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**News Release
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**Allegheny County Bar Foundation to Recognize
Individuals, Public Interest Organization, and Student
Clinic with 2023 Pro Bono Achievement Awards**
*Awards to be presented at Sept. 20 Fall Foundation Reception at LeMont
Restaurant*

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 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 2023 Pro Bono Achievement Awards will be presented at the ACBF's Fall Foundation Reception on Wednesday, Sept. 20, 5:30 p.m., at LeMont Restaurant on Mount Washington.

The following four individuals, public interest organization, and student clinic will be recognized:

Kathryn M. Kenyon Leadership Award: Nicklaus Oliver, Esq.

Nicklaus "Nick" Oliver, Associate General Counsel of Alcoa Corporation, has demonstrated an ardent commitment to pro bono work since the start of his legal career. In 2004, Oliver, a Sewickley resident, began volunteering with Christian Legal Aid, where he not only continues to donate his time regularly at their weekly Northside clinics but now also serves as a member of their Board of Directors. His devotion to pro bono led to his appointment as the Alcoa Pro Bono Committee Chair, a position he has held since 2015. In 2016, Oliver became the Alcoa Project Coordinator for the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership's Landlord Tenant Advice Project and became a member of the Administrative Board of the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership the same year. Oliver's outstanding leadership in the Landlord Tenant Advice Project was crucial in the project meeting the needs of the many drastically affected by the end of the pandemic eviction moratorium. Consistent with his service with Christian Legal Aid, Oliver not only serves in a leadership role but actively participates in the everyday work of the Landlord Tenant Advice Project. Throughout his career, Oliver has been a consistent pro bono contributor fulfilling both leadership and active attorney roles.

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Lorraine M. Bittner Public Interest Attorney Award: Meghan Tighe, Esq.

Meghan Tighe has served as a Civil Legal Aid Staff Attorney at Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) since 2003—a position that was intended to be temporary but is now one Tighe has thrived in for 20 years. A Mt. Lebanon Resident, Tighe began her NLS career in the Helpline Department giving legal advice across a broad spectrum of areas of need before moving to the Elder Law Project where she serves individuals over 60 years old regardless of their income or assets. She later pioneered the Medical-Legal Collaborative for Children, where she provides legal assistance for clients facing a myriad of legal issues including but not limited to housing, utilities terminations, public benefits, SSI denials and terminations, and bankruptcy. Tighe’s incredible work through this project eliminates legal issues that contribute to health disparities. Tighe not only does fantastic work through this collaborative but also handles Protection From Abuse and custody cases through the Family Law Section at NLS and provides legal advice through NLS’s Debt Advice Clinic. Tighe consistently takes the initiative to expand to new areas of law so that she can meet the most areas of need possible, demonstrating her passion for legal aid work.

Jane F. Hepting Individual Attorney Award: Michael J. DiSantis, Esq.

Michael J. DiSantis, a partner at Tressler LLP, has established an enthusiasm for pro bono work through criminal records clearing throughout the course of his career. In 2016, DiSantis, a New Brighton resident, began filing expungement and sealing petitions through Neighborhood Legal Services as a volunteer with the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership, allowing individuals with low-incomes to seek greater occupational, educational, and housing opportunities by eliminating a key barrier to success. Since 2022, he has acted as coordinator for the Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership/Neighborhood Legal Services Criminal Records Clearing Project. As coordinator, DiSantis not only serves in a leadership role by recruiting, mentoring, and assigning cases to volunteer attorneys; but takes cases and participates in community legal clinics himself. DiSantis has provided a crucial legal service with diligence and dedication.

Jane F. Hepting Individual Attorney Award: Christina E. McKaveney-Malkin, Esq.

Christina E. McKaveney-Malkin is the Attorney-Owner of Malkin Law Offices and a longtime volunteer of North Hills Community Outreach. An Ingomar resident, McKaveney-Malkin eagerly donates her time to the “Ask An Attorney” Program, a program that offers a free, 30-minute consultation with a lawyer for civil legal issues. She consistently volunteers in excess of the time limit in order to thoroughly and compassionately address the client’s needs. Not only does McKaveney-Malkin exceed what is asked, but truly goes above and beyond to demonstrate her care for her clients. She not just provides legal advice but has entered appearances to provide full representation, coordinated with other legal aid agencies on behalf of her clients, and has even assisted a client in selling her house and driven another client home several times to ensure her safety. Her care in pro bono service goes far beyond the call of duty.

Public Interest Special Achievement Award: Community Justice Project

Community Justice Project (CJP) is a civil legal aid organization that utilizes class action litigation, administrative law, legislative advocacy, and other forms of impact litigation to aid individuals with low-incomes throughout the state. CJP focuses on civil rights cases in housing, public benefits, employment, and immigration. CJP demonstrates a commitment to equal justice by conducting an annual Language Access Survey throughout the state to identify language-access issues in Pennsylvania courts. This survey is incredibly comprehensive and prioritizes the personal experiences of clients in courtroom experiences. In courts where language access issues are

discovered, CJP offers their assistance for improvement. Language access is a clear commitment to CJP, whose staff is multilingual and dedicated to providing comprehensive services to all. Further, in its defense of renters, CJP is dedicated to serving undocumented immigrants, who experience housing right violations at alarming rates and are often overlooked by other legal aid programs. Community Justice Project does thorough work in furtherance of equal justice initiatives.

Special Service Award: Neighborhood Legal Services and The University of Pittsburgh School of Law Rural Legal Clinic

Neighborhood Legal Services and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law conducted its debut Rural Legal Clinic in Lawrence County in January 2023. The clinic served to expand resources to individuals with low-incomes in legally underserved areas. Ten 1L and 2L students from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law volunteered to travel to Lawrence County during their Winter Break in absence of payment or school credit: Krystal Becker, Murphy DePompei, Ryan Estatico, Jacob Evans, Sarah Ferguson, Jacob Frazier, Tina Kooser, David Oakley, Luke Torrance, and Caitlin Williams. Clients in rural counties like Lawrence County are often faced with the choice to forego legal services completely or to travel far distances to achieve justice. However, through the Rural Legal Clinic, students came to the clients directly and gave brief advice in housing and custody matters after a two-day training, assisting 13 clients over a two-day clinic while under the supervision of legal aid attorneys. The students not only learned practical skills but demonstrated a devotion to pro bono efforts and a compassion for their clients.

The award winners will also be recognized during National Pro Bono Week, Oct. 22-28. 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 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.

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 individuals with low incomes 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 and the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh.

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 an Neighborhood Legal Services 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.

About the ACBF

The ACBF provides educational programming, promotes public awareness of the legal and judicial systems, renders legal services to clients with low incomes 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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