

Pro Bono Spotlight Jonathan Jennings

After first considering a career as a history professor or archaeologist, **Jonathan Jennings**, of Chicago, Illinois, USA, looked to the law as a means of interacting more with people and the community while also focusing on scholarship. Soon after graduating law school, Jonathan entered the area of intellectual property law at Pattishall, McAuliffe, Newbury, Hilliard & Geraldson LLP, where he is now a partner.

Jonathan enjoys working on a variety of pro bono dispute resolution and transactional matters, including many relating to trademark, copyright and domain name laws. He has drafted legislation and spoken out in support of trademark law and has led both individuals and organizations to better protect their intellectual property. Specifically, Jonathan has helped Family & Children's Aid (a provider of psychiatric and counseling services to abused and neglected children in Connecticut) protect its trademarks, logos and domain names and avoid conflicts with other not-for-profit organizations. In addition, Jonathan helped register the mark HOOP HEROES for an organization that hosts charity fundraising events involving hula hoops. Jonathan also supervises trademark maintenance issues for the Journal of Ordinary Thought, a literary publication for poets and authors from underserved communities, and provides counseling to the Chicago Bar Association on trademark and copyright issues.



Jonathan has also worked with **Lawyers for the Creative Arts (LCA)**, a legal aid organization based in Chicago that provides free legal service to financially eligible clients in all areas of the arts, including copyright and trademark law. Jonathan's involvement began in the early 1990s, when, in affiliation with LCA, his firm participated in seminars for artists and musicians to educate them about their rights.

As one of his first projects, Jonathan prepared a license agreement for an art student to protect the student's rights. Most recently, Jonathan successfully resolved an LCA matter involving copyright and false attribution claims brought by a San Francisco-based painter, Janet Seifert, against a recording artist in Chicago. The recording artist had used Janet's artwork without permission in connection with the distribution of his music online and had claimed it as his own. "LCA and Jonathan's assistance was, in the end, the only way to stop the infringement and also handle the recording artist," says Janet. "Jonathan informed me of what was actually legally possible to do, including using the Digital Millennium [Copyright] Act to have the image removed from over forty websites. I would describe my experience with LCA/Jonathan as simply excellent from start to finish."

Jonathan has also handled non-IP pro bono cases. For example, Jonathan represented Eric Walker, who was, at the time, a prisoner at the Taylorville Correctional Center. Walker filed a petition to proceed in forma pauperis (a request to a court to waive filing fees to allow an indigent person to proceed), attached to which was his pro se complaint. Walker alleged claims against the correctional facility, drug program, warden, drug program counselor and correctional counselor that arose from alleged sexual assault, retaliation and unfair discipline. Although the district court recognized that Walker was indigent, the complaint was dismissed as frivolous. Jonathan argued the case on appeal to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Seventh Circuit reversed the district court's decision and held that the inmate's sexual assault allegations against the correctional counselor were sufficient, for purposes of the in forma pauperis statute. *Walker v. Taylorville Correctional Center*, 129 F.3d 410 (7th Cir. 1997). The opinion, written by Judge Wood, begins with the line: "Sexual harassment does not necessarily occur only when a man harasses a woman, as Eric Walker's allegations illustrate." The Seventh Circuit's decision has been cited by 46 courts and 18 secondary sources. For Jonathan, the case provided a chance to try something different and add to his appellate experience.

Not surprisingly, Jonathan has been recognized by his peers and the organizations to which he has devoted countless hours of volunteering. Jonathan devotes his remaining free time to coaching youth baseball and acting as a "professional car pool driver" for his kids.

Author: **Sarah Dale**, McDonald's Corporation, Oak Brook, Illinois, USA
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