

Public Service Committee
2010-2011 Year-End Report
Submitted by: Barbara L. Payne

The Public Service Committee has made several significant contributions to the Allegheny County Bar Association this year in meeting the Committee's goal of promoting and encouraging members of the Bar to provide pro bono services to, and to sponsor public service projects for, the residents of Allegheny County.

In August 2010 the Committee considered nominees for the 2010 ACBA Pro Bono Achievement Awards and voted for the recipients, who received their awards at the 13th Annual Fellows Reception held at the August Wilson Center for African American Culture in September, 2010. Nine recipients, including attorneys, a law firm, a corporate legal department, a paralegal association, a law school clinic, and a judge were honored for their outstanding commitment to free services.

The Committee also organized and held the fourth annual "Backpack Project" to help students attending elementary schools in the Pittsburgh area and children in temporary housing at two area homeless shelters. This effort was spearheaded by Jon McAnney and other members of the Committee. Through the efforts of Committee members, donations were received which provided the school and homeless shelters with over 1,000 backpacks filled with supplies. In October, the Committee approved implementation of the project for 2011 with a goal of 1,000 backpacks. The Committee surpassed its goal and provided 1,500 backpacks for children.

The Pro Bono Celebration of Volunteers was hosted by the Committee in May 2011 at the U.S. Steel Building providing hors d'oeuvres, chocolates and wine tastings, as well as live jazz in a beautiful setting to thank the more than 75 volunteer attorneys and judges who attended. This wonderful event was chaired by Kelly Williams.

In May 2011, the Committee approved a resolution express support for continuation of temporary filing fees that are used to support legal aid programs across the state and in Allegheny County, such as Neighborhood Legal Services Association. The resolution was subsequently approved by the ACBA Board of Governors.

Throughout the year, the Committee continued to investigate several pro bono legal and public service opportunities.

For the 2011-2012 year, the Public Service Committee will again be nominating and voting on the recipients for the ACBA Pro Bono Achievement Awards and the PBA Pro Bono Awards. We will review projects we have done for the past several years and explore other ways to provide services to the community, enhance the provision of legal services to low-income individuals, and support attorney volunteerism.

The Public Service Committee remains a very active and involved committee of attorneys dedicated to serving the community.