For the fifth year, we’re recognizing Washington lawyers for work that has advanced the practice of law. The trailblazers profiled here have won cases at the U.S. Supreme Court and influenced policy at the Justice Department. They’ve charted new courses for their firms and in-house legal departments, and spent hundreds of hours on pro bono cases that made a difference. The results of their work often can be felt far beyond the Beltway.

Selections are made by the editors of The National Law Journal, based on nominations from the legal community as well as our own research and reporting. The selections have been divided into two categories: Champions, those who have upheld the profession’s core values through public service, pro bono work and advocacy for civil liberties, and Visionaries, attorneys whose business foresight or legal acumen has expanded their firms, advanced the law or improved government.

We will celebrate their achievements at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 1150 22d St. N.W. in Washington, on Sept. 20. Stay tuned to these pages and NLJ.com for more details.

— DAVID L. BROWN, EDITOR IN CHIEF
After more than 15 years at Latham & Watkins, partner Abid Qureshi’s pro bono legal work led to a major appointment in March: global chairman of the firm’s pro bono committee.

Qureshi has worked on several successful pro bono engagements since he joined the firm in 1995. In 2011 alone, he secured victories for foreign-educated physical therapists and The National Organization of Concerned Black Men, a group that works to give children in urban areas mentors and role models.

Qureshi said he had “a lot of fun” working for the physical therapists, who challenged in a Georgia state court a Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy decision that stopped them from taking a national licensing test. Under the Federation’s decision, physical therapists who were educated in the Philippines, Egypt, India and Pakistan had to take a licensing test that was different from the exam for other candidates for licensure. Qureshi, who was born in Pakistan, ultimately helped secure an injunction that prohibited the use of the special exam in Georgia, and the Federation decided to scrap its separate test policy throughout the United States.

But the lawyer’s pro bono work extends beyond Georgia. His representation of the Concerned Black Men regarded a breach-of-contract lawsuit brought against the organization in the District of Columbia Superior Court. The parties ultimately reached agreement and the case was dismissed. He also helped with the incorporation this year of the Dawood Global Foundation, a Washington-based nonprofit organization that promotes social equality.

Qureshi said his firm has been “very supportive” of the legal work he does for free. “To me, it seems like a culmination of my entire time at Latham & Watkins,” Qureshi said of his new role as leader of the firm’s pro bono efforts, which last year consumed more than 173,000 hours and were valued at about $83 million. “It really means a lot.”

—ANDREW RAMONAS