Gov’t Lawyers Committee seeks award nominations

For the past 16 years, the Government Lawyers Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association has bestowed its highest honor on a lawyer who works for the government and who is making a difference for the profession and for the people of Pennsylvania. Once again this year, the committee is seeking nominations for the Government Lawyer of the Year Award.

The award honors a practicing lawyer employed by any branch or level of the government who has made a singular achievement that demonstrates an outstanding contribution to a governmental entity serving the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or who has dedicated his or her career to a governmental entity for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth. Once again, the award will be presented at the PBA Committee/Section Day luncheon on Nov. 21 at the Holiday Inn East, Harrisburg. The recipient of the 2013 Government Lawyer of the Year Award could be someone you know, but the only way for that person to receive the recognition he or she deserves is for you to submit a nomination.

Nominations must be submitted to Pamela K. Kance at the Pennsylvania Bar Association, 100 South St., P.O. Box 186, Harrisburg, PA 17108, by Oct. 11.

Nominations may be made on the nomination form posted online here or on any form that includes all of the information from the nomination form. Photocopies of the form are acceptable. You may also submit the nomination form electronically by going here.

If you have any questions or need additional nomination forms, please contact Pamela K. Kance at (800) 932-0311, ext. 2243, or access the Government Lawyers Committee website at http://www.pabar.org/public/committees/govtlaw/.

Overwhelmed. Get Involved.

Editor’s note: The author is chair of the PBA Young Lawyers Division and an attorney for the Governor’s Office of General Counsel at the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The following article was recently published in the YLD’s newsletter, At Issue, which is available on the YLD section of the PBA’s website.

By Robert T. Datorre, News & Views co-editor

OVERWHELMED! That’s how I can best describe how I have often felt over the last 12-plus months. Overwhelmed.

At first, I was overwhelmed at the honor of becoming chair-elect of the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division. It didn’t hit me immediately. It wasn’t until I attended the PBA’s Board of Governors Retreat in June 2012 in Cape May, N.J., that I really realized the privilege I was granted to serve as a leader in the PBA for young Pennsylvania lawyers.

Participating in my first Board of Governors’ meetings really shed light upon the opportunities that I would have through the YLD chair progression. But the feeling of honor was somewhat short-lived and was replaced with a feeling of being overwhelmed by the responsibilities and tasks that come in this role. In addition to my responsibilities as a member of the PBA’s Board of Governors, I also had direct responsibilities to the YLD that were much greater than any I had in any of my previous positions on the YLD Executive Council.

The expectations for participation by the chair-elect in various PBA activities, boards, committees, sections, meetings, phone conferences, etc., started taking a toll.

The pressure really started to

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PBA Government Lawyers Committee, YLD host reception for OGC Summer Legal Externs

On July 18, the Pennsylvania Bar Association Government Lawyers Committee, in conjunction with the PBA Young Lawyers Division, hosted a reception at PBA headquarters for the members of the Summer Legal Extern Program of the Governor’s Office of General Counsel.

The panel included Forest Myers, PBA president; Carol Mowery, deputy general counsel for the Governor’s Office of General Counsel and chair of the Government Lawyers Committee; Robert Datorre, assistant counsel for the Department of Education, chair of the Young Lawyers Division and co-editor of this newsletter; Jonathan Kunkel, assistant counsel for the Department of Corrections and Dauphin County Bar Association president; Jessie Smith of the Office of the Attorney General; and Jonathan Koltash, assistant counsel for the Department of Labor and Industry, vice chair of the Government Lawyers Committee and YLD Zone 3 co-chair.

The approximately 30 externs who attended were provided an insight into the life of a public servant and the various ways the PBA can impact a lawyer’s practice and life. At the conclusion of the panel discussion, externs were invited to tour PBA headquarters before a small reception with the panelists.

Subcommittee report

Professional Development Subcommittee, Fall 2013

The Professional Development Subcommittee (chaired by Jayne Blake and Jerry Mackarevich) assists in arranging guest speakers for committee meetings on a variety of topics. An important aspect of the subcommittee’s mission is coordination of panel discussions at Pennsylvania law schools that offer an “insider” perspective to students who are considering public sector practice upon graduation. The subcommittee is working to schedule presentations during the 2013-14 term at all eight institutions with campuses within the commonwealth. Volunteers are needed for the law school panels, especially those who are graduates of the schools to be visited. Please contact Blake or Mackarevich if you are interested in participating.
Please join us in celebrating the holiday season!

16th Annual Pennsylvania Bar Association Government Lawyers Committee/Administrative Law Section Holiday Reception

Tuesday, December 10, 2013
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Pennsylvania Bar Association Headquarters
100 South Street, Harrisburg

Please bring donations of canned or non-perishable food for the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

RSVP by December 3, 2013

Click here to register online.

Or complete the information below and fax the form to the PBA Meetings Department, care of Audrey Perez, at (717) 238-4134.

Name: ____________________________ Attorney ID #: ____________________________
(please print)

Email address: ____________________________

☐ I will be attending.
☐ Please check here if you require any special services or have any dietary requirements. Attach a written description of your needs.
When I arrived in Israel with my tour group, the region had been calm for a relatively long time. As we were starting the third day of our trip, Orna, our guide, informed us that “we did some business in Gaza last night” and that Israel and Hamas were at war. The pictures of the bombings of Gaza, less than two hours away by car, on the nightly news and the fear of air raid sirens formed the backdrop for the entire trip, which we were able to finish without incident. It was an experience in both ancient history and current international politics in which we learned firsthand about the most troubled area of the world.

The lasting impression I took from the country was the way in which the Israelis went about their daily lives as if accepting that the constant state of conflict was normal. Our tour went on, businesses continued to operate as usual, and there was little disruption, though there was great concern as many reservists from the armed forces were called to active duty. Several rockets were shot at Tel Aviv after we left the city, but none did any damage. One rocket hit an apartment building near Jerusalem. The vast majority of damage and casualties was in Gaza.

The state of division between Israelis and Arabs within Israel and the West Bank was marked, as one would expect. Most towns and villages are wholly Jewish or Arab. There are separate educational systems with separate curricula. However, Arabs who live within Israel have Israeli citizenship. Nazareth, a larger city, has distinct Jewish and Arab sections some distance from each other. Mosques are ubiquitous throughout Israel.

What is surprising about the intensity of the conflict in the Middle East and its importance internationally is the fact that Israel is a very small country. There are few places within Israel that cannot be reached within an hour’s drive. Orna was able to commute to Tel Aviv from her home near Gaza (almost within the range of the rocket fire). At different points during the tour, we saw Israel’s borders with Jordan and Lebanon. While taking a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, we were told that Syria, and its ongoing civil war, was on the other side of a nearby mountain.

Tour buses do not go into the Golan Heights because it is considered dangerous. Damascus and Beirut are not far distant, but there are no road signs leading to either as the borders are closed. There are signs to the border with Jordan, with whom Israel has had peace in recent years.

In order to travel to Bethlehem, we had to leave our tour bus and board a Palestinian bus. Our Jewish tour guide and bus driver were not permitted to enter the West Bank area, where Bethlehem is situated. Our guide in Bethlehem explained that the bus was old because the area in which Palestinians from the West Bank can travel is so small that there was no need for new buses. In Bethlehem there was a sign

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Overwhelmed. Get Involved.
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mount in the months leading up to May 2013, when I would officially become the chair of the YLD, and continued to increase as we approached the YLD Summer Meeting on July 24-26 in State College, Pa. (Read more about the Summer Meeting in this issue of At Issue). In addition to time for PBA activities, I was still busy being a husband/father/son/brother/grandson (always my primary focus) and serving the governor and the people of the commonwealth as an attorney for the Office of General Counsel. At one moment on a day when I was trying to individually contact four panelists for one of the CLE panels I was moderating and editing slides for another panel on which I would serve as a panelist (in addition to preparing for a family summer vacation that would begin in two weeks and working my regular day job), I thought it was all going to be too much to handle and that I was foolish for having taken on so much.

Then, I took a step back from the situation and took stock of what was good. First, I thought about the fact that I have a wonderful and supportive wife, kids and family and that I was going to be spending some R&R time with my wife and kids in just a few days. I also recognized that I was blessed with good health and the good health of my family. I remembered that I have a great job, with supportive and brilliant co-workers and colleagues that help me learn and grow to become a better lawyer and person each and every day. And then, I recognized that the tasks associated with being involved in the PBA – attending meetings, organizing CLE panels, speaking on issues important to the legal profession, etc. – are activities that assist me in becoming a better lawyer in order to best serve my client. Through the PBA, I have the opportunity to interact in a professional, social and friendly atmosphere with countless judges and lawyers. These interactions assist me in growing my network of colleagues as well as building strong foundations for a more cooperative and productive practice of law when I am before the judges or on the other side of the counsel table. The benefits of my involvement in the PBA far outweigh the time I spend preparing for and attending PBA meetings. In short, it is worth it.

I suppose this is an odd “Welcome” message from the new YLD chair, but I preferred it over an impersonal “hello” and recitation of the benefits of being a PBA member. Sure, being involved may seem overwhelming at times and may make you question your decision to become involved, but the right perspective assists to help you recognize that the decision to become involved is the right one. I do want to share some cautionary advice that I will admit I did not particularly heed when I became involved in the PBA. Before becoming involved, learn as much as you can about the role(s) you are considering and discuss it with your family, supervisors, coworkers and friends, and make sure you have their support. The support of those around you will help minimize and even eliminate any sense of being overwhelmed and will more often allow you to recognize the benefits of being involved. If you have their support and you are willing to put the time and effort into the role(s), there should be nothing stopping you from becoming an effective leader in the PBA and recognizing the many benefits that come from your involvement.

So, although I started this message with “OVERWHELMED,” I wanted to end it with a more appropriate thought. These words were shared with me by Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice J. Michael Eakin when I attended my first YLD meeting in 2006, and I hope they have the same impact on you as they did on me. GET INVOLVED.

A close-up view of the Arab-Israeli conflict
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30 years old are no longer permitted to work in Israel. Those that are permitted to enter must go through multiple check points, as did our bus. In the Bethlehem area, we were able to see part of the wall built by Israel to separate the West Bank in order to prevent terrorist attacks. The same wall also separates communities.

The stories on the evening news now take on a new significance since I have returned home. The war in Syria continues with no end in sight and dominates the news. The divide between the peoples of the region is so great that finding peace is an enormous challenge, but one that people of good will must take on.

We have the clients . . . you have the expertise.
Join the PBA Lawyer Referral Service today.
It’s a win-win situation!
For additional information, contact the PBA LRS at 1-800-932-0311, Ext. 2209.
In the spotlight

On Aug. 16, the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association presented the President’s Award to Teresa Lazo, assistant counsel at the Department of State. Lazo has served as counsel to the State Board of Veterinary Medicine since 1999 and also counsels the Board of Medicine. In addition to being a member of the Government Lawyers Committee, Lazo has been a member of the Animal Law Committee since its inception and is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Law Association and Animal Legal Defense Fund. Lazo was a course planner and speaker for the 10th annual PBI Animal Law Conference and is an adjunct professor at Penn State University Dickinson School of Law. Lazo authored a chapter on law and ethics for the eighth edition of McCurnin’s Clinical Textbook for Veterinary Technicians, which was published in April.

Do you have ‘In the spotlight’ news?

Send your news of recent appointments, honors, speaking engagements — and family news — to Carol Mowery at camowery@state.pa.us.

Mark your calendars for upcoming PBA events

**PBA Committee/Section Day**
Nov. 21, 2013 • Holiday Inn East, Harrisburg, Pa.

**PBA House of Delegates Meeting**
Nov. 22, 2013 • Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey, Harrisburg, Pa.

**PBA Midyear Meeting**
Jan. 29-Feb. 2, 2014 • Frenchman’s Reef & Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

**PBA Real, Property, Probate & Trust Law Section Annual Meeting**

**PBA Annual Meeting**
May 14-16, 2014 • Hershey Lodge, Hershey, Pa.

Check the PBA Events Calendar at www.pabar.org for more information, or call the PBA at 800-932-0311.