

June 2, 2013

By e-mail only –
nominations@lgbtbar.org

Nominating Committee – 40 Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40: Class of 2013
The National LGBT Bar Association
1301 K Street, Suite 1100 East Tower
Washington D.C. 20005

Re: Nomination of Laura E. Nelson

To Whom It May Concern:

In 2012, Minnesota became the first state to defeat an anti-marriage equality amendment at the ballot box. And six months later Minnesota became the first Midwestern state to pass marriage equality through the legislature. This was a difficult, expensive, and exhausting effort. What isn't difficult is presenting Laura Nelson to you for recognition as one of the 40 Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40.

I have had the pleasure and good fortune to work closely with Laura on many matters – and I have attached her resume – but I commend her to you in particular for her work as pro bono counsel to Minnesotans United for All Families. More important than any seasoned first-hand perspective I could offer, however, is the praise and appreciation of clients. Attached please find a letter in support from Ann Kaner Roth (executive director of Project 515, a state-wide equality organization, and a co-founder of Minnesotans United) and a letter in support from Richard Carlbom (campaign manager of Minnesotans United). They have said all that I would say, but better.

One of the couples who will get their marriage license this week is Laura and her partner, Kelly. We can hope that their adorable children won't really have a memory of a time when their mothers weren't full citizens of the state they have always called home. And we can thank Laura, among many others, for that.

Sincerely,


Bruce D. Manning

**Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40: Class of 2013
Nomination Form**

Nominee Information

Name: LAURA E. NELSON Date of Birth: 11.29.1979
Title: ASSOCIATE Firm/Organization: ROBINS, KAPLAN, MILLER & CIRESI LLP
Mailing Address: 800 LASALLE AVE., STE 2800 City, State Zip: MINNEAPOLIS MN 55402
Phone Number: 612 349 0986 Email Address: LENELSON@RKMC.COM

Nominator Information

Name: BRUCE D. MANNING
Title: COUNSEL Firm/Organization: ROBINS, KAPLAN, MILLER & CIRESI LLP
Mailing Address: 800 LASALLE AVE., STE 2800 City, State Zip: MINNEAPOLIS MN 55402
Phone Number: 612 349 8466 Email Address: BDMANNING@RKMC.COM
Relationship to Nominee: SUPERVISOR? PEER? FRIEND? ALL OF THE ABOVE!

Optional: To your knowledge, does the nominee identify as any of the following?

☐ Racial or Ethnic Minority ☒ Female ☐ Transgender
☐ Person with Disability ☐ Other: _____

The complete nomination package must be submitted via email to nominations@LGBTbar.org **no later than 5:00 pm EDT on June 3, 2013**. Please submit the following information:

- Nomination Form
- Statement of Support of Nominee (not to exceed 2 pages). Please include:
 - Details on achievements within their legal field
 - Details on their commitment to LGBT equality
- Current Resume of the Nominee
- Letters of Support

LAURA E. NELSON

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P.

Associate (May 2007 to Present)

- Diverse litigation and counseling experience representing plaintiffs and defendants ranging from individuals to Fortune 50 companies in complex trademark, trade secret, false advertising, unfair competition, defamation, and business litigation matters.
- Experience in all stages of litigation from client development through appeal, including evaluating cases, counseling clients, designing litigation strategies, managing and running discovery, defending and taking depositions, briefing and arguing dispositive and nondispositive motions, working with experts, resolving cases through settlement, mediation, and arbitration, acting as trial counsel (including first-chair trial experience), and drafting and arguing appeals.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, Women's Human Rights Program

Staff Attorney (February 2005 to May 2007)

- Conducted human rights fact finding missions internationally; trained legal professionals locally and internationally on human rights and violence against women; consulted on amici briefs; provided technical assistance to attorneys representing battered women; consulted for the UN's Georgia Country team on domestic violence and child abuse.

Hennepin County District Court, Fourth Judicial District

Law Clerk, The Honorable Kathryn L. Quaintance (July 2003 to February 2005)

Judicial Extern, The Honorable Kathryn L. Quaintance (January 2003 to June 2003)

- Conducted legal research; wrote bench memos; drafted orders; scheduled and clerked trials and hearings.

Hennepin County Domestic Fatality Review Board

Advisory Board Member (2006-2008); *Volunteer* (2003 to 2008);

Law Clerk (May 2003 to November 2003)

- Conducted research; wrote and presented case studies; trained new members; participated in creating policy goals and recommendations for criminal justice systems; co-wrote annual reports.

EDUCATION

University of Minnesota Law School
Juris Doctor, cum laude, December 2003

Minneapolis, MN

University of Redlands, Johnston Center for Integrative Studies
Bachelor of Arts, Emphasis: Political Activism: A Study of Law and Human Rights, May 2000

Redlands, CA

PUBLICATIONS

Co-author, *The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction in Cases Involving Allegations of Domestic Violence: A Minnesota Bench Guide*, The Hague Convention and Domestic Violence Minnesota Task Force (October 2011)

Co-author, *Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Georgia: An Assessment of Current Standings of Law and Practice Regarding Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Georgia, and Recommendations for Future United Nations Country Team Involvement*, United Nations (December 2006).

Co-author, *The Government Response to Domestic Violence in Tajikistan*, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (October 2006).

ADMISSIONS

Admitted to practice before the state courts of California and Minnesota; the United States District Courts for the District of Minnesota and the Northern District of California; and the United States Courts of Appeal for the Seventh and Eighth Circuits.

May 30, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to express my strong support for the nomination of Laura E. Nelson as a *Best LGBT Lawyer Under 40*. Laura embodies the intent behind this award and I couldn't imagine a more deserving recipient.

I began working with Laura through my role as executive director of Project 515, a statewide LGBT advocacy organization in Minnesota. Project 515 co-founded the campaigns that would ultimately bring the freedom to marry for same-sex couples to Minnesota. As co-chair of the campaign's board of directors and coordinator of the campaign's legal team, Laura and I worked together almost daily, beginning in 2012. At that point, Laura joined our team as pro bono counsel to Minnesotans United for All Families, first to assist with the anti-marriage ballot measure and then with the pro-marriage legislative campaign. She also provided on-going counsel to Project 515, ensuring that the organization continued in good legal standing.

Laura's role with Minnesota's marriage campaigns was a critical one, and she spent many hours away from her partner and children to help guide our effort. Her efforts spanned the gamut from drafting bill language to analyzing potential amendments to writing talking points.

Of the many valuable contributions Laura made, one of the most important was her work preparing our bill authors to present and defend the bill, both during the committee hearings as well as on the floor of the Minnesota House and Senate. Marriage legislation can be complicated and our bill authors were not attorneys. Laura worked with another colleague to meticulously design trainings for the lead legislators. She spent many hours briefing them on the intricacies of the religious exemption language, teasing out for them the arguments that could emerge and coaching them on responses. Our authors will be well prepared for the debates, in large part due to Laura's efforts.

Most recently, once the bill was passed and signed, Laura again worked with me to continue the analysis of the new legislation and the emerging plan for implementation. Our organization began to field dozens of questions from the community – largely same-

sex couples trying to determine how the marriage law would work, as well as attorneys who work with same-sex couples on family law issues. Over the past few weeks, Laura has continued to work closely with me, ensuring that our community is well-prepared to embrace marriage equality.

Laura is a talented attorney and has given an enormous gift of that talent to Minnesota's LGBT community and to the state of Minnesota overall. I hope you will give her nomination the strongest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Kaner-Roth". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ann" and last name "Kaner-Roth" clearly legible.

Ann Kaner-Roth
Executive Director

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Minneapolis MN 55458
(612) 223-8984
www.mnunited.org
Twitter: @MN4allfamilies



30 May 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I write today encouraging you to select Laura Nelson as a 'Best LGBT Lawyer Under 40'.

As the campaign manager for Minnesotans United for All Families, the organization that led the effort to secure the freedom to marry for all couples in Minnesota, I saw first hand Laura's incredible leadership and unwavering commitment to the LGBT community.

Laura served a critical role on the legal team that advised our successful efforts to pass legislation just six months after voters defeated a constitutional amendment that would have banned the freedom to marry. Laura also played an active role in the successful ballot effort as well.

Laura is a gifted lawyer that helped our organization and lawmakers navigate complicated and very specific issues in Minnesota statute related to our bill that secured the freedom to marry.

In addition, Laura spent hours preparing key legislators for committee and floor debates while ensuring they understood very important details about the impact our legislation would have in numerous policy areas.

Please consider Laura a champion for the LGBT community and, as a member herself, she knows firsthand the importance of the outcome she helped accomplish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Carlbom", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Carlbom, Campaign Manager
Minnesotans United for All Families