

The Nonhuman Rights Project's Accomplishments (2016–2017)

- Secured an appeal and oral argument in Manhattan's First Department appeals court by suing the court to require it to accept our appeal after one Justice refused to allow it to go forward.
- Made public a fully annotated version of the First Department decision that details and explains each serious legal error the court made.
- Provided to attorneys in Argentina and Colombia a model for rights-based litigation on behalf of nonhuman animals via habeas petitions that resulted in 1) the transfer of chimpanzee Cecilia from a zoo to a sanctuary and 2) recognition of the rights of spectacled bear Chucho (the latter decision was overturned on appeal but we are working closely with the attorney who filed the case to help him determine his next steps).
- Discovered a serious longstanding legal error in Black's Law Dictionary's definition of a person (which the Third Department in part relied on to rule against us), confirmed this error with the editor-in-chief who agreed to change it in the next edition, and secured in-depth media coverage of the error and impending correction in social justice magazine *YES!*.
- In conjunction with both our litigation and the release of the documentary *Unlocking the Cage*, we secured over 1000 media hits in major outlets across the US (including *NBC News*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *the Washington Post*, *the Associated Press*, *Law360*, *Gizmodo*, *Fox News*, *Salon*, *The Baffler*, *Crux: Taking the Catholic Pulse*, *Village Voice*, and *Forbes*) and around the world (including the *Kremlin Express*, *Yahoo Japan*, *Al Hurra in Iraq*, *Mexico's Entrelíneas*, and *India's Economic Times*) the collective potential reach of which, according to our media monitoring service, is approximately 350 million.
- As part of our 2017 *Unlocking the Cage* campaign, we worked with interested supporters to organize screenings of the film in their respective hometowns, providing both screening licenses free of charge and detailed guidance on event promotion. We have held nine screenings so far, with 21 more in the works. More than 1,000 people have attended a screening of *Unlocking the Cage*. The film has been played 1 million times across HBO's platforms. This does not include the millions more who watched the HBO live broadcasts, BBC, and French/German national TV.
- NhRP President Steven M. Wise delivered the keynote address at the 2016 Animal Law Conference in New York City, spoke at the Minding Animals conference in the Netherlands, engaged in a public conversation with artist Terike Haapoja in conjunction with the New York exhibit "The Animal Mirror," lectured at numerous universities and law schools in the North America and Europe, participated in *Unlocking the Cage* post-screening question-and-answer sessions in Copenhagen, London, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden, Finland, Nepal, Barcelona, Berlin, Abu Dhabi, and in towns and cities across the U.S. and Canada, and gave talks at the Animal Rights 2017 National Conference outside DC and the Rethinking Animals Summit in NYC.

- Executive Director Kevin Schneider spoke at Harvard, Columbia, and NYU law schools, led undergraduate seminars at NYU and Rutgers, and joined Buddhist monk and author Matthieu Ricard for two events in New York City to celebrate the release of Matthieu's new book, *A Plea for the Animals: The Moral, Philosophical, and Evolutionary Imperative to Treat All Beings with Compassion*. Kevin also took part in and spoke at the first ever New York City United for Animals forum, along with Lisa Rainwater, while staff attorney Monica Miller spoke on a panel at the Vermont Journal of Environmental Law's conference on the Endangered Species Act. Communications Director Lauren Choplin participated in a discussion on the use of nonhuman animals in research hosted by Green Neuroscience Lab in San Diego. Kevin, Lisa, Matt and NhRP attorney Elizabeth Stein attended the New York hearing for Intro 1233, a bill to ban the display of wild or exotic animals for public entertainment or amusement, with the NhRP testifying in support of the bill (which passed the New York City Council [on June 21, 2017](#) by a large margin).
- With the independent press Solid Objects, we helped organize an event in New York City that featured readings by Thalia Field, Karen Joy Williams, Laura Mullen and other novelists and poets engaged with environmental and animal advocacy issues (proceeds from the event benefited the NhRP and the NRDC).
- We had four law review articles, which we write to educate the legal profession and judiciary on the novel legal arguments the NhRP employs in its litigation, published or accepted for publication in 2016 and 2017: 1) a retrospective on the NhRP's work written by Steven Wise (*Syracuse Law Review*); 2) an examination of the power of municipalities, through home rule, to enact legislation granting legal rights to nonhuman animals within its municipal borders (*Syracuse Law Review*); 3) an exploration of the ancient and powerful legal tool of manumission through which a private owner could bestow legal personhood upon his slave (*University of Tennessee Law Review*), and; 4) an in-depth analysis of the New York State intermediate appellate court's ruling in *People ex rel. Nonhuman Rights Project, Inc. v. Lavery*, which for the first time in history made entitlement to legal personhood strictly contingent on the ability of a being to bear social duties and responsibilities (*University of Denver Law Review*). Three more law review articles are in the process of being drafted for publication. Four law review articles written by other scholars have been published in 2017 that analyze and critique the work of the NhRP, including one in the *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*. Such articles reflect and affirm the seriousness and rigor with which particular issues are viewed and debated within the legal academy and can lead to concrete changes in the law, such as when lawyers cite them in briefs or judges rely on them in rulings.
- Stanford Law School invited Steve to teach a summer course about the NhRP's work in the summer of 2017.
- Also in the summer of 2017, Steve, at the invitation of Justice Cuellar of the California Supreme Court, discussed the NhRP's work with the California Supreme Court and its staff, which we view as promising for our planned California litigation.