

# LAWYERS ALLIANCE FOR NEW YORK

## INDIVIDUAL HONOREE

**REX L. NISWANDER**, *Morrison & Foerster LLP*

***Counsel shares crucial immigration knowledge with a dozen nonprofits serving New York City***

While nonprofits often seek to attract international talent to support their missions and operations, the complex United States immigration system can appear to be an insurmountable barrier. However, a pro bono attorney who takes the time to walk clients through the variety of available visa options can open the door to valuable staffing opportunities. Since 2010, Rex L. Niswander has stepped into this role by sharing his employment and immigration knowledge with 12 nonprofit clients, ultimately enabling these organizations to hire and keep instrumental team members. For example, Mr. Niswander's assistance has enabled an arts organization to obtain an O visa for a talented young dancer and allowed an environmental justice organization to renew an employee's H-1B1 visa. Mr. Niswander's pro bono clients have repeatedly praised his attentiveness and accessibility, attributes that are key when navigating such a thorny area of the law.

***Q. How and why did you first become involved with Lawyers Alliance?***

I do not remember the first time I was involved with Lawyers Alliance, but it must be more than 10 years ago. As I recall, I was on your mailing list and saw a case that looked appropriate for me.

***Q. Share a tip for making time for pro bono.***

I would say the best way to make time for pro bono is to choose a law firm that encourages it. For example, Morrison & Foerster actively encourages pro bono and treats it on a par with billable work, so I never feel a need to "make time"; it's just part of my job.

***Q. Share a fun or unexpected moment from pro bono work through Lawyers Alliance.***

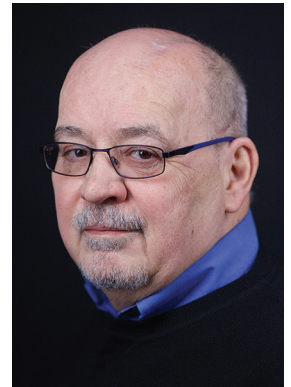
I have had many unexpected pleasures doing pro bono work. Once a pro bono immigration client came to my office to introduce me to her newborn baby, the first person in her family to be born in the United States. Another pro bono client, a concert pianist, became one of my closest friends.

***Q. What's the most rewarding aspect of pro bono work?***

Legal immigration is difficult and virtually impossible without the assistance of a lawyer. Many groups and individuals are unable to pay an immigration lawyer. It gives me great satisfaction to be able to help without charging a fee. And of course the clients almost invariably tell me how grateful they are, which is a pleasure in itself.

*"Rex advised us and helped guide us through two different H1-B matters, including for a current, valued staffer. We were very satisfied – Rex was expert, thoughtful, and accessible. He was a great asset and advisor for us. Rex's impact has been positive for NYC-EJA, as his expertise has helped guide staffing strategies for us."*

— Eddie Bautista  
*Executive Director,  
New York City Environmental Justice Alliance*



**Employment:**

*Morrison & Foerster LLP  
Of Counsel, Employment  
& Labor*

**Graduate of:**

*Columbia Law School*

**Lawyers Alliance clients:**

*B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga  
Association of Greater  
New York  
Chalkbeat  
Children of Promise, NYC  
Committee for Hispanic  
Children and Families  
Global Language Project  
Interfaith Center on  
Corporate Responsibility  
KowTeff School of African  
Dance  
New York City  
Environmental Justice  
Alliance  
New York Theatre Ballet  
Raga Massive  
Single Stop USA  
Southwest Brooklyn  
Industrial Development  
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