



THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

FULTON BUILDING
16TH FLOOR
200 NORTH THIRD STREET
HARRISBURG, PA 17101

THOMAS G. SAYLOR
CHIEF JUSTICE

(717) 772-1599

April 2016

Dear Counselor:

Again this year I would like to offer my personal appreciation and that of my colleagues on the Supreme Court for the contributions of financial support which you provide to legal aid programs as a component of your annual attorney registration fee.

All Pennsylvanians deserve their day in court. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court is dedicated to ensuring the civil legal needs of those who cannot afford the services of a lawyer are met. The Court supports civil legal aid in a variety of ways, from funding a loan forgiveness program for legal services practitioners to honoring the work of pro bono volunteers.

Recently, six law firms that exceeded the Court's requirement that 50 percent of class action residual funds be directed to the IOLTA Board were recognized. Since that rule took effect in 2012, 18 cases have produced more than \$3.4 million to support civil legal services. The six firms are responsible for more than 87 percent of the total revenue generated by the Court's class action residual rule. In one case, 50 percent of the residuals were directed to IOLTA and the other 50 percent to Community Legal Services. In a second case, 100 percent of the funds were directed to the IOLTA Board. These actions have had a significant impact for Pennsylvania's legal aid programs.


The Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, in partnership with regional legal aid providers and a network of specialty legal aid programs, helps provide the framework and structure for legal assistance for the poor. Our law schools inculcate the values of pro bono service in the next generation of Pennsylvania lawyers.

Together with Bill Pugh, President of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, I ask each of the nearly 70,000 attorneys registered in the Commonwealth to make a personal commitment to provide whatever pro bono service you can through direct representation of the poor and financial support of our legal aid programs. It is these volunteer efforts, beyond the mandatory payment, that most greatly impact those in need.

Rule of Professional Conduct 6.1 calls for all lawyers licensed in Pennsylvania to "render public interest legal service." You can go to palawhelp.org and register with paprobono.net to see the range of opportunities there are for pro bono service. With the help of pro bono videos provided as free CLEs by the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, it has never been easier for lawyers to get involved.

For those of you who already contribute your time and financial support, thank you for serving to reflect the best of our profession.

Sincerely,


Thomas G. Saylor