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High Impact Change



Drinker Biddle's **Jerry Hartman** turned a tragedy into a way to impact social justice issues. His wife, **Barbara McDowell**, was a lawyer and social activist; when she passed away of brain cancer in 2009, he conceived of and implemented the Barbara McDowell Pro Bono Initiative with the support of his firm. Barbara had been a Jones Day partner and spent seven years in the Solicitor General's office, where she argued **18 cases** before **SCOTUS** (including two in one day), before joining the **Legal Aid Society** of D.C. There, she was the Appellate Advocacy Project's founding director, handling over **70** matters and winning key cases on **housing rights, public benefits, and domestic violence** (this week, Hogan Lovells' **Jack Keeney**, a former DC Bar president, announced he'll be joining Legal Aid as director of the project, now named in Barbara's honor). Jerry says he wants to **carry on** Barbara's work. We snapped him in his office with **Maureen Hardwick**, a partner in the government affairs practice who's worked on the Initiative for over a year.



The Initiative, which Jerry directs while maintaining his full-time labor and employment practice, aims to select national **high impact** cases that set legal **precedents** and challenge **systemic issues**. They have over **60 volunteers** from Drinker Biddle and will take on **five cases** a year. Maureen tells us they've been working on a **death row** case in Mississippi, challenging the review process and sentencing phase, and quality of the counsel. They hope to get a new hearing for the **15** death row inmates. Jerry, who was named by the *National Law Journal* as a *Legal Times* "**Champion**" for his work, says they're on the look out for **more cases** and more areas in which to **make a change**.