

## Nexsen Pruet announces 2019 Julian Nexsen Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award recipient

### Related Professionals

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### News from Nexsen Pruet

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Margaret Shea Burnham, a commercial real estate attorney based in Greensboro, North Carolina, has earned the 2019 Julian Nexsen Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award for her outstanding dedication to pro bono efforts. Named for Julian Nexsen, this award was established to honor Mr. Nexsen's commitment to legal excellence and public service through pro bono.

Margaret has dedicated hundreds of hours, during the past 11 years, working with The Guilford County Teen Court, a local diversion program for youth offenders whose behavior constitutes a misdemeanor violation of the law and who are actively enrolled in an educational program. Youth are given the opportunity to have their charges dismissed, not acquire a juvenile record, and learn from their mistakes. This program, with the help of compassionate workers and volunteers like Margaret, has led youth offenders into understanding the consequences of their actions and learning about self and community responsibility. Guilford County Teen Court has been highly successful, with teens completing the program, clearing criminal charges, graduating high school, and going on to college or other training. Margaret's tireless pro bono efforts extend beyond Teen Court, as she has also provided her legal knowledge and real estate experience to support the St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, Inc. For over the past 15 years, Margaret has served as counsel and board member to the interfaith retreat center in Rockingham County, which also houses a peace and justice program.

Throughout 2019, many Nexsen Pruet attorneys devoted their time and experience to pro bono causes. The firm was proud to highlight several attorneys for their pro bono commitment including:

→ Jay DeVaney - Through his numerous pro bono services, Jay gives back to the Greensboro community in multiple, meaningful ways. Jay participates in the Pro Bono Disaster Legal Services for Legal Aid of North Carolina, where he has represented and fought for six persons whose homes were flooded by Hurricane Florence. His newest pro

bono effort is with the Bikes for Kids foundation, where Jay represents the national executive director. The program serves Title 1 elementary schools and gives bikes to third graders who participate in education challenges.

- Maressa Cuenca - Maressa hit the ground running with her pro bono efforts, dedicating her time and energy to South Carolina's Lighthouse for Life. The non-profit exists to educate people about the realities of human trafficking, the second largest criminal industry in the world today, and provides a safe environment for victims spiritual, physical, and emotional well being. Maressa works alongside the Lighthouse for Life staff giving legal advice on best employment-related practices.
- Brian Pearce - As a parent of a child on the autism spectrum and member of the Greensboro special needs community, Brian Pearce focuses his pro bono work on the The Down Syndrome Network of Greater Greensboro. The local non-profit is committed to enriching the lives of individuals with Down Syndrome by connecting and educating families and promoting awareness. Brian has provided the organization legal assistance with it's expansion into an inclusive recreation center that provides free therapies and social events.
- Norman W. Sherman - Few attorneys are as committed to their pro bono cases as Norman Sherman, who has been working on his for more than 35 years. Norman serves as counsel to a family that has lived on a coastal tract of North Carolina for nearly a century who are battling a Delaware Corporation that purchased quitclaim deeds as a speculative investment from two remote descendants of a common ancestor. The appeals have been discussed in CLE presentations, manuscripts and legal treatises.

## Pro bono work is a fundamental part of Nexsen Pruet's firm culture, just as Mr. Nexsen intended.

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*Margaret Shea Burnham is a member in Nexsen Pruet's Greensboro, North Carolina office, where she concentrates her practice on commercial real estate transactions and litigation. She is a Board Certified Specialist in Real Property Law: Business, Commercial and Industrial Transactions by the North Carolina State Bar.*

*Margaret is a recipient of the James E. Cross, Jr. Leadership Award from the North Carolina State Bar Board of Legal Specialization, an award given to a certified specialist who has taken an active leadership role in his or her practice area. Margaret is a leader in her community as well, having dedicated her time not only to the Guilford County Teen Court but also an interfaith retreat center. During the 15 year development of the St. Francis Springs Prayer Center she volunteered to assist with real estate matters and later took a position on the Board of Directors.*

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*Nexsen Pruet is an AM Law 200 Firm with more than 200 professionals in eight offices providing regional capabilities with international strengths.*