

Irell Receives Social Justice Award

Practice Areas

Litigation

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Irell & Manella received the 2010 Social Justice Award from the ACLU Foundation of Southern California for its outstanding *pro bono* work on *Sipprelle v. City of Laguna Beach*, securing a major victory on behalf of the homeless community in Laguna Beach, Calif. The award was presented during the organization's 16th Annual ACLU Foundation Law Luncheon held on June 10, 2010 at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in Los Angeles.

In a federal civil rights lawsuit, the firm represented homeless individuals in Laguna Beach with the assistance of the ACLU of Southern California and Dean Erwin Chemerinsky of University of California, Irvine Law School in a case against the City of Laguna Beach and its police department. The case challenged the constitutionality of the city's anti-camping ordinance that prohibits sleeping in public places and selective targeting and harassment of homeless individuals by the police. Soon after the lawsuit was filed, the Laguna Beach City Council repealed the city ordinance, and the case settled. Irell was able to expunge the citations and arrests that the plaintiffs suffered as a result of the city's enforcement of the ordinance and donated the attorney's fees it received as part of the settlement to the Friendship Shelter.

"Irell played an extraordinary role in this case. Not only did the team provide exemplary legal counsel in a complex area of law, but they organized the homeless community, developed strong relationships with many of its members, educated them about their rights, and engaged city leaders to promote humane efforts to end homelessness," said Ramona Ripston, ACLU's executive director.