

PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT

March 2019 – Jerome T. Wolf

We would like to recognize Jerome T. Wolf, senior counsel at Dentons US LLP, for his immense dedication to helping veterans and active duty personnel with the Military Matters program. He was the founding managing partner of the Kansas City office of Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP, now Dentons. Jerry has been a Military Matters volunteer since the program's inception. Jerry Wolf is a past president of Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association (KCMBA), serving in 1979. During his time as KCMBA president, he believed the association needed a foundation to serve charitable purposes, but he didn't expect the foundation to develop as quickly as it did. Jerry founded the foundation along with Hon. Fernando Gaitan. He then became the founding president of Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Foundation. During this process, they created a unified organization for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri and the U.S. District Court of Kansas.



Jerry's passion for helping others does not stop at the Foundation. Jerry has taken more than 50 Military Matters cases over the years. Every single case he takes on receives his full attention. There are two particular cases that he will never forget.

In the first case, Jerry represented a Vietnam War veteran who was trying to obtain service-connected disability. The veteran was on board an aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, when a fire broke out that spread to all of the airplanes on board. Twenty-eight men were killed. In efforts to push the airplanes off the carrier into the water, the Vietnam War veteran tried to pull a pilot out of the airplane, and when he pulled on the pilot's arm to remove him from the airplane, the pilot's arm was severed. The Vietnam War veteran developed terrible PTSD from this experience.



MILITARY MATTERS

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On the first attempt, Jerry was able to get the veteran 70% disability for PTSD, but Jerry kept fighting. He appealed to the Board of Veterans' Appeals, won the appeal, and the case was remanded to the St. Louis Region of the Veterans Administration to implement the decision. After ten months, the Vietnam War veteran was awarded \$145,000 for a 100% disability dating back several years. Jerry fought tirelessly for a veteran who fought for this country, demonstrating his passion for helping veterans and active duty personnel, no questions asked.

The second case Jerry will never forget is one in which he was representing another Vietnam War veteran. The veteran, who served at Camp Holloway near Pleiku, Vietnam, had experienced a number of traumatic events in Vietnam. This veteran developed PTSD from the war, which caused problems with employment, which eventually caused him to become homeless and isolated from society. Jerry was able to obtain 100% disability for this veteran, enabling him to turn his life around.

Jerry has an amazing passion for helping veterans and active duty personnel – he fights for them on an individual level and he also educates others on how to be an advocate. He chaired a seminar in which he trained many other lawyers on handling veterans' benefit claims. When Jerry isn't advocating for veterans and active duty personnel, he is still giving back to the community and has been recognized for his contributions. He has chaired KCMBF's Civility Summit, the Civil Justice Reform Act of 1991 Committee, and received KCMBF's Dean of the Trial Bar Award and Lifetime Achievement Award. He has also been the past two-time chair of the Jewish Committee Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee. He is currently the co-chair of the Legal Aid of Western Missouri Campaign Committee and has sat on numerous other boards. In the free moments Jerry does have, he likes to read, travel, listen to music and be active.

Jerry Wolf has definitely made his mark on the community and has made an enormous difference in the lives of so many veterans and active duty personnel. Military Matters is very lucky to have Jerry Wolf as one of the program's outstanding volunteers. We are very thankful for his dedication to the program, KCMBF, KCMBF and the Kansas City community.



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