This year marks the 28th year that the PBA Legal Service to the Public Committee has presented awards. As we celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta this year, we all realize how much work has been done to achieve justice and how much more work still remains. This is our chance to recognize and thank those who have used their talents to help the needy in your county. While the obstacles to equal access to justice continue to mount, the willingness of attorneys to help meet the legal needs of the indigent in their communities is important to those in need of service and bestows honor upon our great profession.

Pictured with PBA Pro Bono Coordinator David Trevaskis (left), Jones Day attorneys Jeffrey Immel (center) and Devin Winklosky accept the Pro Bono Award on behalf of Jones Day's Veterans Legal Clinic. In June 2008, Jones Day helped launch a Veterans Legal Clinic through the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership. Jones Day and its volunteers have been silent heroes as they have steadily helped veterans in our community. The clinic meets with clients and works with the Veterans Leadership Program in person and by phone, offering legal advice and assistance on a variety of topics including child custody, landlord/tenant, veterans' benefits, and general consumer issues. The clinic volunteers help veterans returning from conflict and service get back on track and move on with their lives. Jones Day has not only responded to the legal needs of our veterans but has also worked on education and community outreach to assist even more veterans recognizing the growing need for help. The Veterans Legal Clinic has undoubtedly enriched the lives of countless veterans who have served our country. "As chair of the partnership, it truly is my privilege to work with some outstanding volunteers and projects and while I think all pro bono volunteers and all the partnership projects are deserving of recognition and awards, I can think of no program more deserving of special recognition for all it has accomplished in the last six years." - Katie Kenyon, chair of the partnership.

PBA Zone 12 Gov. Jay N. Silberblatt congratulates Immel and Winklosky.
Kathryn Kenyon accepts the Pro Bono Award on behalf of Meyer, Unkovic & Scott LLP from Trevaskis. Shortly after joining the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership and its administrative board, Meyer Unkovic launched a Section 8 legal services project that provides representation to individuals and families who have been denied Section 8 or public housing. Most recently, Meyer Unkovic expanded its Section 8 project to include assistance to tenants seeking to appeal magisterial district judgments. Meyer Unkovic’s Landlord Tenant Project has been met with great success, representing tenants who would otherwise face the legal process on their own. Meyer Unkovic has created a culture to encourage and recognize pro bono services. The firm’s approach is tremendously effective and making a dramatic difference in numerous lives.

"Meyer Unkovic has obviously created a culture to encourage and recognize pro bono services. Their approach is tremendously effective and making a dramatic difference in numerous lives. Meyer Unkovic deserves to be commended and receive recognition for its tremendous efforts and dedication." - Katie Kenyon, chair of the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership.
Trevaskis presents a Pro Bono Partner Award to Heather Fink. Fink's involvement with the Divorce Law Project has helped to achieve better service for clients. Heather's work as a paralegal for Edgar Snyder's divorce clients has been carefully executed and she is always sure to provide the best and most appropriate care to those clients. Heather has raised matters with Divorce Law Project administration that have helped the project to improve, including raising questions of immigration procedures and working on how to improve the training process for new volunteers. “She is always very professional and it is very clear that she cares very much about achieving optimum service to clients and to the profession.” - Liz Gaetani, ACBF pro bono coordinator.

From left: Gaetani, Albert, Silberblatt, Trevaskis, Fink and Griffin.

Emily Jeannette Kaufmann accepts a PBA Pro Bono Award from Trevaskis. Kaufmann has been volunteering at the Neighborhood Legal Services Association (NLSA) since November 2012, assisting the attorneys who do NLSA's Social Security Disability Insurance work. Her offer of help came at a most opportune time, as NLSA was in the process of laying off staff because of a reduction in funding from both the national and state level, and when one of NLSA's SSDI attorneys was on maternity leave. In the years that she has been volunteering at NLSA, her level of commitment has been astounding. As of mid-July 2014, she had provided NLSA with more than 687 hours of assistance, most of it in the office, interviewing and
advising clients, assisting with case preparation, mentoring staff and participating in the training of new volunteers. Absent her help, NLSA would not have been able to continue to provide the level of services to SSDI clients which they have been able to maintain. NLSA has become a better program for the services she has and is continuing to provide. "I have appreciated having Jenny as a mentor in the office and a help to our clients, and I think I have become a better Social Security lawyer for working with her." - Katy McKee, staff attorney at NLSA.

From left: Gaetani, Albert, Silberblatt, Kaufman, Griffin and Trevaskis.

Amy G. Carpenter accepts the PBA Civil Legal Aid Attorney of the Year Award from Trevaskis. Carpenter is a staff attorney at NLSA, where she has worked for the past 14 years. Prior to coming to NLSA, she was a staff attorney for two and half years at Southern Allegheny Legal Aid in Altoona. Along with her fellow Helpline attorneys at NLSA, Amy talks to thousands of callers every year who are seeking legal advice. This allows her to hear first-hand the legal issues facing individuals with low incomes in our communities. Amy is an active member of the Allegheny County Bar Association’s (ACBA) Public Service Committee, regularly attending meetings and participating in community outreach projects such as the Backpack Project and Law Day. This year she also played on a committee’s bocce team at the annual ACBA Golf and Bocce Tournament, the proceeds of which help support NLSA and the Pro Bono Center. Amy is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and holds of BA in International/Global Studies from American University. “Her insight helps the pro bono community identify areas of need for free legal services and develop programs to meet those needs.” - Barbara Griffin, director of the ACBF Pro Bono Center.
Sarah Carlins (not pictured) has administered and run the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership's Custody Conciliation Project for years. She plans and oversees the training of all the volunteer attorneys and coordinates intake and review of the applications for prospective clients of the project. Sarah then matches volunteer attorneys with the clients. She serves as a mentor on this project having volunteered for numerous conciliations herself. Sarah's devotion to the Partnership and this project in particular are tireless. In addition to these administrative duties and her actual volunteer time, Sarah also sits on the Administrative Board of the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership. She is an integral and active member, always stepping in to help. Through Sarah's leadership of the custody conciliation project, she has ensured that needy clients have legal representation at custody conciliations. The clients, individuals and families, she has helped directly and indirectly by this point are several hundred. Sarah works hard to balance her family, private practice and giving back to the community. "She makes it look easy and I hope her commitment and selflessness can be recognized." - Katie Kenyon, chair of the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership.