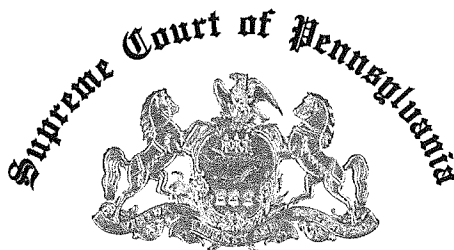


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Chief Justice Debra Todd

May 2024

Dear Pennsylvania Lawyer:

As we commemorate Law Day, I join PBA President Nancy Conrad in thanking Pennsylvania lawyers and judges for their support of legal aid and pro bono service.

All Pennsylvania lawyers contribute to civil legal aid programs through their annual registration fees. We direct a portion of those fees, along with class action residual funds, to legal services organizations through the IOLTA Board. Further, under an IOLTA grant administered by the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, our Loan Repayment Assistance Program, funded by pro hac vice admissions fees paid by out-of-state attorneys, provides student loan forgiveness to attorneys working for legal service agencies, making it easier for law school graduates to pursue positions in public service.

Still, it is *lawyers who volunteer* who have the most direct impact on those in need. The PBA and county bar associations encourage attorneys to "render public interest legal service" pursuant to Pa.R.P.C. 6.1 by contributing their time and expertise to representing individuals who have critical needs but cannot afford to retain private counsel.

Any Pennsylvania lawyer may now receive CLE credits for pro bono work performed through an accredited Pro Bono CLE Provider. In addition, our Court created an "Emeritus" status which allows retired attorneys to perform pro bono service with a minimal annual registration fee and reduced CLE requirements under the auspices of non-profit legal aid organizations.

The Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network (PLAN), in partnership with our regional legal aid providers and a network of specialty legal aid programs, provides a framework and structure for legal assistance.

Each year, PLAN's Excellence Awards recognize individuals from throughout the Commonwealth, whose contributions have had a profound impact on countless individuals and families, embodying the true spirit of justice and service. The 2024 honorees were Donna Allen-Rosemond (Neighborhood Legal Services), Erica Briant (Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania), Jane A. Downing (retiree of The Pittsburgh Foundation), Janice Meinert (Pennsylvania Health Law Project), Soheila "Gigi" Nikpour (Community Legal Services), and the law firm of Winebrake & Santillo. Their stories of service, at <https://palegalaid.net/pennsylvania-legal-aid-network-excellence-awards>, offer examples of how individuals can fundamentally impact the lives they touch.

If you already donate your time to pro bono service, I thank you. And, if you have not yet found the time to perform pro bono service, I urge you to commit to doing so and to encourage the young lawyers who work for you to do the same.

Together, we truly can make a difference.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra Todd".

Debra Todd