Mary Law School where he teaches students legal skills and the importance of pro bono work.

Bell received his award at the tax section's 2023 midyear meeting, held Feb. 9-11 in San Diego. In his [acceptance speech](#), Bell talked about the first pro bono case he handled, helping a spouse get her tax refund and relief from her husband's tax debts. The Internal Revenue Service conceded the case before trial, and the client later mailed Bell a card saying she used the refund to help her daughter purchase items for college. "I looked at that and I said, 'My gosh, we can change people's lives.' It moved me to tears," Bell said. "From that day on, I said, I'm doing pro bono, and I'm going to do a lot of it."

Bell, a fellow of the American College of Tax Counsel, is a nationally recognized tax attorney and litigator who represents individuals and businesses in disputes with federal, state or local taxing jurisdictions. He is a former chair of McGuireWoods' Tax & Employee Benefits Department.

Bell has received numerous awards for his commitment to public service, including the ABA Legal Assistance for Military Personnel Award for his work with military personnel; the Virginia State Bar's Pro Bono Award for his work on the emergency response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon; and the St. George Tucker Professorship Award for outstanding service to William & Mary Law School.

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