



PRO BONO PROFILE: MEET ALAN GOLDFARB

The great Aristotle once said, "Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts." Alan Goldfarb's moral excellence comes from a long-time commitment to pro bono on his quest for justice.

As a third-year student, Alan participated in a human rights fellowship with the Center for Applied Legal Studies in South Africa. After graduation, Alan joined a corporate law firm and, like all young lawyers, focused on developing his practice. Although there was little spare time, he accepted a pro bono asylum case. Little did he know that it would influence his professional direction in unexpected ways.

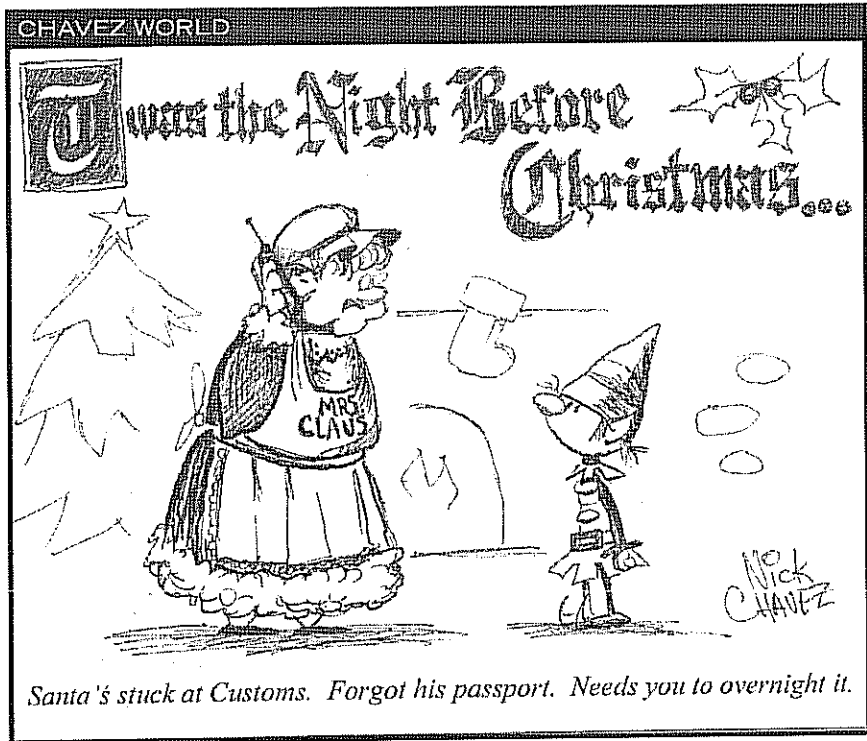
Initially, the experience provided Alan with the satisfaction of working with a "person." Over time, it helped him develop case management skills that left him at ease in accepting responsibility.

"As a corporate lawyer, I gained more responsibility with experience, but working as a pro bono attorney on asylum cases helped me gain a sense of professional responsibility earlier," said Alan. "Taking that responsibility helped me to develop as a lawyer."

Alan also discovered a new passion in immigration law. His commitment to refugee and asylee issues led him to volunteer one day a week with the Asylum Law Project at the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Through this experience, Alan met AILA members who shared his passion for service; this prompted him to become an immigration attorney in 1997.

As an AILA member, Alan continues to give. He has served as the Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter chair, and is currently an ambassador for the American Immigration Law Foundation. Alan also continues to volunteer with Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. He notes, "I learned that satisfaction wasn't so much in winning as in working with the client, staying with them, guiding them."

Alan's commitment provides a ray of hope to those hidden behind bars. His pro bono services have enabled dozens of asylees to move forward with new lives. Alan meets with former clients on a regular basis, including a head soccer coach at a local high school, a successful business woman who serves other immigrants, and a woman with whom Alan annually celebrates his birthday. Thanks to Alan, she has another year to celebrate.



commissions. For example, the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission invited Minnesota Advocates to monitor Peru's recovery from more than 20 years of violence and repression. The commission credits Minnesota Advocates for empowering the widows and mothers to find their voices after suffering indescribable crimes in silence for decades.

Recognizing that human rights abroad can have little meaning if human rights are not respected at home, Minnesota Advocates regularly works on national human rights issues in the United States. In fact, Minnesota Advocates has published recommendations to ensure immigrant women are safe from domestic abuse.

To develop its recommendations, Minnesota Advocates used international human rights methods to investigate and document immigrant women's experiences in obtaining protection from domestic violence and accessing legal, medical, and other services in the United States. Working