

**Legal Services to the Public Committee  
Committee/Section Day Meeting Minutes  
June 10, 2005**

Present at the meeting were: Al Azen, Sandy Ballard, Joe Campagna, Sam Cooper, Susan K. Danforth, Jim DeAngelo, Susan R. Emmons, Liz Fritsch (Co-Chair), Derek Green (Co-Vice Chair), George Gvozdich, Jr., Sylvia Hahn, James Kearney, Christine Kirby, Barb Kittrell, Lora Kulick, Kathy Manderino, Jonathan P. Miller, Iva Munk, Samuel Rosensweig, Dveera Segal (Co-Chair), William H. G. Warner, Joanne Ross Wilder (Co-Vice Chair) and Charles T. Young. Micah Davis, Meagan LeMelle, and Niva Lind were present as interns for the Dauphin County Bar Association. Dale Schell and David Keller Trevaskis represented the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

David Trevaskis welcomed everyone to the meeting and began introductions. The meeting was chaired by Liz Fritsch, the senior of the two Co-Chairs of the Committee. She acknowledged the returning leadership (Dveera Segal moving from Co-Vice Chair to Co-Chair and Derek Green returning as Co-Vice Chair) and welcomed Joanne Ross Wilder as the newly appointed Co-Vice Chair.

Trevaskis began his Pro Bono Coordinator's report as PBA President Bill Carlucci arrived to bring greetings to the Committee. Carlucci noted his long support of pro bono service and legal aid. He also pointed out that his home county, Lycoming County, was a past Goffman Award winner for its pro bono efforts. Carlucci encouraged the Committee to submit resolutions to the Board of Governors and the House of Delegates and he promised to be a strong voice for civil legal aid both through his role as PBA President and through his service on the IOLTA Board.

Trevaskis reported that the Pro Bono Office and the Committee have spent significant time this past year working on and promoting two electronic tools to help serve the civil legal aid needs of the state. The first, PALawHelp.Org<sup>1</sup>, was designed as a pro se site for clients but has evolved into a tool utilized more heavily by attorneys and others looking to find resources for clients. The site provides the structural backbone for the Office of General Counsel's Virtual Law Clinic that was featured at this year's American Bar Association's Equal Justice Conference. That program, jointly organized by the PBA, Pennsylvania Legal Services, the Dauphin County Bar Association and MidPenn Legal Services, connects clients who qualify for legal services but cannot be helped because of limited resources, with OGC lawyers who try to help them work through their legal concerns.

PAprobono.net<sup>2</sup> is an even more ambitious project, designed to provide resources for pro bono attorneys and to help facilitate the matching of providers and their cases with interested and competent pro bono lawyers. Law firms, law schools and legal services providers are currently meeting to determine how best to utilize this site in Pennsylvania. The promise of the site is great; in San Francisco, over 85% of all pro bono placements occur through the site. Much of the 9/11 pro bono support was organized through the New York version of the website. The

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<sup>1</sup> The website is described at <http://www.pabar.org/palawhelpinfo.shtml>.

<sup>2</sup> This website is described at <http://www.pabar.org/probono/featuresPAprobononet.shtml>.

website allows programs to target lawyers in specific areas with specific interests so that the whole field is not bombarded with irrelevant material. Trevaskis concluded by explaining that an IOLTA Pro Bono Grant to the PBA for July 2005 through June 2006 will allow for greater emphasis on Paprobono.net.

Sam Cooper then presented an update on the Task Force on Loan Forgiveness and Debt Reduction. Cooper, a Tri-Chair of the Task Force, shared with the Committee that there is an initiative currently underway directed to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania exploring the possibility of imposing a fee upon out-of-state lawyers seeking pro hac vice admission in Pennsylvania. Currently, Pennsylvania does not impose a charge on pro hac vice admissions, although many states do. Cooper explained that the Task Force hopes that, if Pennsylvania adopts such a fee, funds collected might be dedicated, at least in part, to support loan repayment assistance for public service attorneys. Second, Cooper noted that there was a very productive preliminary meeting in Harrisburg with representatives of PHEAA and several members of the Task Force. The Task Force is exploring the possibility of establishing a statewide repayment assistance program that would be administered by PHEAA, assuming that a program was authorized by the General Assembly. Cooper concluded by noting that PBA President Carlucci is eager for the Task Force to make progress on its work and he has asked the Task Force to deliver a preliminary report on its work at the next House of Delegates meeting in November.

With all of this in mind, Cooper said that the tri-chairs of the Task Force have met by conference call to develop the a list of proposed next steps that members of the Task Force should be working on in preparation for the next full Task Force meeting in early fall. He shared those steps with the Committee and asked for the Committee's input.

Trevaskis and Derek Green then gave a report on the recent, fourth Pro Bono Conference held by the Committee that was tied to the annual meeting in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, May 4, 2005.<sup>3</sup> Fritsch and others who attended the program declared the event a great success. Trevaskis noted that a 4<sup>th</sup> Northeastern Pro Bono Conference will be held this fall in Scranton by Lackawanna Pro Bono, Inc. on Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>. One of the highlights of this year's event was that the Pro Bono Awards were given during the Pro Bono Conference;<sup>4</sup> Two new awards were implemented for the 2005 Pro Bono Conference: an award for a judge and an award for a civil legal aid attorney.<sup>5</sup>

Sam Milkes then gave an update on Pennsylvania Legal Services, highlighting the Martin Luther King fellowships now in place at Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania and MidPenn legal Services. He summarized the recent PLS statewide training event and discussed briefly the potential impact of the state budget. Al Azen then made a short IOLTA report, noting the funding of law schools at \$200,000 each per year and sharing with the Committee certain issues on the funding streams that flow into the IOLTA program.

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.pabar.org/pdf/05anmtgbrochureweb.pdf> for the Annual Meeting Program and the Pro Bono Conference agenda.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.pabar.org/probono/pbaw.shtml> for 2005 winners and a list of all past winners.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.pabar.org/probono/ReedMemo.pdf> for more detail on the two new awards.

Next followed a detailed discussion led by Milkes about the Sunset Provision on the Access to Justice Act and about efforts to eliminate that sunset. The Committee authorized a resolution to be submitted to the Board of Governors for its consideration; the following resolution was drafted subsequently:

The PBA Legal Services to the Public Committee submits the following resolution for consideration:

Whereas the Access to Justice Act was passed in 2002 to raise much needed funding for legal services to the neediest among us in Pennsylvania; and

Whereas the Access to Justice Act has provided funding which is vital to the continued strength and effectiveness of legal services programs in Pennsylvania and to the delivery of legal assistance to thousands of Pennsylvanians in the face of uncertain and inconsistent funding from other sources; and

Whereas the Access to Justice Act was passed with a five-year sunset provision which will cause this much needed funding for legal services to end in 2007; and

Whereas the PBA had supported an earlier version of the Access to Justice Act which did not contain any sunset provision:

Be it resolved that the Pennsylvania Bar Association endorses efforts to repeal and eliminate the sunset provision through the adoption of appropriate legislation, and authorizes the President to use the resources of the PBA through its leadership, legislative office and other means to help achieve that repeal and elimination.

The Board of Governors unanimously passed the resolution (with at-large Governor Kathy M. Manderino abstaining).

The Committee was updated on the new Military Affairs Committee which will be taking over the LAMP duties and it was noted that Trevaskis and Schell are staffing the new committee.

The final business of the meeting was a report on the County Pro Bono Activity Survey. Trevaskis reported that Schell would soon be contacting the people identified in a survey undertaken by PBA and PLS interns to check the status on local pro bono efforts.