

Wiley Honored by Council for Court Excellence with Justice Potter Stewart Award

February 26, 2021

Washington, DC – Wiley is among a select group of honorees who will receive a prestigious 2021 Justice Potter Stewart Award from the Council for Court Excellence, in recognition of the firm's significant contributions to the DC Compassionate Release Clearinghouse Project. Wiley, whose pro bono team responded immediately to help vulnerable inmates apply for "compassionate release" following the COVID-19 pandemic's onset, will be honored during the 24th Annual Justice Potter Stewart Award Virtual Gala on May 20.

The District of Columbia's emergency "compassionate release" statute was enacted in April 2020 to address the risks of exposure to COVID-19, and prevent its spread, in jails and prisons. The program allows individuals incarcerated in DC to apply for release if they meet certain criteria – including advanced age or health conditions that put them at high risk if they contract the virus. Recognizing the urgency of this effort, a small coalition quickly came together to collect and screen compassionate release applications, provide training and resources, and recruit lawyers to take DC compassionate release cases.

While hundreds of lawyers in the community have since taken on individual cases, a cohort of legal professionals at Wiley stepped up as leaders in this coalition effort and quickly began screening the hundreds of requests for representation that flooded in. Along with Wiley's other impactful pro bono efforts over the past year, the firm's lawyers and legal assistants have been committed to helping DC's compassionate release law succeed and providing counsel to vulnerable incarcerated individuals during this critical time. In addition to an extensive commitment to the applicant screening process, Wiley attorneys including Pro Bono Partner Theodore A.

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Howard and associates Hannah J. Miller, Ashley E. Bouchez, Vesna K. Haracsic-Yacsic, and Michael D. Faucette have taken on individual cases seeking the release of eligible prisoners.

The Justice Potter Stewart Award, named to honor the memory and public service of the late Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, was established in 1997 by the Council for Court Excellence (CCE). The Award recognizes individuals and organizations whose work on behalf of the administration of justice has made a significant contribution to the law, the legal system, the courts, or the administrative process in the nation's capital. Founded in 1982, the CCE's mission is to enhance the justice system in the District of Columbia to serve the public equitably.