

Lackawanna County 2010 National Pro Bono Week Events

Lackawanna County 2010 National Pro Bono Week got an early start and a late ending in Scranton at bookend events over two weeks, first with a major fundraiser and then a less formal reception, celebrated pro bono service and the work of Lackawanna Pro Bono.

Carlene R. Gallo, attorney and president of Lackawanna Pro Bono, had a smile on her face as she looked around the ballroom at the Scranton Cultural Center on Thursday night, October 21, 2010 as it slowly filled up with community leaders from all over the county.

In addition to raising thousands of dollars for the nonprofit that helps people who cannot afford legal representation, the 175 people mingling and munching on finger food was, for Ms. Gallo, a visual representation of the support they receive.

"It's incredible to see so many here," she said. "It validates our feelings that we're meeting needs in the community."

It is the second year Lackawanna Pro Bono has held the fundraising gala, and the second year that the board of directors selected attorneys to honor for community involvement.

"We wanted to recognize lawyers who are doing good in our community," Lackawanna Pro Bono secretary/treasurer Robert Gownley Jr. said.

Thursday's dinner honored attorneys Ned and Mary Ann Abrahamsen, attorney George V. and Patti Lynett, and the Scranton Area Foundation for contributions to the community.

Mr. and Mrs. Abrahamsen and their law firm, Abrahamsen, Conaboy & Abrahamsen, have been recognized by the Lackawanna County Bar Association and the Pennsylvania Bar Association for their work with the group.

"It's such a great organization," Mr. Abrahamsen said. "We as lawyers have to give back to the community. Every lawyer in our firm takes at least one pro bono case each year."

Mr. Lynett, a publisher emeritus of The Times-Tribune and chief executive officer of Times-Shamrock Communications, is co-chairman of the Scranton Plan. Mrs. Lynett is involved in a number of community groups and charities, including the Everhart Museum and Catholic Social Services. In 2009, the couple co-chaired the United Way Drive of Lackawanna and Wayne Counties.

The Scranton Foundation helps charities across the city, including endowing nine funds that benefit Lackawanna Pro Bono.

Also in attendance at Thursday's dinner were U.S. Rep. Paul E. Kanjorski, D-11, Nanticoke, U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, his mother and former Pennsylvania first lady, Ellen Casey, Sister Adrian Barrett, I.H.M. and PBA Pro Bono Coordinator David Trevaskis.

Trevaskis would be back in Scranton two weeks later on November 4th with PBA President Gretchen Mundorff for Lackawanna Pro Bono's Pro Bono Reception at Cooper's Restaurant to hand out Pro Bono Awards and celebrate the good work of Scranton area lawyers and judges.