

## Say Thank You With a Gift to Bar Foundation

By Amy Ginensky



THIS IS THE SEASON OF THANKSGIVING, and hopefully we all were able to take the time, between the rush of cooking and family gatherings, eating and shopping, to count our blessings. Despite everything this year has wrought, most of us have much for which to be thankful.

There are many in our community who on Thanksgiving certainly counted among their blessings the work of our colleagues in the public interest legal community.

Take Juanita (all names have been changed), for example. Juanita is a high school senior who lost both parents within a few months of each other early this year. Juanita had no relatives that were able to take her in, but the mother of Juanita's best friend, who lives in a nearby school district, gave her a place to stay. The school district was not going to allow her to continue to attend the high school she had attended for three years. Then the Education Law Center intervened on her behalf, and convinced the school district that Juanita was entitled to attend and graduate from that school.

Keeping with the seasonal theme of this column, let's borrow a scene from "It's a Wonderful Life" and imagine if Education Law Center hadn't been there to help Juanita. It is very likely that Juanita would not have finished school, and, as we know, high school dropouts are more likely to live in poverty and depend on public assistance. Think about Juanita. Her life was already torn apart by her parents' deaths. School was the only stable thing in her life. The initial decision by the school district could have had dramatic financial, societal and personal consequence if ELC had not been there for her.

Laila is another young woman who would have been lost but for the help of HIAS & Council. HIAS helped Laila, a Moroccan immigrant, escape from an abusive relationship. Many women

experience the trauma of domestic violence, but immigrant women, because of language barriers, social isolation and lack of financial resources, have an even harder time leaving abusive relationships.

Laila was such a woman. She met her American husband in Morocco. After

coming with him to the United States, Laila discovered that her husband was abusive. Laila's husband convinced her that she could not become an American citizen without his help, and would be deported. Since she was not allowed out of the house, she had no one who could

advise her. Finally, Laila got in touch with HIAS, who helped her file a self-petition for abused spouses so her immigration status could be legalized and she could leave her husband. She is safe today.

There are thousands of stories like these  
*continued on page 18*

### Philadelphia Bar Foundation

#### Proudly Thanks the Sponsors of the 2009 Andrew Hamilton Benefit

The Board of Trustees of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the following law firms, individuals and businesses that share our commitment to promoting access to justice for all members of our community. These sponsors help the Bar Foundation provide grants to a network of more than 30 public interest legal organizations that help Philadelphians who are struggling with poverty, abuse and discrimination.

(List as of November 17, 2009)

##### Diamond Sponsors



##### Platinum Sponsors



##### Gold Sponsors



##### Silver Sponsors

Cenero Audio Visual Rentals and Event Services  
Hollister Creative  
Johnnie Walker  
POMCO Graphic Arts  
Reliable Copy Services

##### Bronze Sponsors

The Beasley Firm  
Caesar, Rivise, Bernstein, Cohen & Pokotilow, Ltd.  
Chartwell Investment Partners  
Chimicles & Tikellis LLP  
Comcast  
Dilworth Paxson LLP  
Duffy + Partners  
Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC  
Eisenberg, Rothweiler, Winkler, Eisenberg & Jeck, P.C.  
Forensic Resolution  
Golkow Technologies, Inc  
HIRE Counsel  
The Justinian Society of Philadelphia  
Langer, Grogan & Diver P.C  
Law Offices of Lenard A. Cohen  
Law Offices of Bernard M. Gross, P.C.  
Oppenheimer & Co., Inc.  
The MCS Group, Inc.  
Panitch Schwarze Belisario & Nadel LLP  
Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association  
Saltz Mongeluzzi Barrett & Bendesky, P.C.  
Tactix Real Estate Advisors, LLC  
Teeters Harvey Gilboy & Kaier LLP  
TrialGraphix  
Zarwin Baum DeVito Kaplan Schaer Toddy P.C

**We also thank our many patrons and contributors for their support.**

*The official registration and financial information of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.*

# Foundation

*continued from page 17*

of people who have been helped, just in this year alone, by the public interest legal community of Philadelphia.

- The man who became homeless after a debilitating accident, whose denial of disability benefits was overturned thanks to a pro bono lawyer working with the Homeless Advocacy Project. He now can afford a place to live.

- The struggling graphic designer who almost lost the rights to her entire portfolio until Philadelphia Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts went to court and saved her life's work.

- The woman who was saddled with bad debt and undiscovered fraud on an inherited home whose VIP volunteer attorney helped save her credit rating and avoid foreclosure on her own property – the modest home to her family of five.

- The senior whose daughter physically

## Memorial Gifts Recognized

From time to time, the Philadelphia Bar Foundation receives contributions or a fund in memory of someone who has died or, on a happier note, to mark a special occasion or honor an achievement. Philadelphia lawyers are a special breed. We honor them when we make a gift to the Bar Foundation that is then used to assist Philadelphia's public interest lawyers and the clients to whom they provide legal services.

### In Memory

An anonymous gift in memory of **Samuel Barson**, father of **Leon R. Barson**, a partner with Pepper Hamilton LLP.

Given by **Amy B. Ginensky** and **Andrew R. Rogoff** in memory of **Spencer W. Franck**, a partner at Saul Ewing, LLP, who served as chair of their Business Department for nine years. Franck served on the Board of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Red Cross and was a member of the Philadelphia Club, the Racquet Club and the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

Given by **Phyllis Horn Epstein** in memory of **Marie Anderson Yesenko**, mother of **Kathleen D. Wilkinson**, a partner with Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker LLP.

beat and starved her for three days – for whom SeniorLAW Center obtained a protection from abuse order and who is

now living safely with other relatives.

The lawyers who have helped these individuals deserve our thanks, as well as

the thanks of their clients, for they make us and our profession proud; by their work, their light shines on all of us.

This is a season of giving, as well as thanks. And one way to say thanks is to make a gift. As you think about your year-end charitable giving, think about these stories. We at the Bar Foundation think about them every time we hold a fundraising event, every time we send a fundraising letter, and every time we make grants, as we will do later this month. And I think about them every time I write my column.

Please join with us at the end of the year by making a gift to the Bar Foundation or one of the grantee legal services organizations.

And to all, happy holidays.

---

*Amy B. Ginensky (ginenskya@pepperlaw.com), a partner at Pepper Hamilton LLP, is president of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation.*