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News Release
For Immediate Release
Sep. 27, 2018

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**Allegheny County Bar Foundation Honors Five Individuals,
One Organization with 2018 Pro Bono Achievement Awards**
Awards were Presented at Sep. 26 Fall Foundation Reception at Fairmont Hotel

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

The 2018 Pro Bono Achievement Awards were presented at the organization’s Fall Foundation Reception on Wednesday, Sep. 26 at the Fairmont Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh.

The following five individuals and one organization were recognized:

Mary Ellen Droll — Lorraine M. Bittner Public Interest Attorney Award

Mary Ellen Droll, a Squirrel Hill resident, is an attorney at Neighborhood Legal Services Association who has dedicated her entire legal career to representing people with very low incomes. Her colleagues say that her special gift is the empathy, compassion, and patience she shows her clients, while at the same time zealously advocating for their best interests.

Antoinette C. Oliver – Kathryn M. Kenyon Leadership Award

Mt. Lebanon’s Antoinette Oliver is the Immediate-Past President of the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership and a recognized leader in Allegheny County’s legal aid community. In addition to maintaining a busy law practice at Meyer Unkovic & Scott, Oliver dedicates hundreds of hours each year to Partnership projects that she coordinates and for which she continues to volunteer. In 2016—her first year as Chair — the Partnership served nearly 1,000 individual clients across its more than 20 projects.

The Hon. Christine Ward – Judge’s Award

Judge Ward, a Shadyside resident, was honored for her innovative support of and dedication to the Name Change Project, a pro bono program that helps transgender individuals obtain legal identities that match their lived experiences. Judge Ward was instrumental in overhauling the name change process in the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas and now serves as the first Special Name Change Judge.

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Devin A. Winklosky – Jane F. Hepting Individual Attorney Award

Although he is now with Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur, Devin Winklosky – a Hampton Twp. resident – spearheaded efforts with Jones Day and the American Bar Association to develop and launch VetLex, the first ever online network for providing pro bono legal services to veterans. Winklosky’s work in developing VetLex has already had significant positive impact on the clients who have used its resources.

Yuanyou “Sunny” Yang – Young Lawyer Award

Ross Twp.’s Sunny Yang was honored for her work with Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, which provides free legal services to artists with low incomes and small arts organizations. Yang is a great example of a young lawyer embracing her professional obligation to help clients with limited means tackle complex legal issues, making her a part of the rich fabric of the Pittsburgh arts community.

Organization Award: Allies for Health + Wellbeing

Formerly known as The Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force, Allies for Health + Wellbeing has been offering free legal services to clients of the agency since 1985 using a network of volunteer attorneys. It began by serving a population that no one else was willing to help, initially focusing its service on end-of-life planning documents and discrimination in housing, employment, and medical care. Then, as the benefits of new medications to treat HIV/AIDS were realized, clients began living longer and facing many of the same legal issues encountered by others with low incomes. During the most recent fiscal year, 600 cases were processed through Allies with 30 attorneys volunteering.

The award winners were honored during National Pro Bono Week, Oct. 21-27. Pro Bono Week is a national celebration of the life-changing work that volunteer attorneys perform on behalf of clients with low incomes across the country. The ACBF Pro Bono Center will celebrate the week with a variety of events as we thank volunteers, recruit and train additional volunteers, and bring attention to the needs of individuals facing critical legal issues.

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 effort benefitting the most vulnerable in our communities.

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 individuals with low incomes facing legal issues that threaten their basic human needs. For more information, visit www.PittsburghProBono.org.

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