

4 What's Going On 2
 5 Court Summaries 5
 9 Notice to the Bar 9
 10 Foundation Silent Auction 10
 11 Legal Marketplace 11

Law Practice Management
 Prepare Now for Increased
 Competition Ahead



PBA on the Hill Event Focuses on 'Pennsylvania Lawyers Taking Their Case to Capitol Hill' May 5-6 in Harrisburg

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from a speech PBA President Andy Susko gave at the recent PBA on the Hill event, which was held May 5-6 in Harrisburg.

Today, lawyers from across the Commonwealth have joined together here in Harrisburg to bring to the General Assembly issues and concerns of the legal profession. Principal among the issues we will be addressing at PBA Day on the Hill is the accessibility of our justice system to hard-working, low-income Pennsylvanians.

Every year, one million low-income Pennsylvanians benefit from the services of legal aid; thousands more receive free legal services from volunteer Pennsylvania attorneys. Yet estimates from a national study of unmet legal needs commissioned by Legal Services Corp., titled "Documenting the Justice Gap," reveal the depth of the challenge that still remains and that has been identified as the "justice gap" in America. Eighty percent of low-income Americans see their legal needs go unmet. One in every two people who actually go to a legal aid office with a legal problem do not receive representation because the resources are not sufficient to make a lawyer's services available to

them. In Pennsylvania, these national statistics have been confirmed; for nearly every person who is helped by a legal aid entity, one is turned away.

Our justice system is only as fair as it is accessible to all. A justice system that is only available to those who have the means undermines the integrity, the legitimacy and the fundamental fairness of the system. There are landmark legal decisions that set forth critically important legal rights, like *Brown v. Board of Education*, holding that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. But although this landmark decision — along with other significant decisions — creates important rights for our citizens, these important legal rights do not have full meaning and their promise cannot be fully realized when ordinary citizens do not have effective access to our justice system because they cannot meaningfully access a lawyer's services.

So today lawyers have joined with me and the Pennsylvania Bar Association to take our case to the Hill; we seek legislative support of increased state funding for legal services. Because the need is great and state funding has been flat in modern times, cur-



PBA members showed their support for an additional \$1 million in state funding for civil legal aid during a state Capitol Rotunda rally on May 5. The increase, which would bring state funding for legal aid to \$3.6 million, is currently included in Gov. Ed Rendell's 2008-09 budget proposal. Part of the PBA on the Hill activities, the rally included remarks by PBA President Andrew F. Susko (center), Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network Executive Director Sam Milkes, Sen. Andrew E. Dinniman, Sen. Stewart J. Greenleaf, Sen. Michael O'Park, Rep. Kathy M. Manderino and Dorchina Davala Urrutia, a client of MidPenn Legal Services. The rally also brought attention to two bills that would create a law school student loan repayment program for public service lawyers.

PBA on the Hill *Continued from Page 1*

rent shortfalls in legal services funding undermine the fundamental fairness of our justice system. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, from a jail cell in Birmingham, Ala., that "injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere." Every time justice is denied, the fabric of the justice system is damaged; every time justice is reached in a case for a legal aid client — even in one case — the justice system is greatly enhanced.

Our nation is dedicated to the principle that our justice system is for everyone, and what we as lawyers know is that access to a lawyer's services often makes the difference between justice and injustice, between heartache and happiness. In the context of protecting a women from abuse, protecting against the loss of one's housing or providing representation on behalf of children whose safety and welfare are at risk, the legal system must be fair and accessible to all. Indeed, this is the principle upon which our very government was founded, and the principle that is embodied in the words concluding our Pledge of Allegiance to our flag: "with liberty and justice for all."

That is why lawyers and legal aid clients are here today; that is why we rally on the Hill in support of increased funding for legal services. Lawyers across this state are deeply committed to the justice system and to its fairness and to the principle that equal justice under the law must be for everyone. This is the promise of our nation's founders — a promise we must as a legal community stand up and fight for every day.

In a few moments you will hear from Sam Milkes, executive director of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network. You will also hear from legal aid client Dorchina Urrutia, Rep. Kathy Manderino, Sen. Andrew Dinniman and Sen. Stewart Greenleaf.

Before I call on Sam, I want to share a story with you that provides a powerful illustration that legal services can be a positive sum gain, not only for those Pennsylvanians who directly benefit from the program but for all Pennsylvanians.

Legal aid client Susan F., a single mother of three children ages seven, three and one, applied for a job driving a bus. The job offered the prospect and hope of working perfectly with her children's schedules, and the resulting income would have allowed her family to live on her income instead of public assistance. But she had been charged — not convicted — of an offense as a juvenile. She needed her record expunged to be able to drive the bus. Although Neighborhood Legal Services filed a petition to expunge her record, the district attorney's office initially objected. Legal Services had the client provide the letter of hire from her new employer stating that she would not be able to work unless her record was cleared. As a result of the work of Neighborhood Legal Services, the DA's office withdrew the objection, the court, on petition, agreed to expunge Susan's record and she is now happily able to support her three children. This is one of hundreds of success stories that vividly demonstrates that legal aid benefits not only the client but in many cases every Pennsylvanian. Our justice system is only as fair as it is accessible to everyone, and these stories and many others dramatically demonstrate that increased funding for legal services is both necessary and justified.

And now it is my pleasure to call on Sam Milkes, executive director of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, who will document the legal services funding needs here in Pennsylvania. Sam Milkes is responsible for coordinating and making effective the legal aid program in Pennsylvania. He, along with eight regional legal aid program directors and six special program directors, provides individualized legal services to nearly 100,000 clients annually. Sam has been a tremendously effective executive director and is a proven and spirited advocate for legal services and legal services funding here in Pennsylvania.