

WILLS FOR HEROES

Wills for Heroes Program seeks Lawyer Volunteers to participate in an Event at Widener-Harrisburg School of Law to provide local First Responders with Free Estate Planning Documents

The Pennsylvania Bar Association in partnership with Widener-Harrisburg School of Law and its Trial Advocacy Honor Society is sponsoring a day long Wills for Heroes Event to provide free Wills and powers of attorneys to Dauphin County firefighters, police officers and others

WHERE: Second Floor of the Widener University School of Law, L 203; 3800 Vartan Way, Harrisburg, PA

WHEN: Saturday, April 17, 2010 from 9 AM – 5 PM.

WHAT: "Wills for Heroes" is a free service that provides wills, living wills and financial powers of attorneys to first responders and their spouses/partners. At the conclusion of one-hour appointments with lawyer volunteers, first responders receive notarized legal documents.

WHY: First responders selflessly devote their lives to serving their communities. Despite the inherently dangerous nature of their jobs, an overwhelmingly large number of first responders – approximately 80 – 90% – do not have wills (This figure is based on experiential data from state and national first responder organizations.).

Event Information

10 to 20 lawyers and at least 3 notaries and 6 witnesses (who do not have to be lawyers) are needed for the event. Volunteers do not need to practice trust and estate law. A mini-course will be given the morning of the event to familiarize volunteers with what they need to know. Also, several lawyers who are well-versed in estate planning will be available to answer any questions that may arise.

The event usually runs from 9 AM – 5 PM with training from 9 – 11. Appointments begin at 11 AM and run through 4 PM. Breakfast and lunch are provided.

About the Wills for Heroes Program

The Wills for Heroes program was founded by Anthony Hayes, a South Carolina lawyer who wanted to do something meaningful to help the country after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. He met with South Carolina firefighters and noted a glaring need for estate planning services.

The Wills for Heroes program was initiated in Pennsylvania by Daniel McKenna, a Philadelphia-based Ballard Spahr attorney and board member of the Wills for Heroes Foundation. The Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyers Division adopted Wills for Heroes as one of its statewide public service projects in spring 2009.

Each participant sits with a lawyer to review a questionnaire that the participant has filled out in advance. Answers are entered into a computer-based program. The lawyer reviews the resulting document with the participant to ensure its accuracy. After any necessary corrections are made, the will is printed, signed and notarized.

Upon request, lawyer volunteers also will work with each participant to prepare an advance medical directive, often called a "living will," which specifies what actions should be taken for the participant's health in the event that he or she can no longer make decisions due to illness or incapacity. In addition, lawyers will prepare a durable power of attorney, a document that gives another person legal authority to act on behalf of the participant if the participant becomes incapacitated. These documents also are offered at no cost to participants.

More information about this program can be found at the Wills for Heroes Foundation site (<http://www.willsforheroes.org>) and the projects section of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Web page (<http://www.pabar.org/public/yld>). If you are new to Wills for Heroes, there is a registration form provided by the PBA you can complete. Please link to their [online registration form](#). Feel free to contact Hillary Prutzman, the student coordinator, at hprutzman@gmail.com or Lisa Shearman, the regional coordinator, at las@plotnickellis.com with any questions or to sign up!