February 5, 2015

Day Pitney Honors Three Attorneys with Coleman Award for Exemplary Pro Bono Service

HARTFORD, Conn., February 5, 2015?-- Day Pitney LLP announced attorneys John W. Cerreta, Sara A. Colb and Jennifer E. Galiette as the 2015 Coleman Award winners in recognition of their exceptional commitment to pro bono work. The Coleman Awards are given by Day Pitney annually to lawyers at the firm whose commitment to pro bono and public service exemplify the best ideals of the legal profession and the legacy of Cyril Coleman, a former Day Pitney partner who served many public institutions and causes and was known for his dignity, common sense and integrity. The recipients received the awards in front of colleagues and friends at a firm-wide event held on Jan. 29, 2015.

Cerreta, a counsel in the Hartford office, was recognized for his pro bono work. John has tackled several significant pro bono representations over the last year. These include a federal civil rights action in which Day Pitney serves as appointed pro bono counsel, a pending immigration appeal that Cerreta recently argued in the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and a criminal appeal pending before the Connecticut Supreme Court.

Colb, an associate based in the Boston office, was selected for her work with the New England Innocence Project assisting prisoners seeking to establish their innocence through DNA testing and other investigative. In one case, Colb helped overturn the conviction of a defendant convicted of arson and murder on junk science in the 1980s. This defendant was released after spending over 30 years in prison. In another case, Colb assisted a defendant convicted of rape in the 1980s pursue his innocence claim, drafting several amicus briefs, both to the Massachusetts Appeals Court and the Supreme Judicial Court, arguing that newly discovered DNA evidence exonerated the defendant.

Galiette, a counsel in the Hartford office, was recognized for her pro bono work handling a multi-year case from Lawyers for Children America, where she represented three young children in neglect proceedings before the Connecticut juvenile courts. Since 2009, she has advocated for the best interest of these children through motions and hearings before the courts, the negotiation of open adoption agreements with the children's biological parents, and, ultimately, a trial to terminate parental rights due to neglect. Through her work, all three children were placed in welcoming pre-adoptive foster homes. Most recently, she handled the adoption two of the children by their foster mother and will handle the adoption of the third and youngest child by his foster family later this year.

In addition, the firm announced the winners of the First Annual Day Pitney Pro Bono Competition. The Pro Bono Competition pitted the partners and counsel at the firm against the associates and paralegals in a competition to determine which team had a higher participation rate in pro bono over the period July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014. The winning team, which turned out to be the Associates/Paralegals by a slim percentage, won the Cooper Cup, a trophy honoring the late Matthew J. Cooper, Esq., for his commitment to pro bono service. In addition to the Cooper Cup and bragging rights for the time being, the Associates/Paralegals team in Day Pitney's primary offices earned the right to select a local charity of their choice to receive a generous donation from the firm so that five different charities will benefit from the competition.

"The goal of the competition was to increase the number of attorneys and paralegals who participate in pro bono activities at the Firm," explained Paul R. Marino, Day Pitney's Pro Bono Committee Chair. "While it is a small sample size, early indications are positive. In fact, there was a 10% increase in participation during the six month competition as compared to the previous six months."