

**Attorneys
Associate**

• Sarah E. Bell

Pryor Cashman Associate Sarah Bell Awarded 2008 President's Pro Bono Service Award By NYS Bar Association

Every year the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) bestows the President's Pro Bono Service Awards on those who have rendered extraordinary pro bono service. The NYSBA presents these awards to publicly recognize and thank the people who give such service and also to convey a message to the profession and the public about the importance of pro bono in achieving equal access to justice.

Pryor Cashman is proud to announce that litigation associate Sarah Bell has been selected by the NYSBA as the winner of the 2008 President's Pro Bono Service Award in the Young Lawyer's category. We congratulate Sara on this outstanding achievement.

Over the course of the past year, Sarah handled two pro-bono cases in N.Y. Family Court, each presenting "an especially challenging set of facts and circumstances." She successfully represented her clients (and continues to represent one client) in every type and aspect of child custody determinations, including foster care, guardianship and visitation, and orders of protection.

With respect to the first case, which Sarah has handled for over one year, she has been representing her client in various related custody battles which have necessitated over 20 court appearances, including oral arguments, conferences, hearings and negotiations with state agencies and six other attorneys representing parties on the case. Sarah has had to negotiate for her client on several fronts and, in the process, has managed to gain the respect and trust of an individual who previously had great difficulty navigating the system.

In the second case, Sarah represented her client from the initial appearance through trial and final disposition. Sarah conducted the entire trial on her own, examining witnesses, putting in evidence, making objections and giving a closing argument. The Judge ruled from the bench immediately after the trial in favor of her client on all counts, granting a permanent order of protection and finding aggravating circumstances justifying a 5-year order of protection, and awarding full custody to our client with no visitation to the respondent father. In the words of her client, this complete victory was "the best Christmas present ever."

The awards presentation will take place on Thursday, May 1, 2008 at The State Room, located on 142 State Street in Albany, New York.