

## **2010 Pro Bono Award Narratives**

### **#1 F. J. Lucchino, Jr.**

F.J. Lucchino and Ms. Kutzavitch have been running the Uptown Legal Clinic since the project opened its doors in 2004. Uptown Legal Clinic operates at Bethlehem Haven, an organization assisting homeless women near downtown Pittsburgh. Debbie and F.J. recruit and schedule volunteer attorneys for the clinic, which meets once a month on a Wednesday evening. Clients at the clinic are able to sit face-to-face with an attorney to talk about and attempt to resolve legal issues. In 2009, a total of 68 clients were helped by the clinic. Because of the dedication of Debbie and F.J., the Uptown Legal Clinic remains a vital resource to low-income residents in Pittsburgh.

### **#2 Deborah L. Kutzavitch, Esq.**

Ms. Kutzavitch and F.J. Lucchino have been running the Uptown Legal Clinic since the project opened its doors in 2004. Uptown Legal Clinic operates at Bethlehem Haven, an organization assisting homeless women near downtown Pittsburgh. Debbie and F.J. recruit and schedule volunteer attorneys for the clinic, which meets once a month on a Wednesday evening. Clients at the clinic are able to sit face-to-face with an attorney to talk about and attempt to resolve legal issues. In 2009, a total of 68 clients were helped by the clinic. Because of the dedication of Debbie and F.J., the Uptown Legal Clinic remains a vital resource to low-income residents in Pittsburgh.

### **#3 Duquesne University School of Law Unemployment Compensation Clinic**

Duquesne University Law students, under the guidance of Adjunct Professor Michael Simon, have very capably represented a significant number of unemployment compensation claimants at referee hearings and on appeal. In so doing, they have each demonstrated a sincere and profound commitment to pro bono service. According to Attorney Simon, "Students' efforts make this go." It is estimated that each current student in the program, under Attorney Simon's instruction, has represented at least 10 pro bono clients and that one student has represented some 30 clients during the two semester course. The clinic receives pro bono referrals from multiple sources, including the Mon Valley Unemployed Committee, Career Links, Neighborhood Legal Services Association, former clients and members of the bar."

### **#4 Cindy Sebastian Conley, Esq.**

Exceptional service to pro bono program.

### **#5 William H. Poole, Jr.**

Exceptional volunteer participation in pro bono program.

## **#6 Powell Law**

The firm's outstanding commitment to pro bono service was demonstrated by the fact that, during 2009, each of the attorneys in the firm at that time accepted at least one pro bono referral from Lackawanna Pro Bono. Those attorneys are James J. Powell III, Christopher T. Powell, Jr., Mark J. Powell, Christopher J. Osborne, and Bruce S. Zero.

## **#7 Mazzoni & Karam**

The firm's outstanding commitment to pro bono service was demonstrated by the fact that each attorney in the firm accepted at least one pro bono case during 2009. Those attorneys are Gerard Karam, Paul Mazzoni, John Petorak, Rocco Valvano, and Christopher Szewczyk.

## **#8 Kelley & Polishan**

The firm's outstanding commitment to pro bono service was demonstrated by the fact that each of the attorneys in the firm accepted at least one pro bono referral from Lackawanna Pro Bono during 2009. Those attorneys are Eugene Kelley, Timothy Polishan, Carrie Buscarini, David Solfanelli, and Patrick Walsh.

## **#9 Dougherty Leventhal & Price**

The firm of Dougherty Leventhal & Price demonstrated outstanding commitment to pro bono service. During 2009, each attorney in the firm's Lackawanna County office accepted at least one pro bono referral from Lackawanna Pro Bono, Inc. Those attorneys are Thomas Cummings, John Finnerty, Sean McDonough, Paul Oven, Joseph Price, and Judith Price.

## **#10 Abrahamsen Conaboy & Abrahamsen**

The firm demonstrated outstanding commitment to pro bono service. During 2009, each of the attorneys actively practicing in the firm's Scranton office accepted at least one pro bono referral from Lackawanna Pro Bono. The five attorneys are Edwin (Ned) A. Abrahamsen, Edwin (Chip) A. Abrahamsen, Jr., James Conaboy, Kevin Conaboy, and Michael Parker.

## **#11 Charles F. Wilson**

Attorney Wilson has shown outstanding commitment to pro bono service by representing numerous pro bono clients referred to him by Lackawanna Pro Bono over the years. Last fall, he represented a pro bono client who was being evicted from public housing. Eviction would have been disastrous to this client, because private housing was well beyond his financial means. Because of Attorney Wilson's dedication and hard work, the eviction was prevented.

## **#12 Michael C. Boland**

Michael C. Boland steadfastly supports MidPenn Legal Services and its clients by participating in pro bono. He accepts cases in a variety of areas, including subsidized housing cases that few private attorneys handle. On more than one occasion he has successfully appealed unemployment compensation losses before a referee to the Board of Review.

As well, he accepts family law cases including custody and protection from abuse.

## **#13 University of Pittsburgh School of Law Unemployment Compensation Practicum**

Aside from lending valuable practical training to future lawyers, the clinic, under the guidance and instruction of Adjunct Professors John Stember and Steven M. Pincus, has provided valuable pro bono representation and counsel to unemployment compensation claimants. Law students working under Attorneys Stember and Pincus have represented many indigent unemployment compensation claimants. The students have individually demonstrated a commitment to pro bono service. Additionally, Attorney Lauren Hoye, a past clinic student, continues, as an associate of Stember, Feldstein, Doyle & Payne, to participate in the clinic, and she provides valuable pro bono representation to individual clients as well. In addition to accepting pro bono referrals, Attorneys Stember, Pincus and Hoye have volunteered significant time and resources in providing unemployment compensation law training to pro bono volunteers within the bar. The students and faculty within the University of Pittsburgh Law School Unemployment Compensation Practicum have demonstrated a sincere and selfless commitment to pro bono service for which they deserve to be recognized.

## **#14 Jill C. Engle, Esq.**

She has been a very active chairperson of the Centre County Bar Association, Pro Bono committee and has promoted more participation of the bar. She has also developed a Family Law Clinic at the Dickinson School of Law that has allowed numerous referrals of low income clients for pro bono services. She also actively serves on MidPenn Legal Services Board.

### **#15 Nicole M. Bordonaro, Esq.**

Nicole created, manages and leads the Civics Education Alliance on behalf of the Governor's Office of General Counsel. The Civics Education Alliance is only one of two pro bono outreach programs in Pennsylvania that bring lawyers to classrooms on a consistent basis and the first and only program that focuses on United States civics and government that serves an entire 8th grade student population.

Nicole is solely responsible for maintaining the schedules and managing the day to day concerns of 26 teams of lawyer volunteers; 7 schools in the Harrisburg School District; and 26 classes of 8th grade students.

In addition, Nicole worked in conjunction with Gareth Pahowka, legal intern for the PA Department of Education and a third year law student at Penn State Dickinson School of Law, to develop the program curriculum (monthly lesson plans and activities) that is aligned with and designed to support PA academic standards for civics and government. Nicole is also responsible for all public relations outreach materials.

The Civics Education Alliance boasts over 140 lawyer volunteers from both the public and private sectors and several judge volunteers, including but not limited to, U.S. 3rd Circuit Judge and First Lady of Pennsylvania, Marjorie O. Rendell; U.S. District Court for the Middle District of PA, Judge John E. Jones; Justices Michael Eakin and Thomas Saylor of the PA Supreme Court; President Judge Bonnie Brigance Leadbetter and Judges Bernard L. McGinley, Mary Hannah Leavitt, John Butler, Patricia McCullough, Rochelle Friedman, Jim Flaherty, James R. Kelley, Keith B. Quigley, Barry F. Feudale of the PA Commonwealth Court; and President Judge Richard Lewis and Judges John Cherry, Bruce Bratton, Jeanine Turgeon of the Dauphin Court of Common Pleas.

### **#16 Christina Hausner**

Chris Hausner has actively participated in the Volunteer Attorney Program and has handled over 55 cases since 1989. In the past, she covered two or three cases each year--usually in such substantive areas as custody, landlord/tenant, civil defense and unemployment. However, this past year, with our shaky economy and prevalence of employment-related cases, Chris has handled denial of unemployment compensation exclusively. A strong and competent advocate, Chris has been quite successful in gaining unemployment benefits for most of these clients.

### **#17 Marylou Matas**

Over the course of attorney Matas' career in Cumberland County, she has made it a priority not only to accept pro bono referrals, but also to seek additional pro bono responsibilities. Accepting numerous family law cases through the Cumberland County Bar Association's Pro Bono Program, she has also conducted clinics to assist clients in navigating the court system on their own. As a member of the county bar's Modest Means Committee, she seeks to locate income-sensitive legal services for the county's working poor. She is also a member of bar's Family Law Section and Carlisle's Early Education Committee and is active in collaborative law. She is a graduate of the Dickinson School of Law and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is an attorney with Saidis, Sullivan Law, with offices in Carlisle and Camp Hill.

### **#18 Kevin M. Taccino**

Kevin regularly handles pro bono cases for MidPenn Legal Services, Franklin County Legal Services and the Law Offices of WIN Victim Services. Kevin has offered immediate help to pro bono clients. Kevin also participates in the bar association pro bono programs. Kevin was instrumental in developing the Wills for Heroes program in Franklin County.

### **#19 Joanne Ross Wilder**

Attorney Wilder has been volunteering with the Westmoreland County Pro Bono Program since 2007. She has helped many indigent clients file for divorce. She is very professional and very efficient in getting the work done.

### **#20 John H. Whitmoyer**

Attorney Whitmoyer always agrees to take bankruptcy cases when we contact him. The clients who have been referred to Attorney Whitmoyer have been extremely complimentary of his professionalism and his caring nature.

### **#21 Linda Shick**

Ms. Shick goes above and beyond in her pro bono commitment in that her famous comment is “load me up”. She will represent 5 or more plaintiffs in protection from abuse cases, if necessary, on any given hearing date.

She always makes herself available for hearing dates around the holidays when it is particularly difficult to schedule attorneys. In the snowstorms over the past winter, Ms. Shick called the Legal Aid office to offer her assistance in representing plaintiffs if the court was open as she was “right in town and could walk to the court.” Each of the victims of domestic violence she represents receives the benefits of years of legal experience. She often makes herself available to the victims by phone, even after the hearing date, to answer any questions and guide them through the maze of the legal system.

### **#22 Dorothy L. Mott**

Not only has Dorie Mott and her firm donated countless hours, they are also willing to take emergency pro bono bankruptcy cases. MidPenn Legal Services has other pro bono attorneys that are willing to take regular pro bono bankruptcy cases. However, Dorie’s efforts are unique and especially worthy of recognition due to Dorie’s repeated willingness to take these frequent emergency cases.

### **#23 Matthew F. Fox, Esq.**

Mr. Fox has been a pro bono attorney for our program for years and has professionally and generously donated his time for between 2-4 cases each year. They are generally family cases and on occasion can be complicated and time consuming.

Mr. Fox’s law firm, Rubin, Glickman, Steinberg and Gifford has a long history and tradition of participating in our program’s pro bono program and many of the firm’s attorneys take pro bono cases each and every year.

### **#24 Aimee M. Taylor, Esq.**

Ms. Taylor is always willing to take pro bono cases, providing clients with excellent representation. Her dedication and commitment to the Pro Bono Project is a tremendous asset to the Pro Bono Project, as well as the clients she represents.

### **#25 Kristen m. Daniels, Esq.**

Ms. Daniels, without hesitation, has accepted numerous pro bono custody cases. She is always willing to take on difficult cases, and represented her clients at several hearings and/or until the cases are concluded.

### **#26 Richard E. Filippi**

He has gone beyond the call of duty in taking pro bono cases from our program and conflict cases through the Erie County Bar Association. His primary case involved a tenant being evicted from public housing in which he successfully maintained the client's housing following two appeals to Superior Court.

### **#27 Catherine Voit**

Cathy has become a tremendous asset to our organization. In addition to donating countless hours of representation to the lower income residents of Chester County she has also taken on the task of being an advocate for Legal Aid within the CCBA, volunteered for the Trial Run committee and donated financially to both Legal Aid and the Trial Run.

### **#28 Senior Lawyers Professional and Public Service Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association**

Members of this committee provided pro bono services to the public and the profession, including a panel that conducted pre-trial conferences on behalf of the Court of Common Pleas of the First Judicial District on appeals from arbitration, thus eliminating a significant backlog; members assisted lawyers who are ill and families of deceased lawyers in dealing with open files, thus protecting the clients and others involved in open cases; members mentored young lawyers; and members assisted in monitoring election law complaints in Philadelphia; members also assisted victims of crimes and their families.

### **#29 Jeffrey Bowe**

Attorney Bowe has participated in our pro bono program for several years. He has helped numerous clients obtain divorce decrees. He treats all his clients with respect.

### **#30 Hon. Marc Lovecchio**

Like many of our volunteers, unless he has a conflict of interest, he takes the call and then takes the referral. He has been our go-to person for many years - as some may say a “multiple threat performer” – be it landlord/tenant (well before he started representing landlords), consumer, school expulsions, employment, and family, he has been willing and never shies away from the controversial nor the unpopular. As a matter of fact colleagues in other offices would call and ask if we thought he would take a referral from their county, and at program wide litigation meetings others would bemoan that they wished they had a “Marc Lovecchio” to refer a certain case. Marc not only took individual cases, he was one of the first and only to volunteer to spend a day at legal services and handle the calls that came in that day ( a short lived program). Over the years he has been available for “mentoring”, as well as case handling. After his election as Judge, I contacted him to find out when we should stop referring cases to him and he said “probably by the end of November.” He took referrals right up to the end. As he moves on to another legal career we will surely miss his volunteer efforts and the oft heard retort when we have a case that is out of the ordinary, time consuming and contentious, “I wonder if Marc would take this referral?”

### **#31 Hon. Michael E. McCarthy (Judges Award)**

Judge McCarthy manages the Allegheny County “Save Your Home” mortgage foreclosure conciliation program. In response to the growing numbers of residential foreclosure actions in Allegheny County, Judge McCarthy and then President Judge Joseph James worked closely with the court and county offices, the county Sheriff, the Allegheny County Bar Foundation, Neighborhood Legal Services Association, lenders’ representatives, and area housing counseling agencies to create a program to divert foreclosure actions to a conciliation program. The “Save Your Home” program allows defendants to opt in to a program in which they are matched with a housing counseling agency in attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution of the foreclosure action. In appropriate cases, defendants are referred to a volunteer attorney who further assists in attempting to resolve the case. As of December 2009, over 750 borrowers have participated in the program.

### **#32 Hon. Joseph M. James (Judges Award)**

In response to the growing numbers of residential foreclosure actions in Allegheny County, Judge James--who was then President Judge of Allegheny County--worked closely with the court and county offices, the county Sheriff, the Allegheny County Bar Foundation, Neighborhood Legal Services Association, lenders’ representatives, and area housing counseling agencies to create a program to divert foreclosure actions to a conciliation program. The “Save Your Home” program allows defendants to opt in to a program in which they are matched with a housing counseling agency in attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution of the foreclosure action. In appropriate cases, defendants are referred to a volunteer attorney who further assists in attempting to resolve the case. As of December 2009, over 750 borrowers have participated in the program. The program is supervised by Judge Michael McCarthy.

### **#33 Nicole Scialabba, Esq. (Civil Legal Aid Award)**

Nicole Scialabba's commitment to legal services began as a law student at Duquesne University and has continued in her professional career as a legal aid attorney. At Duquesne, Nicole served as the Pro Bono Student Coordinator and the chair of the Public Interest Law Association. She also worked at Neighborhood Legal Services Association (NLSA) as an intern, where she assisted in the Family Law Clinic and the Elder Law Program, researched various legal issues for staff attorneys, advised clients on landlord tenant issues on the Helpline, and interviewed clients and attended landlord tenant and unemployment compensation hearings. Now a full-time attorney at NLSA, Nicole is the Employment Project Coordinator. In the past year, Nicole took cases referred by the new federal probationers "ECSEL" project, which helps former federal inmates with legal issues that are impediments to reenter the work force, such as drivers license restatement and criminal records expungement.

Nicole is also active in the Allegheny County Bar Association, leading the coordination of pro bono and public service projects. She is an inspiration to her fellow young attorneys.