

5-8-2008

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Recommended Citation

Villarreal, Carlos, "GGU School of Law Honors Former Chapter President Allan Brotsky" (2008). *Articles About Faculty*. Paper 26.
<http://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/aboutfaculty/26>

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GGU School of Law Honors Former Chapter President Allan Brotsky



Professor Emeritus Allan Brotsky, a member of the faculty at Golden Gate University School of Law for nearly three decades and a luminary of the San Francisco Bay Area legal community, is the first recipient of the Allan Brotsky Pro Bono Award, presented on May 16 at the School of Law Commencement at the Nob Hill Masonic Center in San Francisco.

This new award recognizes outstanding pro bono work by law faculty and staff in the School of Law.

Professor Brotsky, who has specialized in litigation and dispute resolution, practiced law full-time for 35 years with Garry, Dreyfus, McTernan & Brotsky and other firms, and as a sole practitioner, before joining the Golden Gate faculty in 1979.

"I am deeply honored to have the newly established Pro Bono Award of our Law School given in my name," Brotsky said upon learning of the honor. At age 87 and still actively engaged in the San Francisco Bay Area legal community, he joked, "I understand a Longevity Award is also being considered."

Brotsky has handled a number of major cases pro bono on behalf of clients whose constitutional rights were being challenged, during the McCarthy era, the Johnson and Nixon administrations, and later. He first made his mark in his pioneering efforts to establish low-cost legal services for union members. Included among the many pro bono matters in which he has represented clients are cases involving the electoral process, in California and nationally; cases involving academic freedom; representation of witnesses before grand juries and congressional committees involving core questions of constitutionality; cases concerning the rights of conscientious objectors; cases arising out of the demonstrations at the Palace Hotel and on Auto Row in San Francisco during the civil rights era; cases challenging warrantless wiretapping; cases challenging the right of the Armed Services to base discharges on pre-induction political activities and not on the quality of active duty service; immigration cases; cases involving the rights of unions to refer their members to the union's attorneys; and representation of indigent clients in personal cases.

Brotsky served as president of the San Francisco chapter of the National Lawyers Guild from 1963 to 1965 and received the National Lawyers Guild Achievement Award in 1991. He has been an arbitrator for the San Francisco Judicial Arbitration Program, the American Arbitration Association, and the National Association of Securities Dealers' Dispute Resolution Program. He is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates and the California and New York state bars. His courses at Golden Gate have included Trial Advocacy and Civil Practice Clinic.

"Allan Brotsky personifies Golden Gate's proud tradition of public interest law and its commitment to expanding access to high-quality legal representation," says School of Law Dean Frederic White. "The Allan Brotsky Pro Bono Award celebrates Professor Brotsky's legacy of public service and begins a tradition of honoring other faculty and staff who provide legal assistance pro bono to those in need. We congratulate Allan on this new award."