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## Attorney advises colleagues to treat law as a service industry

BY MIKE SUNNUCKS  
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Pro bono work is a professional expectation among lawyers. But for one Phoenix attorney, it's quickly becoming part and parcel of her legal career.

Julie Maurer is a commercial litigation, transportation and employment attorney with Phoenix-based law firm Ryley Carlock & Applewhite PA.

She said she started doing pro bono work while attending the University of Notre Dame Law School and has continued since joining Ryley.

"During law school, I took a class that allowed me to represent clients through the South Bend (Ind.) public defender's program," she said. "It taught me the value and responsibility of service that a law degree confers. It also hooked me on the 'humaneness' of the law."

Many attorneys focus their pro bono efforts on specific areas, such as death penalty cases, immigration or legal work for charities. Maurer doesn't necessarily follow a theme; she just tries to find worthy cases.

"Since I graduated and started with Ryley Carlock & Applewhite, I strive to have at least one pro bono case going at all times," she said. "Some of the cases have

COMMUNITY  
Julie Maurer

been referred through the local Volunteer Lawyers' Program, while others I have taken through personal observation and referrals."

The Maricopa County Bar Association and State Bar of Arizona both have volunteer lawyer programs and services that link attorneys with pro bono cases.

Maurer said she typically takes on litigation-oriented cases to help people in need. For example, she recently helped resolve a personal injury case stemming from inadequately maintained premises at a national retail chain. Her client filed a claim against the company after incurring substantial medical bills and lost wages as a result of the injury, and repeated attempts to resolve the issue had failed.

"The retail chain simply would not recognize the injury and ignored my client's attempts at communication," Maurer said. "Although my client could not afford legal representation, once she received it, the company began communicating immediately."

She also has represented clients in landlord-tenant issues, a Medicare lien claim involving professional fraud, and breach of contract claims.

Lawyers tend to have a less-than-positive public image, whether they be commercial attorneys representing corporate interests or defense attorneys representing unpopular clients. Maurer said law is a service industry,

### JULIE MAURER

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**Firm:** Ryley, Carlock & Applewhite PA

**Education:** Master's degree in public administration, Arizona State University; Juris Doctorate, University of Notre Dame

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and attorneys should keep that in mind.

"No matter how many years of school associates recently have been through, how high our law school loans might be, or how complex and time-consuming our day-to-day billable assignments are, the law remains a service industry," she said. "By serving others, we learn a bit more about ourselves, become better attorneys and become more valuable — not only to the legal community, but the community as a whole."

The Wisconsin native got her undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri-Rolla and a master's degree in public administration from Arizona State University before attending law school at the University of Notre Dame.

She played basketball and soccer at Missouri and is a fan of Notre Dame and Green Bay Packers football.