

FIRM NEWS

SRZ Announces 2014 Brooks Burdette Pro Bono Awardees

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SRZ is proud to announce the recipients of the 2014 Brooks Burdette Pro Bono Awards, which recognize public interest organizations that work on behalf of the poor or otherwise engage a public policy issue to which the firm devotes substantial pro bono time. The firm has selected Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding to receive the 2014 Brooks Burdette Pro Bono Award and the New York Civil Liberties Union to receive the Brooks Burdette Fellowship. The Tanenbaum Center is a secular, non-sectarian nonprofit that promotes mutual respect with practical programs that bridge religious difference and combat prejudice in schools, workplaces, health care settings and areas of armed conflict. The NYCLU is one of the nation's foremost defenders of civil liberties and civil rights.

The SRZ Brooks Burdette Pro Bono Awards recognize that while public service organizations often honor individuals and groups at their annual dinners, the organizations themselves should be honored too for their enormous contributions to the betterment of society. The awards are presented annually at SRZ's Pro Bono Award Ceremony, which celebrates the work of attorneys who devoted more than 50 hours to pro bono projects. In 2009 the firm created the Brooks Burdette Pro Bono Award and the Brooks Burdette Fellowship in honor of the late litigation partner who was a long-time chair of the Pro Bono Committee and whose commitment to public interest work while at the firm was exemplary. Brooks was a board member of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and was the first chair of the Board of Democracy Prep, a Harlem charter school. He played a key role in the landmark case of

McWaters v. Federal Emergency Management Agency, a 2005 New Orleans federal court action that successfully challenged the eviction from temporary housing of tens of thousands of families left homeless after Hurricane Katrina. A native of Hogansville, Ga., Brooks earned his bachelor's degree from Wofford College and his law degree from Harvard Law School in 1986. He was admitted to practice in New York that year and made partner 10 years later. He passed away suddenly on May 13, 2009 at age 47.

To view the *New York Law Journal's* coverage of the ceremony, please [click here](#).