

For Immediate Release

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Unique Business – Legal Collaboration to be Honored at Bar Dinner

- Group Raises Over \$300,000 to Hire A Family Law Lawyer at MidPenn Legal Services for Five Years

MidPenn Legal Services York Advisory Board, a volunteer group composed of both lawyers and business professionals, will be among those recognized at the York County Bar Association Dinner at Heritage Hills on January 8, 2008 at 6 PM. The Advisory Board conducted a successful campaign to raise funds to hire a family law attorney at MidPenn Legal Services, which provides free legal aid to low income residents. Some 50% of MidPenn's caseload involves family law matters. The Advisory Board sought to increase their capacity in this critical area. With governmental funding flat, they turned to a partnership of the business and legal communities. The campaign was co-chaired by retired bank president and civic leader Robert W. Pullo and William C. Gierasch, Jr. Esq. of Stock and Leader. The campaign took place between July and December 2007 and raised \$311,000.

Recent Weidner Law grad Kim Lengert hit the ground running on October 1 and has already worked on 69 cases, 59 of which were custody matters. Attorney Lengert said, "I began as the Family Law Attorney at MidPenn on October 1st, 2007. In addition to Custody proceedings, I represent victims of domestic violence at PFA hearings, and provide assistance to clients going through custody and divorce clinics without an attorney of their own. It is an honor to be involved with an organization that helps people with their problems." As a Lutheran minister with over eighteen years of experience prior to going to law school, Kim is very aware of the importance of the stability of the family.

To kick start the campaign the York County Bar Foundation approved a challenge grant in July in the amount of \$125,000 over five years, provided that an equal amount could be raised from the business community. Outgoing Bar President Daniel M. Frey said both the York County Bar Association and the York County Bar Foundation unanimously passed the motion supporting the grant. The Bar already makes an annual contribution of \$35,000 to MidPenn and many attorneys contribute by handling cases for no fee through the Bar's pro bono program. In the last two years lawyers have provided legal representation valued at \$137,550.

The campaign was an exciting and novel partnership between the York Bar and private businesses concerned with the quality of justice in our community. MidPenn Advisory Board Chair Joan E. Book, Esq. said their group scheduled awareness breakfasts at both the Glatfelter Insurance Group and

Stock and Leader. Commerce Bank Vice President Susan Nagorny spoke about the work of MidPenn and the need for additional help. Additional Advisory Board members include: Susan Crawford, DENTSPLY International Director of Global Performance Systems; Ray R. Fidler, Esq., Glatfelter Insurance Group General Counsel; Angie Kraft, also from Glatfelter Insurance Group; and William C. Gierasch, Jr. Esq. of Stock and Leader.

Pennsylvania Bar President Andy Susko, on hand to honor attorney Gierasch with the PBA Pro Bono Award, noted: "Providing access to legal services for those who cannot afford to pay for a lawyer's representation is essential to a fair justice system that is truly accessible to everyone. This is especially so in circumstances where housing is being taken away, medical benefits are being terminated or the welfare of a child is endangered."

Susko has made improving access to civil legal aid for the neediest among us the central mission of his PBA Presidency and he touted the York effort as a model for others to follow: "The outstanding and innovative work of the York County Bar Association and Bar Foundation have served to improve greatly meaningful access to the justice system and stand as a shining example of layers improving our justice system."

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For further information: James Kearney, MidPenn Legal Services Director of Development - 299-0971 x 2215

Donors:

\$125,000

York County Bar Association Foundation

\$25,000 or more

DENTSPLY International

United Way of York County

\$10,000 or more

Barley Snyder

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Commonwealth Supply

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Susquehanna Pfaltzgraff Foundation
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\$5000 or more

Blakely, Yost, Bupp & Rausch
Robert W. Pullo

\$2500 or more

Griffith, Strickler, Lerman Solymos & Calkins
William C. Gierasch, Jr., Esq.
Miller, Poole & Lord

\$1000 or more

Joan E. Book , Esq
Fredrick and Barrie Callahan
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Kinsley Construction
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