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Gibson Dunn Team Wins Appeal Before New York Appellate Term in Pro Bono Housing Case

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A Gibson Dunn pro bono team, in partnership with the Legal Aid Society, has successfully challenged a housing court decision against six tenants in a rent-stabilized building in Brooklyn, New York, that had drastically reduced lawyers' fees. Associate Vanessa Ajagu argued the appeal, which challenged a decision to award only 20% of the prevailing market rate solely because the tenants were represented by the Legal Aid Society, a nonprofit providing free legal services to low-income New Yorkers. Our team argued that this reduction misapplied the legal standard for fee awards and failed to include essential costs such as process server fees. The New York Appellate Term for the Second Judicial Department agreed, emphasizing a long-standing precedent that lawyers' fees must reflect prevailing market rates, regardless of whether representation is provided by a nonprofit or a private firm. The team was led by partner Christopher Joralemon and, alongside Vanessa, included associates Amanda Bello, Melissa Murphy, and Maryam Asenuga. We are proud to partner with the Legal Aid Society and support its ongoing mission to ensure equal justice under the law.

Related People

Christopher M. Joralemon

Vanessa Ajagu

Melissa Murphy

Related Capabilities

Litigation

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