Q&A: Award-Winning Pro Bono Advocate Sean Lewis on Service, HB Trial Academy and Giving Back

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Haynes Boone Associate **Sean Lewis** received the 2026 Dallas Association of Young Lawyers (DAYL) Pro Bono Service Award on July 16, highlighting his exceptional commitment to expanding access to justice through his pro bono work.

Haynes Boone spoke with Sean about the experiences that have shaped his commitment to pro bono work, the impact of **HB Trial Academy** on his development and what this recognition means to him.

Q: Tell us about your pro bono work and the matters that have been most meaningful to you.

Lewis: One of the things I appreciate most about Haynes Boone is its longstanding commitment to pro bono service. Our incredible pro bono team, led by Pro Bono Counsel **Rachel Elkin**, creates meaningful opportunities for attorneys to get involved and make an impact. The most meaningful pro bono experience I have had so far **was representing Mr. Wintley Phipps alongside Haynes Boone alumna Ashley Koos in my first jury trial**, in a case that stemmed from a fraudulent business scheme.

I have also really valued my time volunteering with the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program's intake clinic. During my first year at Haynes Boone, I helped a tenant who had been dealing with a difficult landlord dispute for years. When she tried to move out, her landlord added incorrect fees to her account. Our team helped her resolve the dispute and provided much-needed relief.

Q: The DAYL specifically recognized your pro bono trial representation of Mr. Phipps as an example of exceptional service. Can you share what that experience meant to you and why it stands out in your career?

Lewis: Representing Mr. Phipps meant a great deal to me. In 2016, he was led to believe that he was investing in a business that would help support him and his family in retirement. Unbeknownst to Mr. Phipps, the defendant instead used those funds for personal purchases, including cars, jewelry and other items.

The trial was a full-circle moment for me. In this chilling case of fraud, I was able to apply the skills I developed through HB Trial Academy, along with the hands-on experience I gained working alongside talented attorneys at the firm, to advocate for a deserving client.

Q: The DAYL highlighted Haynes Boone's Trial Academy as an important factor in your development as a young lawyer. How did that experience prepare you to advocate effectively for pro bono clients?

Lewis: I took part in HB Trial Academy just a few months before representing Mr. Phipps, and it made a real difference for me. The program gave me the opportunity to learn from experienced trial lawyers, practice the fundamentals of trial advocacy and receive direct feedback in an environment

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that closely mirrored the courtroom experience. As we prepared for trial, we were fortunate to be coached and trained by **Victor Vital**, global chair of Haynes Boone's Trials Practice Group, who led HB Trial Academy and equipped us with the skills and confidence to take Mr. Phipps's case through verdict.

Q: What inspired you to pursue pro bono work?

Lewis: My parents instilled in my four sisters and me from a young age that service matters. I feel incredibly fortunate to be a lawyer, and I believe that privilege comes with a responsibility to use my skills and training to help people who need support.

Q: Looking ahead, what would you say to young attorneys who want to make pro bono service a meaningful part of their careers?

Lewis: I would encourage them to simply get involved. There are many talented attorneys who are passionate about pro bono work and eager to collaborate with others who share that commitment. No matter your area of practice, there are people in need who can benefit from your time, skills and willingness to help.

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