

Seyfarth Shaw Immigration Practice Helps Pro Bono Client, a Formerly Enslaved Egyptian Woman, Become a U.S. Citizen

Human trafficking victim Shyima Hall represented pro bono by attorney Angelo Paparelli in citizenship application process; naturalization ceremony takes place today, Dec. 15, 2011 in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (December 15, 2011) — Leading law firm **Seyfarth Shaw LLP**, which represented Egyptian human trafficking victim **Shyima Hall**, 22, in her goal to become a U.S. citizen, is pleased to announce that Ms. Hall is nearing the completion of her naturalization process. Hall will be sworn in as a U.S. citizen in a ceremony at the U.S. District Court in Montebello, Calif. on December 15, 2011.

Shyima Hall's story became national news following the 2005 indictment and 2006 conviction of a wealthy Egyptian couple who were accused of holding Hall hostage for nearly two years as a slave in their upscale Irvine, Calif. home. Beginning in 2000, the couple, Abdel Nasser Eid Youssef Ibrahim and Amal Ahmed Eweis-abd Motelib, forced Hall, then 10 years old, to work inside their house and sleep in their unheated garage, using threats and physical abuse. Ibrahim and his wife were eventually sentenced to federal prison for three years and one year, 10 months, respectively, and later deported.

After her rescue in 2002, Hall was adopted by a Southern California family. She is now working to obtain a college degree, in pursuit of her dream of a career in law enforcement – specifically, working for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Hall's other dream is to become a U.S. citizen, which becomes a reality today, Dec. 15.

“My hope of becoming a U.S. citizen is tied to my career goal – eventually I'd like to work for the ICE Department of Homeland Security unit,” said Hall. “I wish to help future victims of slavery and human trafficking.” Hall has already worked with ICE in helping the agency's human trafficking awareness program, volunteering to speak at a number of its educational events.

Angelo Paparelli, a partner in Seyfarth Shaw's Immigration practice group who practices in Los Angeles and New York, represented Hall pro bono as she worked to obtain her citizenship. He learned from an ICE official about Hall's need for help in the application process. The officer asked Paparelli to recommend pro bono counsel for Hall. Instead, Paparelli volunteered to donate his and the firm's legal services in assisting Hall in becoming naturalized.

“It was an honor helping Shyima obtain what so many of us take for granted – our U.S. citizenship,” Paparelli said. “After the torment she endured this past decade, it is especially satisfying to see her finally cross the threshold and meet her goal of becoming a U.S. citizen. Shyima's story of courage, resilience and self-sacrifice is an inspiration in so many ways -- not just for immigrants, but also for victims of human trafficking.”

Paparelli plans to attend Hall's swearing-in ceremony today.

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