

NEWS RELEASES

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# Husch Blackwell's Pro Bono Efforts Recognized by U.S. District Court, Federal Bar Association

*Husch Blackwell's Pro Bono Efforts Recognized by U.S. District Court, Federal Bar Association*

The United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois, in conjunction with the Chicago chapter of the Federal Bar Association, has named Husch Blackwell attorneys Patrick Coffey and Margaret Heitkamp as recipients of the 2018 Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service award for their work representing a plaintiff inmate who was assaulted by another inmate in an Illinois jail.

Initially, the plaintiff filed a lawsuit *pro se* seeking damages for injuries resulting from an assault by another inmate. Judge Matthew F. Kenelly ultimately appointed Coffey, as a member of the Trial Bar of the Northern District of Illinois, to represent the plaintiff. Through targeted discovery Coffey and Heitkamp uncovered a larger issue with the procedures and practices at the jail. The attorneys amended the client's complaint and prevailed in defending a dispositive motion on the new claims. In ruling, the court explicitly acknowledged that the novel theory underlying the claim against the county was sufficiently pled. The parties successfully resolved the case shortly thereafter.

Coffey, a Milwaukee- and Chicago-based partner on Husch Blackwell's Healthcare, Life Sciences & Education industry team, has more than 30 years of experience representing individuals and organizations in a wide variety of investigations and enforcement matters. His practice is focused on criminal, civil and administrative proceedings and the defense of claims under the False Claims Act, including *qui tam* whistleblower actions.

Heitkamp is an associate in Husch Blackwell's Milwaukee office. She is licensed in Wisconsin and Illinois, and is a member of the General Bar of the Northern District of Illinois. During law school, she worked as a law intern in the Northern District of Illinois and at the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Heitkamp has a deep involvement and personal interest in public-interest law and public policy. She served as executive editor of the *Journal of Law and Social Policy* and worked as a student lawyer in the MacArthur Justice Center of Northwestern Law's Bluhm Legal Clinic. She has continued that interest through her work on cases at Husch Blackwell.

The award will be presented at the Nineteenth Annual Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service Award Ceremony on Tuesday, May 1, 2018, at 3:00 p.m. in the James B. Parsons Memorial Courtroom, Room 2525, of the Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse, 219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago. The keynote speaker will be Kip Bollin, President of the Federal Bar Association.