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.

Traci L. Naugle, Altoona

Traci L. Naugle, of Sullivan, Forr, Stokan, Huff & Kormanski, Altoona, Blair County, is the co-chair of the PBA Young Lawyers Division Statewide High School Mock Trial Competition, one of the largest high school mock trial programs in the country.

Describe your pro bono work.

In addition to my role with the PBA YLD mock trial competition, I am the coordinator of the Blair County Bar Association Constitution Day program. I also perform community service through my church, Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, Altoona, where I have served as congregational council president.

Why do you participate in pro bono?

I feel that lawyers have a responsibility to inform the public about the legal system. One meaningful way we can do that is through the high school mock trial competitions.

How does it "make a difference"?

My work not only makes a difference in the lives of the students competing in the Statewide High School Mock Trial Competition but also in the lives of their parents and coaches, and the judges and attorneys who volunteer to serve as judges, scoring judges and attorney coaches.

How did you become involved?

My first year in practice I attended the PBA YLD Summer Meeting/New Admittee Conference and was so moved by the stories from the young lawyers around the state making a difference in their communities that I contacted my Zone chair, Tim Burns, and asked how I could get involved. He asked me to take over coordinating the Blair County high school mock trial competition and I have been involved ever since.

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

I do not do much litigation in my practice so I am always impressed at the level of poise the high school students have as they compete in their mock trials.

What have been the personal rewards?

Watching students gain confidence and skills — and have fun — as they compete.

Government Lawyer of the Year Award Nominations Sought

The PBA Government Lawyers Committee is seeking nominations for the 2013 Government Lawyer of the Year Award. The award will honor a practicing lawyer employed by any branch or level of government who has made a singular achievement that demonstrates an outstanding contribution to a governmental entity serving the citizens of the commonwealth or who has dedicated his or her career to a governmental entity for the benefit of the citizens of the commonwealth. The award will be presented at the PBA Committee/Section Day luncheon at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg East on Nov. 21.

The online nomination form can be found in the committee area of the PBA website at www.pabar.org. Nominations are due by Oct. 11.

New Bookmarks Added to PBA Law-Related Education Materials

As part of its law-related education efforts, the PBA has added colorful bookmarks featuring the preamble to the Constitution to the list of materials that lawyers can distribute when presenting law-related programs in schools. PBA members can request the bookmarks, stickies and/or pocket-sized Constitutions by contacting PBA Education and Special Projects Coordinator Susan Etter at susan.etter@pabar.org or 800-932-0311, Ext. 2256. These items are available at no cost, thanks to the generous support of the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation.

The PBA has also announced plans to launch a new and improved civics and law-related education program using Benjamin Franklin’s quip, “A Republic … if you can keep it.” Franklin’s famous remark expressed the value and need for civic education, meaning it is vital that citizens are educated about how our government operates, the rights we possess and the responsibilities we have to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution.

To learn more about how PBA members...