BERGER SINGERMAN
FLORIDA'S BUSINESS LAW FIRM

PRO BONO

Berger Singerman is committed to giving back to our community. A big part of that is giving back to the communities in which we practice in the form of pro bono leadership and counsel.

When individuals or not-for-profit corporations become our pro bono clients, they become clients of the firm. Berger Singerman attorneys commit to the same team approach and timely delivery of passionate client service. Some representative examples of the ways we help clients pro bono include:

- Because of changing economics and politics, a well-respected museum had decided to close. The museum wanted help determining the best course for a wind-down and orderly liquidation of its remaining assets. The organization's leadership approached Berger Singerman based on our experience and knowledge in these areas and our reputation and willingness to handle the matter pro bono. We helped the nonprofit through the statutory wind-down process and negotiated with creditors to maximize the value of its assets.
- Berger Singerman represented a client pro bono in a precedent-setting appeal. The case arose out of In re *Scantling*, where a creditor objected to a Chapter 13 debtor's proposed "strip off" of its lien on the grounds that the debtor had filed for Chapter 7 relief and obtained discharge less than four years prior to commencement of the Chapter 13 case, making the debtor ineligible for Chapter 13 discharge. In *Scantling*, the judge held that a debtor's eligibility for discharge is not prerequisite to the debtor's ability to "strip off" a wholly unsecured junior mortgage in a Chapter 13 case and a "strip off" would become permanent only on the debtor's completion of the plan.
- The Miami City Commission found itself blocked by a potentially costly conflict of interest. The City Attorney could not ethically give the Commission a legal opinion about payment of the Mayor's legal fees in the Mayor's defense of a lawsuit filed by a sitting City Commissioner. The city was in the process of negotiating with other law firms on a retainer basis for a third-party legal opinion. Berger Singerman offered our experience on a pro-bono basis in corporate governance and providing the much-needed opinion.
- Berger Singerman represented The Florida Bar in connection with an appeal to the Florida Supreme Court. Attorneys briefed and argued the homestead exemption issue of the case Osborne v. DuMoulin. The Court concurred, holding that where a debtor in bankruptcy elects not to claim the homestead exemption and the trustee's administration of the bankruptcy estate is not otherwise obstructed by the existence of the homestead exemption, the debtor does not receive the benefits of the Florida homestead exemption and may claim the personal property exemption of $4,000.00.
- Berger Singerman has represented numerous individuals in individual personal bankruptcy filings, and in various litigation and real estate matters.

Pro Bono Leadership

Our lawyers regularly support universities and other organizations offering pro bono legal assistance. This has included:

- Leading the free monthly Pro Se bankruptcy clinic in Miami,

- Serving on the leadership of the Florida Bar Foundations and other law-related boards and commissions, and
- Participating in the University of Miami pro bono project, where lawyers met pro bono with not-for-profit organizations.

Our lawyers are active members of the Miami Pro Bono Round Table, a group of law firms dedicated to furthering the involvement of private bar attorneys in pro bono legal services. We have also advised the Florida Venture Forum about its involvement with emerging business and capital formations of indigent clients and represented dependent children as guardian ad litem.

In addition to representing a variety of clients on a pro bono basis, our lawyers also serve as directors and officers of various groups dedicated to pro bono legal assistance. These include Dade Legal Aid Pro Bono Committee, Legal Services of Greater Miami, Pro Bono Committee of the Florida Bar Business Law Section, Florida Bar's Chief Justice's Advisory Committee for the 2012 Tobias Simon Pro Bono Awards, Legal Services of North Florida, and Broward County Pro Bono Services Committee of the Bankruptcy Bar Association.