

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles 2017 Pro Bono Law Firm Award

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Sheppard Mullin is proud to receive the 2017 Pro Bono Law Firm Award from the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, presented at the 19th Annual Access to Justice Dinner on October 19, 2017 in Los Angeles, California.

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP has a long tradition of providing legal services to individuals and community organizations who could otherwise not afford legal representation. Since 2015, attorneys from the Sheppard Mullin Los Angeles office, led by LAFLA Board Vice-President Jim Burgess, have fought tirelessly to give a voice to homeless citizens who want to access the city's beaches.

For years, the city enacted and has enforced a ban on accessing the city's beaches at night, even though the city did not obtain a permit from the Coastal Commission for such a ban. Homeless advocates have long argued that the overnight ban has been disproportionately used to target homeless citizens along the coast. Many, including the *LA Times* Editorial Board and the California Coastal Commission argued that the city needs to submit to a public permit process and allow the Coastal Commission to decide if the curfew is truly necessary. The City refused, and a former member of the City Council famously said to "sue [the city]" over the curfew. Thanks to the talented and dedicated attorneys at Sheppard Mullin, LAFLA's clients were able to do just that.

In 2015, two long-time activists and homeowners, represented by Sheppard Mullin and LAFLA, filed *Valentine v. City of Los Angeles* to compel the city to seek a Coastal Development Permit. Attorneys from Sheppard Mullin have been integral to the case. They have participated in every hearing, played a role in every filing, and attended every deposition. They managed a voluminous document production and led lengthy settlement negotiations with the City. As a result of their zealous advocacy on behalf of LAFLA's clients, and after numerous hard-fought legal victories, the City of Los Angeles finally agreed in June of 2017 to seek a Coastal Development Permit. For the first time, the city's decision to close the beaches will be subjected to public debate and discussion and open to scrutiny by the California Coastal Commission.

In addition to Jim Burgess, the Sheppard Mullin team included attorneys Matthew Ardoin, John D. Rees and Ryan Schiedermayer.

Attorneys

James M. Burgess

J.D. Rees