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.

Anthony Sottile III, Indiana County

Anthony Sottile III is a partner at Barbor, Sottile & Darr PC in Indiana.

Describe your pro bono work.
Along with Attorney Sarah P. Ross, I co-chair the Indiana County Bar Association Pro Bono Committee. We have a team of approximately 13 attorneys who represent petitioners at their initial protection-from-abuse (PFA) hearings. In addition to my administrative duties as co-chair, I also handle some of these cases. The number of cases depends on the number of PFA filings in the past week, as well as cases continued from prior weeks. I have also participated in our local pro bono referral service, where the court administrator assigns indigent clients to participating attorneys when no other legal aid is available.

Why do you participate in pro bono?
I find my participation in this process to be an ethical and moral obligation. It is one small way for a practicing attorney to give back to the community and to address an increasing area of need.

How did you first become involved?
Due to the foresight of Indiana County President Judge William J. Martin, and as a result of funding reductions to our local legal aid office, the Pro Bono Committee was created in July 2012 to offer pro bono representation to indigent petitioners in PFA cases. When Judge Martin asked, both Attorney Ross and I answered the call to chair the committee.

Have your pro bono cases dealt with legal issues different from your regular practice areas? If so, how did you adapt?
A large part of my practice is family law, so I have been involved with PFA matters for several years.

What have been the personal rewards?
It is always personally satisfying to help persons in need, especially when they are the victims of domestic violence. One client actually took the time to send me a thank you note for helping her with her case. That small token of appreciation meant a great deal to me.

Describe your other community service.
I am secretary of the Indiana County Sports Hall of Fame Board of Directors and a trustee/Past Grand Knight of our local council of the Knights of Columbus. I formerly served as the board chair of the Indiana County Chapter of the American Red Cross and was the Legal Professional Division chair of the United Way of Indiana County Fundraising Campaign.

How does it “make a difference”?
Giving back to the community in which you live always makes a difference. It is especially rewarding when that service addresses an urgent need that can only be provided by a legal professional.

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