



Burchinow



Chan and McGuire



Garcia



Shea



Wagner

PRO BONO PROFILE:

Meet the Pioneering Spirits of Colorado

The early pioneers who settled in Colorado were self-sufficient, hardworking, and did not hesitate to help neighbors in need. That spirit is alive and well with American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) solo practitioners in Colorado who have generously donated their time and expertise to clients of the Rocky Mountain Survivors Center (RMSC). RMSC is a torture survivor treatment center that provides legal assistance, mental health therapy, social services, and medical referrals to torture survivors. Over the past year, RMSC clients have benefited from the tireless efforts of AILA members **Elsa Burchinow, Catherine Chan, Richard Garcia, Ginger McGuire, Jim Salvator (not pictured), Lilian Shea, and Alexis K. Wagner.**

Some examples of recent victories by these solo practitioners include a grant of asylum for a victim of rape and female genital mutilation (FGM) from Sierra Leone, and asylum for a politically active Haitian man who had suffered a serious head injury that impacted his ability to remember.

Jim Salvator makes volunteerism a regular part of his practice, volunteering not only for RMSC, but also for other nonprofits in Colorado. As for Lilian Shea, a recent immigrant from Argentina, she feels a close bond with her pro bono clients because, "I am a foreigner who also struggled in this country. It was hard for me not speaking English and not understanding this culture." When asked why she volunteers, Ginger McGuire said, "I feel it is my obligation to give to the community.

I practice immigration law to help a vulnerable class." Alexis K. Wagner finds that, "RMSC clients and pro bono asylum cases are the most deserving and compelling cases I have taken." Elsa Burchinow expresses a different motivation, "When I am meeting a client for the first time, I feel profoundly grateful that my parents had the perseverance to make it to the U.S. The vast majority of people I meet are no different than the early European settlers who washed up on these shores with dreams of a better life."

Courtesy of **Regina Germain**, Legal Director of RMSC and a member of AILA's Pro Bono Services Committee.

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