Allegheny County Bar Foundation to Honor Five Individuals, Two Organizations with 2017 Pro Bono Achievement Awards

Awards to be Presented at Nov. 1 Fall Foundation Reception at Renaissance Hotel

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Bar Foundation is dedicated to providing free legal services to individuals facing critical legal issues who cannot afford to hire attorneys to represent them. Each year, through its Pro Bono Achievement Awards, the ACBF recognizes individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to this worthy cause.

The 2017 Pro Bono Achievement Awards will be handed out at the ACBF Fall Foundation Reception on Wednesday, Nov. 1, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh.

The following five individuals and two organizations will be honored:

**Lifetime Pro Bono Service Award: Gary M. Lang**

A medical malpractice attorney with Feldstein Grinberg Lang & McKee, Lang has had a distinguished legal career that began with a dedication to helping others, a dedication that has remained for decades. When Lang left his position as an attorney at Neighborhood Legal Services Association in 1981, he did not leave behind his commitment to providing free legal services to the poor. He continued to do pro bono work through his career, then, in 1999, Lang agreed to act as coordinator for his law firm’s representation of domestic violence victims at final protection from abuse hearings. He not only took these cases himself — more than 200 hearing dates over the past 18 years — he also encouraged and facilitated pro bono service by other lawyers at his firm. A Whitehall resident, Lang has served on the NLSA Board of Directors, is an active member of the Allegheny County Bar Association and is an ACBF Charter Fellow and Sustaining Fellow. He is a prior recipient of an ACBA Pro Bono Achievement Award (1999). Lang is highly regarded for this professionalism, competence, civility and compassion.

**Jane F. Hepting Individual Attorney Award: Dorothy Alke**

Alke has been a dedicated volunteer of the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership’s Custody Conciliation Project for more than 10 years, during which time she has represented approximately 60 clients. A corporate attorney at CBS Corporation, Alke has continually been willing to step out of her regular area of practice to help families resolve custody disputes so as to avoid subjecting children to difficult court proceedings. A Lower Burrell native and longtime Robinson Twp. resident, Alke has been an administrative board member of the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership since 2006.

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Lorraine M. Bittner Public Interest Attorney Award: Katherine L.W. Norton

As the Acting Director of Clinical Education at Duquesne University School of Law, Norton works at Family Court, overseeing students who assist approximately 400 individuals each year in navigating the custody process. Prior to joining Duquesne, Norton – a Hamburg, N.Y. native and current Mt. Lebanon resident – was an active pro bono volunteer while in private practice, representing domestic violence victims at final PFA hearings, staffing the court’s Self Help Center and helping families conciliate custody disputes. She has chaired both the ACBA Public Service Committee and the Family Law Section’s Public Service Committee. Norton’s dedication to legal services for the poor began even before she became licensed to practice law. As a student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, she took an extra semester at the Family Law Clinic, where she was on-site at the courthouse helping families through the custody process.

Kathryn M. Kenyon Leadership Award: Jennifer Fox Rabold

A corporate real estate attorney with FedEx Ground, Fox Rabold was the principal architect of her company’s pro bono program, which launched under her leadership in 2011 with a Wills Clinic at the Bridgeville Public Library. Her work with the Allegheny County Library Association led her to identify that site as a place adjacent to a senior-citizen high rise, where potential clients could easily access the services of volunteer attorneys. Soon, she helped expand the project to locations in Crafton and McKees Rocks, both economically-distressed communities greatly in need of free legal help. Since the inception of these clinics, more than 700 clients have met with volunteer attorneys and notaries public to obtain wills and other advanced planning documents.

Under Fox Rabold’s leadership, FedEx Ground’s pro bono participation has expanded to community legal clinics, protection from abuse cases and assistance to veterans and small nonprofit organizations, among other efforts. As a result, FedEx Ground was the recipient of a 2011 ACBA Pro Bono Achievement Award and a 2016 Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network Excellence Award. Apart from her pro bono work, the Collier Twp. resident has served on the boards of numerous nonprofit organizations including the Carnegie Library, the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, Pressley Ridge, and others.

Young Lawyer Award: Joseph R. Williams

While still early in his legal career, Williams is already an experienced and compassionate attorney who uses his professional skills to advance equal access to justice in one of the highest areas of demand for pro bono legal services: family law. A Lore City, Ohio native and current downtown Pittsburgh resident, Williams started his career with a commitment to giving back. He is a former chair of the ACBA Young Lawyers Division and is an active volunteer in PFA and custody matters. Williams serves as a mentor to newer attorneys and encourages them to participate in pro bono programs.

New Pro Bono Initiative Award: Guardian Project at Pietragallo, Gordon, Alfano, Bosick & Raspanti, LLP

This year, the law firm Pietragallo, Gordon, Alfano, Bosick & Raspanti stepped up to fill a gap in legal services for families who seek to establish guardianships for family members with severe disabilities. Without such services, these families struggle to manage important financial and everyday living matters for relatives who are unable to do these tasks on their own. This process is neither brief nor simple and requires the taking of depositions of medical professionals and several court appearances. Undeterred, the firm agreed to help get this new project up and running, take cases and manage it as a “Signature Project” of the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership.

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Over the past year, K&L Gates attorneys in the firm’s Pittsburgh office have spent more than 7,000 hours providing pro bono legal services in a wide variety of programs and practice areas. Particularly impactful has been the firm’s representation of domestic violence victims. K&L Gates has been involved in this effort since 1992, when, as Kirkpatrick & Lockhart, the firm formed NLSA’s first Protection from Abuse Referral team. NLSA currently has several teams to which it refers cases, but none has been more consistent in its response to this need than K&L Gates.

In addition to the representation of clients, K&L Gates has hosted trainings for PFA volunteers on a regular basis, encouraging its own staff to attend and welcome outside attorneys willing to do this pro bono work. This emphasis on training and mentoring has created a well-trained and supervised PFA team. K&L Gates also has been involved with new and cutting-edge pro bono programs, including representing former juvenile criminal defendants in re-sentencing cases following the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in Montgomery v. Louisiana. The firm’s attorneys volunteer for a variety of other programs including Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, immigration law cases and prisoners’ civil rights cases, among many others.

**Additional Award Information:**

*The Jane F. Hepting Individual Attorney Award is given to an attorney who has shown exemplary commitment to or made substantial achievements in pro bono legal services. The ACBF Board of Trustees adopted a resolution in 2002 to name this award in recognition of Jane Hepting’s dedication to the delivery of pro bono legal services through her 26 years as a Neighborhood Legal Services Association attorney, the many and varied pro bono programs that she helped create and implement, her recruitment initiatives and exceptional training programs to attract and prepare volunteer attorneys, her exceptional expenditures of time and energy on behalf of pro bono legal services, and her outstanding commitment and dedication to public service, the legal profession and the community.*

*The Lorraine M. Bittner Public Interest Attorney Award is given to an outstanding and dedicated attorney who is employed by an entity or program whose primary function is the delivery of civil legal services to low-income individuals or organizations that serve the poor or disadvantaged. The award is named in honor of the first attorney to receive it when it was established in 2005, in honor of her exceptional and career-long commitment to the needs of the poor and disadvantaged through her work at Neighborhood Legal Services Association and the Women’s Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh.*

*The Kathryn M. Kenyon Leadership Award is given to an attorney who demonstrates exceptional leadership and commitment to pro bono efforts benefitting the most vulnerable in our communities.*

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**About the ACBF**

The ACBF provides educational programming, promotes public awareness of the legal and judicial systems, renders legal services to low-income clients and provides financial assistance and grants to legal-related organizations. The foundation’s Pro Bono Center helps attorneys fulfill their professional responsibility to provide public interest legal services by creating, managing, and supporting programs that match volunteer attorneys with low-income individuals facing legal issues that threaten their basic human needs. For more information, visit [www.PittsburghProBono.org](http://www.PittsburghProBono.org).