Write About Your Favorite Books, Authors for the Lawyer Magazine

The editors of the PBA’s Pennsylvania Lawyer magazine are planning an issue focused on lawyers’ favorite books, and the editors want to hear from you for the issue. What books and authors have sparked your interest? Entertained you? Given you insight or provided escape? In about 200 words, describe the books and writers you especially like and why. Classics or current, fiction or nonfiction? Summer beach reading? Weekend reading? What selections would you list among your top 10? Was there a book that made a real difference to you? And what’s your preference: traditional book or e-book? Email your contribution for the favorite-books issue to editor@pabar.org.

PBA YLD Seeking 2016-17 Leadership Nominations

The PBA Young Lawyers Division’s Nominating Committee is accepting applications from YLD members interested in seeking nominations to run as candidates for the YLD’s 2016-17 chair-elect, secretary, treasurer and ABA representative positions. The terms for those elected will begin at the conclusion of the 2016 Annual Meeting in Hershey.

Those interested in being nominated by the Nominating Committee under Article IV, Section 2, of the bylaws should submit their qualifications and a brief biographical sketch by March 18 to committee chair Bernard John, John & John, 96 E. Main Street, Uniontown, Pa. 15401. Materials may also be faxed to John at 724-438-8690 or emailed to bcj@johnandjohnlaw.com.

Those who wish to be nominated by petition under Article IV, Section 4, of the bylaws should send their materials with a petition signed by at least 15 members of the YLD by April 12 to the above address or fax number.

Send a copy of all materials to Maria Engles, YLD coordinator, PBA, 100 South St., P.O. Box 186, Harrisburg, Pa. 17108; fax 717-238-7182; maria.engles@pabar.org.

The YLD bylaws are on the PBA website at www.pabar.org/pdf/yldbylaws.pdf.

Call Bernard John at 724-438-8560 with any questions regarding the election process.

Making a Difference

The Pennsylvania Bar News column that highlights Pennsylvania attorneys who make a difference in their communities by providing extraordinary pro bono service and/or other community services in the public interest.

Jason M. Imler
Blair County

Jason M. Imler is an associate at Grabill & Seelye PLLC, Altoona.

Describe your pro bono work.

I have coached several high school mock trial teams and in years where I have not coached I have volunteered as a judge. I regularly volunteer for our local bar association’s Constitution Day presentation and I am organizing next year’s Law Day celebration. I also volunteer with the Blair County Young Lawyers Division’s Wills for Heroes programs. From time to time I have consulted with the PBA on issues in my practice areas. I have also provided pro bono services to local teachers by providing in-service training on various school-law issues.

Until recently I was a public defender, so all of my legal services were “pro bono.” However, at the public defender’s office I would also voluntarily assist clients with non-criminal collateral consequences of their cases. Criminal charges disrupt every portion of a person’s life, and at times the problems caused by the charges—not necessarily the charges themselves—are the bigger trauma and issue for the client. Drawing on my experience in labor and employment law, I would provide them with whatever assistance I was able to within the constraints of my employment.

While at the public defender’s office and as part of the DUI Court team, I worked with Penn State Altoona, Blair County Adult Parole and Probation, and the Blair County Domestic Relations Office to start a six-week program that provides job-acquisition skills training to people with criminal records. The program teaches participants how to do everything from finding potential opportunities to answering the tough interview questions about their backgrounds. The program has a tremendously high placement rate, based in large part on the support of community businesses and the skills that the participants learn. Further, the undergraduates staffing the program gain a great deal of experience.

I serve on the board of our local chapter of the Red Cross and respond as part of the Disaster Action Team when I can. Last year I completed a program offered by the Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Blair County, where I was part of a team that raised money for and renovated the kitchen of a local after-school program that provides dinner and a safe place to hang out for junior and senior high school students.

Why do you participate in pro bono?

I find the service opportunity that pro bono work provides to be extremely rewarding. Further, this service shows the community your commitment to it, which is a great marketing opportunity. Pro bono service is not only rewarding. It can really help establish a reputation for a young attorney.

How did you first become involved?

Two words: David Trevaskis. I met David while he was assisting my father with LRE programs and I began volunteering 15 years ago, right after completing my undergraduate degree. Expanding that service after law school simply made sense and the opportunities to help our community expanded with my new skills.

Have your pro bono cases dealt with legal issues different from your regular practice areas? If so, how did you adapt?

If a novel pro bono case comes my way, I can really help establish a reputation for a young attorney.

What have been the personal rewards?

I believe that my efforts have improved lives in the community. I have impacted students, defendants and the less fortunate. And when I see them doing better, it is very rewarding. Further, it has brought in additional work by raising my community profile, which is great, cost-effective marketing.