

Press Release

Federal Bar Association Recognizes Timothy Sendek, Robyn Bowland's Efforts in Reuniting Father with Children

May 8, 2019

Presented with Federal Bar Association's 2019 Award for Excellence in Pro Bono Service

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, is pleased to announce that the Chicago chapter of the Federal Bar Association recognized Timothy Sendek and Robyn Bowland with the 2019 Award for Excellence in Pro Bono Service at the 20th Annual Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service Award Ceremony on May 1 for their work in resolving an international abduction case. Sendek and Bowland helped reunite a father, residing in Spain, with his two children, who were abducted to the United States in 2015 by their mother when they were three and 10 years old.

The U.S. State Department sought the assistance of Sendek, a member of the State Department's Hague Convention Attorney Network, to defend the father in a petition filed under the Hague Convention for the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. In 2015, the mother took the children to the U.S. without permission from her ex-husband, the father of the children. The father reported the unauthorized removal to police after the mother and children overstayed their tourist visas. Unable to help, the police eventually connected him to the U.S. State Department, which reached out to Sendek.

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Timothy K. Sendek

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Following a bench trial by District Judge John Lee of the Northern District of Chicago, the children were ordered to return to Spain. Sendek and Bowland worked with the Spanish Consulate in Chicago to obtain emergency passports for the children. Following a four-year absence, the father was reunited with his daughter and son, now six and 13 years old respectively.

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