As the 122nd President of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, I am delighted to be here tonight to celebrate the pro bono accomplishments of the Lycoming Law Association. Rule of Professional Responsibility 6.1 celebrates "pro bono" service, which is short for *pro bono publico*, a Latin term that means "for the public good." Although the term is used in different contexts to mean "the offering of free services," it has a very specific meaning for us in the legal profession. *Pro bono* service enhances access to justice for the neediest among us.

2017 year marks the 30th year that the Pennsylvania Bar Association has honored lawyers with Pro Bono awards for enhancing access to justice for the neediest among us. It is doubly fitting that the first such award of 2017 goes to a Lycoming County attorney, Jennifer B. Ayers. It is fitting both because of the wonderful work attorney Ayers has done and because Lycoming County has been a model of pro bono partnership with the Bar, Court and Legal Aid all working in concert to help those in need here.

When Jennifer Ayers first started practicing law in Lycoming County, she contacted what was then Susquehanna Legal Services to see how she could volunteer to do pro bono representation. She did that until she was ultimately hired by Legal Services as a staff attorney. During financial difficulties, what had become North Penn Legal Services was forced to downsize and Jen was an unfortunate victim of that downsizing. However, even though she was no longer a staff attorney, her devotion to providing Legal Services to the indigent did not end. Since her layoff and return to private practice, Jen has continued to do more than her share of pro bono representation. She is the go to person for the Williamsport office when there are conflicts or a need for representation in neighboring counties. She participates in the Protection From Abuse Panel and the Unemployment Compensation Panel. She is involved with expungements and has recently volunteered to help with our forthcoming expungement clinic. Jennifer also serves on the Legal Services to the Indigent Committee where she is able to promote civil legal services within the Law Association.

Jennifer recently had a case that involved a claimant's termination from a Civil Service job. This case involved Jennifer, on her own dime, traveling to Harrisburg for a civil service hearing. She was successful in a recovery for the client. In addition to the hours that were spent on this case with research, travel and representation, Jennifer also continued to accept referrals in other types of cases while this case was ongoing. In making her nomination, people who know said that while she is no longer employed at Legal Services, her heart is still with the Legal Services community.

Some of the more recent comments on client Evaluation Forms regarding Jennifer are as follows: "She was very professional and kind. I would highly recommend her awesome experience!” “Great person. Jennifer was very knowledgeable and helpful with my case which as to get a PFA against my ex-husband.” Finally, “Jennifer was very friendly and very helpful with her advice.”
Chief Justice Saylor will soon come out with his annual pro bono letter in which he and I thank Pennsylvania lawyers for supporting access to justice for Pennsylvania’s poor. I am pleased to provide that thanks in person tonight.