

# LAWYERS ALLIANCE FOR NEW YORK

## INDIVIDUAL HONOREE

**MICHAEL CAMPION MILLER**, *Steptoe & Johnson LLP*

### ***Pro Bono Team Leadership Evident in Quality Guidance to Family Services Organization***

Michael Campion Miller is co-managing partner of Steptoe & Johnson LLP's New York office. He received an A.B. from Boston College in 1982 and his J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center in 1985.

Due to their complex or sensitive nature, some cases are more difficult to place with volunteer counsel. These cases are often important to a nonprofit's viability and stability, and require a special volunteer. One such volunteer is Michael Campion Miller, who, along with Steptoe partner Evan Glassman and associate Lisa Sandoval, provided **Forestdale**, a child welfare and family services agency headquartered in Queens, with assistance during a highly publicized incident that could have had devastating consequences for the agency.

Four years ago the parents of eight siblings in foster care absconded with them during a visit at Forestdale, touching off a multi-state police search before the children were located and returned to foster care. Forestdale required immediate legal assistance with securing insurance coverage, conducting an internal investigation, and responding to child welfare regulators. In addition, the parents sued Forestdale for allegedly creating the situation. Forestdale needed to fight the lawsuit and defend the agency's reputation. Executive Director Anstiss Agnew turned to Lawyers Alliance for assistance.

Mr. Miller visited Forestdale on his way out of town on a holiday weekend, taking the time to talk with the children instead of just interviewing them. By sitting on the floor, he was able to engage and connect. When the parents filed suit, Mr. Miller appeared in Supreme Court on several occasions. Despite the amount of time he put into this case, Mr. Miller declined compensation offered by the insurance carrier and insisted on providing his services pro bono. Even after all threats of litigation and adverse actions by regulatory authorities had subsided, he asked Lawyers Alliance to keep the matter open for several months so that he could remain available to answer any lingering questions. More recently, Mr. Miller investigated and resolved a sensitive internal matter for Forestdale, preserving valuable city contracts in the process. Today Forestdale is a vital resource for over 1,000 families in crisis in Queens.

Ms. Agnew says, "Mike has been Forestdale's guardian angel. He took the time to get to know the agency and the family involved. His commitment, integrity, and wit were instrumental in putting this case to rest and allowing us to focus on our work with families in crisis."

Says Mr. Miller, "It is an honor to receive the Lawyers Alliance Cornerstone Award for the work my Steptoe colleagues and I performed on behalf of New York City's finest foster care agency, Forestdale. At Steptoe, we think pro bono representations are an essential part of an attorney's life. There are few things we do as lawyers that are as personally enriching."

