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# Podhurst Orseck's Founding Partner Aaron Podhurst Honored with 'Judge Learned Hand Award' by Miami and Broward Office of AJC

The Miami and Broward Office of the **American Jewish Committee** announced legal stalwart, **Aaron Podhurst**, as the 2015 recipient of its Judge Learned Hand Award. The award, considered one of the highest honors given within the legal profession, recognizes the lifetime achievement and dedication to individual rights and democratic values.

Podhurst, a founding partner of Podhurst Orseck in Miami, was honored at a gala dinner held at Jungle Island this past week. The event raised more than \$400,000 and had a record-breaking attendance of nearly 500 people.

“At a time when diplomatic tensions reach an all-time peak and international terror attacks continue to dominate our nation’s headlines, we are reminded more than ever the importance of a strong legal framework and independent judiciary,” said Brian Siegal, AJC Miami and Broward County Director. “Arguably no one else in our community embodies these values as much as Aaron Podhurst does and it is with a great deal of respect and admiration that we bestow this honor upon him.”

Deemed by many as the ‘quintessential diplomat,’ Mr. Podhurst has been called upon by leaders at the highest of levels to help to bridge partisan barriers, diffuse tensions, and bring people together towards a common goal. He served as the unofficial mediator in the tense standoff over Elian Gonzalez in 1999 and has also been credited with negotiating the deal that brought Miami’s Museum Park from dream to reality.

Within the profession, his firm is one of the standout aviation litigation practices in the world, which has become increasingly international in nature. These have included representing victims of nearly every major plane crash in the last 25 years, including AirFrance, Silk Air, TAM Airlines Ft. 3054, and most recently, the firm represents 30 victims of the Malaysian Air MH370 flight that disappeared. Additionally the firm handles some of the most significant multi-district litigation (MDL) matters across the country, including the NFL concussion litigation; Chinese drywall multi-district litigation; and Takata airbag litigation for economic loss. He also served on the plaintiffs’ steering committee in the bank overdraft fee litigation, which involved more than 30 of the largest banks in the U.S.

Beyond the courtroom, Podhurst also devotes countless hours to community service, including serving as the past president of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation and memberships in many other civic organizations. Just last year he was the recipient of the 2014 Honorable Theodore “Ted” Klein Special Recognition Award.

His career has brought him honors and offices from virtually every major legal organization, including the presidencies of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and The Florida Justice Association, fellowship in the American College of Trial Lawyers, member of Board of Governors of American Association for Justice and The Florida Justice Association, among others.

“Lawyers are the first line responders who protect society against misuse of power. Great lawyers are at the front of this never-ending battle. They lead the rest of the bar by example not only in terms of professional excellence but also commitment to the core values of a decent society and make our world a better place to live,” said Andrew C. Hall, founding partner of Hall Lamb and Hall, President of Miami and Broward AJC and also a past Judge Learned Hand Award recipient. “Aaron Podhurst is an outstanding example of this type of lawyer.”

#### **About Podhurst Orseck**

Miami-based Podhurst Orseck, P.A., established over four decades ago, is a top flight boutique trial and appellate firm focusing its practice on tort litigation matters including aviation, products liability, serious personal injury, and wrongful death claims, as well as complex commercial litigation and white collar defense. Additionally, the firm has a strong appellate practice, handling appeals for its own attorneys and attorneys throughout the nation, in various state and federal appellate courts, including the United States Supreme Court. The firm has consistently received an AV-Rating from Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory, the highest possible rating, based on legal ability and general ethical standards. For more information, please visit [www.podhurst.com](http://www.podhurst.com).

#### **About AJC**

AJC (American Jewish Committee) is the global Jewish advocacy organization, with headquarters in New York, 22 regional offices across the United States, and 10 offices around the world, including one in Jerusalem. Founded in 1906, AJC’s mission is to enhance the well-being of the Jewish people and Israel, and to advance human rights and democratic values in the United States and around the world.

#### **About the AJC Judge Learned Hand Award**

AJC, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing human rights and democratic values in the U.S. and worldwide, established the Judge Learned Hand Award in 1964 to recognize leaders in the legal profession for their excellence and contributions to the practice of law. The award honors the memory of Judge Learned Hand, a highly distinguished individual recognized as heir to Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes’ legacy of a Jurist and Poet of Liberty. Judge Hand, a graduate of Harvard and its law school, was widely admired as a Dean among American jurists, and was well-known for the extensive range of decisions he tendered that centered on questions of constitutional rights and antitrust legislation.