

The Pro Bono Spotlight features attorneys chosen by the Texas Access to Justice Commission or the State Bar of Texas for their exceptional commitment to pro bono work. Find pro bono opportunities, support, and inspiration at [probonotexas.org](http://probonotexas.org).

## Gary KRUPKIN

EVEN GOING BACK TO HIS CHILDHOOD, GARY KRUPKIN HAS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THE VALUE OF OFFERING A HELPING HAND. AS A BOY, HE OBSERVED HOW HIS FATHER, A PHYSICIAN, WOULD OFFER HIS EXPERTISE FREE OF CHARGE TO THOSE IN HIS COMMUNITY WHO COULD NOT AFFORD MEDICAL CARE, AND IT STRUCK A CHORD. INSPIRED BY HIS FATHER'S EXAMPLE, KRUPKIN IMMEDIATELY BEGAN WORKING PRO BONO CASES AFTER HE BECAME A TEXAS-LICENSED ATTORNEY IN 1994. THE *TEXAS BAR JOURNAL* CAUGHT UP WITH THE DALLAS-BASED ATTORNEY TO DISCUSS HIS EXPERIENCE IN THE PRO BONO WORLD.

INTERVIEW BY **WILL KORN**  
PHOTO COURTESY OF **GARY KRUPKIN**



### **WHAT KIND OF PRO BONO WORK DO YOU DO AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING IT?**

I've been representing clients on a pro bono basis since the day I was admitted to the bar—July 15, 1994. I've taken on pro bono representation in a variety of cases, including criminal defense, family law, and most recently, in First Amendment free speech cases. But, if somebody needs my help in other areas, I will either give it a try or find somebody who can assist.

### **WHY IS PRO BONO WORK IMPORTANT TO YOU?**

When I was a child, I learned the importance of sharing with others from my father, a physician. He would give freely of his

time in offering medical services to nursing homes and patients that could not afford a physician. Every Thursday, he would attend patients in nursing homes and, in old-school fashion, do house calls. Notably, Thursday was his “day off.” He actually did house calls until he was 87. I asked him if he charged for these services, and he said that he did not. Of course, being inquisitive, I asked, “Why?” His answer was simple, but I really didn't understand it at 7 years old. He said, “The more you give away, the more you get back.” Worthy words from a man who lived a most worthy life.

### **HOW WOULD YOU SAY HANDLING PRO BONO WORK HAS BENEFITED YOUR LAW CAREER?**

Even though many pro bono clients could not afford legal services, they remembered me in ways that paid far more than the services I rendered. You never know how rich you are until a family you've helped rings your doorbell and gives you a platter of cookies.

### **WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO AN ATTORNEY WHO IS CONSIDERING DOING PRO BONO FOR THE FIRST TIME?**

I'd give her or him the same advice my father gave me: “The more you give away, the more you get back.”

### **IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PRO BONO WORK?**

Many attorneys feel that simply because they have a professional degree, they are somehow entitled to monetary compensation for everything they do with that degree. Honestly, your degree entitles you to nothing other than to serve your fellow citizens. Service comes in many forms and fashions and not always with a price tag, no matter what the senior partners in your firm may say.

### **HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR TIME BETWEEN YOUR NORMAL WORK AND PRO BONO WORK?**

There is always time to lift up your fellow man with a helping hand.

### **GARY WOULD LIKE TO SHARE A LITTLE STORY.**

When I was growing up, we kept a lamp lit in a front window. I always thought this was to keep burglars away, thinking that they would conclude somebody was awake in the house and pass up our house. One day, I asked my father the reason he lit that light every evening. He said he lit that light so that people who were in trouble knew they could knock on the door and somebody would answer to assist them. I still keep a lamp lit in our house every night. **TBJ**

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