

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.

Andrew W. Barbin, Cumberland County



Barbin

Andrew Barbin is a solo practitioner at Andrew W. Barbin PC, Mechanicsburg.

Describe your pro bono work.

I have been active in the pro bono programs of the Dauphin County (DCBA) and Cumberland County Bar Associations, accepting a variety of employment, domestic-relations and general-practice matters. I regularly participate in the PBA's Wills for Heroes programs in several counties, the PBA Young Lawyers Division State-wide High School Mock Trial Competition and PBA Law Day activities, the DCBA's Ask a Lawyer, Neighborhood Dispute Settlement (community mediation) and with the DCBA in the Stand Down event for homeless veterans.

I have performed community-oriented pro bono work for the WWII Honor Bus Program, The Pride of the Susquehanna, the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania, Please Live (suicide prevention) and other secular and religious nonprofits.

Why do you participate in pro bono?

"It is better to give than to receive" is a statement of fact as well as of morality. Special satisfaction comes from meeting needs that might otherwise go unmet. Pro bono clients are almost universally grateful. Gratitude often makes a hard week easier.

How did you first become involved?

I come from a family of lawyers who, by word and deed over generations, inculcated the responsibility and shared the joy of service to the community, including pro bono legal services.

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

Pro bono opportunities have arisen over the years that have taken me off well-trodden trails into areas less familiar. I did not go without guidance. Those who may not be available to undertake a journey can still provide advice. I cannot recall a single time in more than three decades of practice that I called upon a subject-matter specialist who was not willing to give time and advice on a pro bono case when asked.

What have been the personal rewards?

The rewards of pro bono activities over the years are incalculable. The gratitude of clients and the inspired look in the eyes of youth are particular treasures. I am guided and challenged by the writings of Albert Schweitzer, among others. My pro bono work provides opportunities to meet that challenge and to become in a small way a part of the change I seek for my children, their children and generations to come.