

SYREN LAW OFFICES



August 9, 2022

Niki.Tshibaka@anchorageak.gov,

I am writing to recommend attorney Mario Bird for Municipal Attorney.

I was born and raised in Anchorage and passed the bar in 1989, focusing my practice in tort law. I have known Mario since he graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2004.

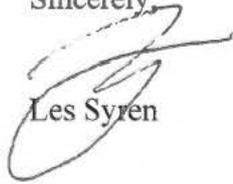
Over the years, I've witnessed Mario's virtues of hard work, dedication, advocacy, fairness, evenhandedness, and intelligence. However, I think the best display of his abilities as a lawyer are found in *Bohn v. Providence*, 484 P.3d 584 (Alaska 2021). It's available online at [Bohn v. Providence Health Servs. - Wash., 484 P.3d 584 | Casetext Search + Citator](#)

The case started in 2013 when Mr. Bohn, an adult who had previously appointed his parents as surrogate decision makers for him in case of a medical emergency, found himself at Providence Hospital. You can read the details in the case, but the upshot is that eventually Providence began administering medical treatment against his will, and then against the will of his parents as his surrogate decision makers. Early on, Mr. Bohn's parents hired Mario's firm, and he participated in the long, drawn-out legal proceedings arising from the disagreements between Providence and Mr. Bohn. Mr. Bohn lost at the trial court level, and Mario handled the appeal, which overturned the lower court decision.

Here are a few take aways for me. Most cases don't last that long. Mario persisted. Most cases don't involve high caliber law firms on the other side. This case did. Most cases resolve at the lower court level. This case did not. Appeals are expensive and time consuming. Appellate practice is also a highly specialized area of the law. Most attorneys view it as attractive as performing open heart surgery. Moreover, while lawyers may unfortunately get away with shoddy work at the lower court level, that's not the case at the Supreme Court. I've known of briefs being rejected at the Supreme Court's front counter because the font was incorrect, or the margins. A mentor of mine read Mario's brief and commented, "The kid can write!" Most cases don't involve novel questions. This one did. The Alaska Supreme Court even noted in its opinion that it had never had the opportunity to interpret the statute in question. Novel questions about an uninterpreted statute mean added work going through reams of statutory history contained in lengthy transcripts of hearings, presided over by loquacious politicians, to try and decipher what they intended by writing the statute. It can be like sifting for gold. Mario did the extra leg work, and won.

I think he'd be a great Municipal Attorney.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Les Syren', written over the printed name. The signature is stylized with a large loop and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Les Syren