



Georgetown University



Profile of New Perimeter Co-Chair

Esther Lardent

In her dual roles as president and chief executive officer of the Pro Bono Institute (PBI) and adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center, Esther Lardent wears many hats in the service of pro bono. She is a policymaker, instructor, program developer, resource manager, and theorist. Over more than three decades, Ms. Lardent has encouraged and nurtured the pro bono efforts of attorneys throughout the world, challenging them to undertake innovative service and expand their vision of pro bono.

All this makes her a perfect choice to serve as co-chair, along with Judge Patricia Wald, co-chair of New Perimeter's Advisory Board. "She is a visionary," says Partner Sheldon Krantz, Director of New Perimeter. "She has provided so many good ideas to help us develop the program."

"She is really the goddess of pro bono," adds U.S. Pro Bono Partner Lisa Dewey. "She taught me the value of relationship building and that, ultimately, all of our work at some level is about building relationships internally and externally."

Ms. Lardent worked closely with Sheldon, Lisa, and Jeff Liss, U.S. Co-Managing Partner, as they brainstormed the structure and implementation of New Perimeter's groundbreaking international partnerships. "The level of on-the-ground support and system of globally rotating resources...makes [DLA Piper's] approach to international pro bono work quite remarkable," noted Ms. Lardent. In her role as co-chair, she continues to contribute her enthusiasm and energy to help the Advisory Board oversee New Perimeter projects at a policy level, provide ongoing expertise for their refinement, and champion their overall mission.

During her undergraduate years, Esther Lardent's feelings about the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War changed her career path. Realizing that she wanted to change the world and right what she saw as wrongs in society, she shifted professional direction from journalism, ultimately graduating from University of Chicago Law School. After beginning her career as an attorney at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Civil Rights

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Division and then practicing for the Individual Rights arm of the American Bar Association, Ms. Lardent created the first pro bono project for the Boston Bar Association. "Esther Lardent revolutionized the way firms think about pro bono by encouraging them to donate billable time," Lisa says. "She made pro bono a real, living part of the culture."

At the Pro Bono Institute, Ms. Lardent's vision of marrying public service to private practice helped her imagine and create programs that were seen as radical at first, but which increasingly lie at the heart of pro bono service in law firms today. Her brainchildren, the Pro Bono Project and Law Firm Pro Bono ChallengeSM, are vehicles through which tens of thousands of law firm attorneys give back to their communities and through which millions of pro bono hours are donated each year.

"She has changed the world for the better," Sheldon adds. 🇺🇸

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