

THE PRO BONO

PROGRAM

*Making a Difference
for Ten Years*

McConnell
Valdés LLC 

A Message from McV's Managing Director and the Chair of the Pro Bono Committee



Ten years ago, we established the McConnell Valdés Pro Bono Program to honor the firm's 60th anniversary and our legacy of giving back to our community. Today, as we celebrate the program's 10th anniversary, it remains the only institutionalized pro bono program in Puerto Rico.

We are a law firm dedicated to excellence in service and to the meaningful improvement of the communities in which we live and work. The McConnell Valdés Pro Bono Program embodies our belief that, as lawyers, we share a responsibility to provide free legal services to people and entities that cannot afford to pay for them. In accepting this responsibility, we put our talent and dedication to work on a variety of legal matters that ultimately benefit – and improve – our communities.

We are proud that during the program's first ten years, we have donated more than 10,600 hours, with an estimated value of more than \$2 million, in pro bono legal services to more than 60 not-for-profit organizations ranging from art museums to environmental education start-ups. During this time, more than 300 entities have also benefited from our seminars on topics related to tax exemption and governance issues of not-for-profit organizations.

We have not done it alone. We are pleased to partner and collaborate with the Puerto Rico Community Foundation, the United Way of Puerto Rico, and the Fundación Ángel Ramos, their member organizations and grantees, and other not-for-profits that serve people of limited means, to provide a full range of transactional and legal advisory services.

Our commitment has grown stronger with each passing year: from 2006 to 2016, we saw a 133 percent increase in the number of hours worked under the McConnell Valdés Pro Bono Program, with 78 percent of our attorneys and 89 percent of our paralegals participating in the program. As our program enters its second decade, we look forward to continuing to serve the public good.

We are honored to share highlights from the McConnell Valdés Pro Bono Program's first decade in this report.

Arturo J. García-Solá, Managing Director

Antonio Escudero-Viera, Chair, Pro Bono Committee

OUR STORY:

Making A Difference in Puerto Rico



In 1946, attorneys Herbert McConnell and Adolfo “Wally” Valdés founded McConnell Valdés. They envisioned a different breed of law firm: one that would be a leader in meeting our valued clients’ needs and in making a difference by contributing time and talent to a better Puerto Rico.

The McV Pro Bono Program is Woven into the Fabric of the Firm

From the start, we have believed that it is our social responsibility, as a law firm, to provide pro bono legal services to not-for-profit entities serving people of limited means. We formalized this commitment in 2006, when we honored the firm’s 60th anniversary by establishing the McConnell Valdés Pro Bono Program. Our goal: to help non-profits achieve the potential to strengthen and empower the communities that they serve.

Ten years later, ours is the only institutionalized program of its kind in Puerto Rico.

Our counsel on tax exemptions, corporate governance, contracts, and employment matters ensures that Puerto Rico continues to have stable and robust organizations dedicated to improving our communities and our lives.

We are proud to celebrate a decade of making a difference in Puerto Rico: during our first ten years, we have donated more than \$2 million in free legal services. We value our productive partnerships with the Puerto Rico Community Foundation, United Way of Puerto Rico, and the Fundación Ángel Ramos, their member organizations and grantees, and other not-for-profit groups serving people with limited means.

And we are especially proud of our attorneys, Summer Associates, and paralegals who make such a tremendous difference in the lives of others by participating in the program.

THE McV PRO BONO PROGRAM *A Decade of Success*



Building Strong Communities

Puerto Rico Community Foundation

When the Community Investment Fund was formed by the Puerto Rico Community Foundation to provide non-profit organizations with investment capital, we provided pro bono legal assistance to the Puerto Rico Community Foundation by drafting the Fund's governing documents.

This type of investment fund finances community economic development and housing development projects spearheaded by non-profit organizations. It also provides loans to micro-enterprises that fuel economic development in communities with limited means.

Supporting Puerto Rico Arts and Culture

Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico

We have assisted the Museum with a wide range of legal matters touching on everything from corporate governance, and real estate, to fundraising, commercial contracts, and sponsorships.

Since its founding in 2000, the Museum has been home to the most important and encyclopedic visual arts collection in Puerto Rico. Located in San Juan's Santurce neighborhood, the Museo serves as a major cultural center not only for this resurgent community but also for Puerto Rico.

With our help, in 2013, the Museum became the second museum in Puerto Rico to be accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.



This accreditation enhances the Museo's reputation and ability not only to borrow works of art, but also to host international traveling art exhibitions.

A case in point: in 2016, the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico was selected as a venue for the critically acclaimed "Impressionism and the Caribbean: Francisco Oller and His Transatlantic World," organized by the Brooklyn Museum. This traveling exhibit presented the works of 19th century Puerto Rican master Francisco Oller beside the works of European Impressionists – many of which were exhibited in Puerto Rico for the first time.

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico

Located in the heart of Santurce, the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico, or MAC, is home to a noteworthy and growing collection of contemporary Puerto Rican art.

The McV Pro Bono Program has provided MAC with legal advice and assistance on matters ranging from reviews of its employee manual and sponsorship agreements to counsel on Department of Treasury licenses in connection with fundraising events.

Fundación por la Arquitectura de Puerto Rico

Our pro bono efforts have strengthened the Fundación por la Arquitectura de Puerto Rico by opening new avenues for funding and program creation.

Created by the College of Architects and Landscape Architects of Puerto Rico, the Fundación serves the Puerto Rico community and architecture profession by fostering awareness of the value of architecture and landscape architecture, through guided architectural tours and educational programs from its historic Santurce home.

We have helped the Fundación support its mission by reviewing and revising corporate documents that enabled it to become an independent affiliate of the College of Architects and Landscape Architects. In this capacity, the Fundación is able to raise additional funding for educational programs.

Educating Puerto Rico Youth

Politécnico Amigó

Established in 1999, Politécnico Amigó is a non-profit organization that promotes an alternative education for teen boys and young men aged 16 to 21 who have left school.

Politécnico Amigó, which is located in Santurce, offers vocational and educational programs that encourage young men to pursue their GEDs and/or the vocational training that can help them land jobs.

We helped Politécnico Amigó obtain its federal tax exemption under section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. This tax exemption will both give Politécnico Amigó access to funding from U.S.-based foundations and corporations and also make it eligible for federal grants.



Promoting STEM Education

EcoExploratorio: Museo de Ciencias de Puerto Rico

The McV Pro Bono Program, through its assistance to EcoExploratorio, is helping to promote STEM – science, technology, engineering, and math – education in Puerto Rico.

EcoExploratorio was established in 2010 by a group of committed scientists and educators hoping to build a place where children and families can come together, to learn to explore, understand, and protect our natural environment through innovative interactive exhibits and educational films.

From the start, we collaborated with EcoExploratorio. Our attorneys helped obtain a 501(c) (3) federal tax exemption in record time and worked to revise its corporate governance documents. We assisted with the review of the EcoExploratorio’s Memorandum of Understanding with the Government Development Bank for Puerto Rico, which awarded a significant initial grant to EcoExploratorio. We also advised EcoExploratorio with respect to the Letter of Intent executed with the Puerto Rico Convention Center District Authority in relation to the parcel of land where the museum’s permanent home will be built.

While the EcoExploratorio raises funds to build a permanent home in the Puerto Rico Convention Center District, Oceánica, its first successful interactive exhibit, has been installed in a temporary space at a major San Juan shopping mall. EcoExploratorio’s popular exhibit gives Puerto Ricans a preview of the many projects and programs that will be forthcoming to enrich STEM education for Puerto Rican youth.

Protecting Puerto Rico’s Coastal Environment

Fundación Legado Azul

The not-for-profit organization Fundación Legado Azul was established by concerned citizens and scientists wishing to protect the Puerto Rico ocean environment and coastline through research, education, and “blue” community initiatives.

The Fundación, together with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources, established the Puerto Rico Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) System, which promotes sport and commercial fishing in designated areas on the north and east coasts of the island by using a system of buoys that increase fishing yields while reducing fuel consumption.

The first buoy was deployed in 2015 and additional buoys have since been deployed that help fishermen in nearby communities increase their yields without having to travel further from the coast – thereby reducing the fishermen’s fuel costs, while also promoting sport fishing in Puerto Rico.

Since the Fundación’s inception in 2011, McV attorneys have helped it by drafting corporate governance documents and working to obtain tax exemptions under Puerto Rico and U.S. laws.

THE McV PRO BONO PROGRAM

*The First 10 Years
by the Numbers*



300
institutions served



133% increase
from 409 in FY 2006 to 951
in FY 2016 – in number
of pro bono hours worked



78% of our attorneys
have contributed time and talent
to the Program

\$2,056,983 worth of free legal services



10,600+
pro bono
hours
donated



15+ attorneys
recognized for working 25 hours
or more on pro bono matters in
the last 10 years

Our Clients

We have provided our pro bono clients with counsel on:

Administrative law

Contracts

Corporate matters, including corporate governance issues

Labor and employment matters

Real estate

Tax matters, including federal and Puerto Rico tax exemptions

Our Partners and Collaborators

United Way of Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico Community Foundation

Fundación Ángel Ramos

Law for Change/Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation

Asesores Financieros Comunitarios

Organizations That the Pro Bono Program Has Served in These 10 Years:

Academia Puertorriqueña de la Jurisprudencia • Alianza Arte Santurce • Asesores Financieros Comunitarios • Asociación de Fomento Educativo • Asociación de la Distrofia Muscular • Asociación de Padres de la Academia la Milagrosa • Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico • Banco de Alimentos de Puerto Rico • Boys & Girls Club of Puerto Rico • Cáritas de Puerto Rico • Centro para Envejecientes Shalom • Centro para la Nueva Economía • Centro para Puerto Rico – Fundación Sila M. Calderón • Centro Providencia Loíza • Centro Renacer • Centros Sor Isolina Ferré • Colegio San Ignacio de Loyola • Corporación para la Conservación del Estuario de la Bahía de San Juan • EcoExploratorio • Escuela de Artes Plásticas • Fideicomiso Olímpico • Fideicomiso para la Escuela de Derecho de la Universidad de Puerto Rico • Fondos Unidos de Puerto Rico • Friends of the Community of Humacao • Fundación Ángel Ramos • Fundación Comunitaria de Puerto Rico • Fundación García Rinaldi • Fundación Hospital Pediátrico • Fundación Jimmy Iván Olsen • Fundación Legado Azul • Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín • Fundación Mayagüez 2010 • Fundación por la Arquitectura • Grameen America • Hogar Abrazo de Amor • Hogar de Envejecientes Irma Fe Pol Méndez • Hogar del Niño • Hogar Nuestra Señora de la Providencia • Hogar Padre Venard • Hogar Santa María de Los Ángeles • Iglesia Centro Cristiano Vida Abundante • Jane Stern Community Library • Jardín Botánico de Caguas • La Fondita de Jesús • Law For Change / Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation • Make-A-Wish Foundation • Monteclaro • Museo de Arte Contemporáneo • Museo de Arte de Ponce • Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico • Parroquia Stella Maris • Politécnico Amigó • Proyecto Enlace del Caño Martín Peña • Puerto Rico Center For Social Concerns • Raiders Baseball • Rebuilding Together • Red de Fundaciones / Fundación Ángel Ramos • Scuba Dogs Society • SER de Puerto Rico • Susan G. Komen for the Cure – Puerto Rico

THANK YOU

*We couldn't do it
without you*

It takes more than good intentions to succeed. It takes commitment and dedication and hard work. We would like to thank our attorneys and staff who have so selflessly contributed their time and talents to the success of the McV Pro Bono Program – and to helping those in need.

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