

7 Best Reasons to Attend Hamilton Benefit

A FEW WEEKS AGO, I thought we would publish a "Top 10" list of the reasons to attend the Andrew Hamilton Benefit to be held on Saturday evening, Nov. 21. But given David Letterman's recent troubles and my inclination to stay away from controversy, I thought better and decided to do something different: give you the Seven Best Reasons out of the Top 10 to attend the Benefit, each one of which should convince you to join us at the Please Touch Museum to support the Foundation.

7. Mayor Michael Nutter, Chancellor Sayde Ladov and City Solicitor Shelley Smith will be "Dancing for Justice." (Now this is really not "seventh," but we want to make sure you see it.)

Mayor Nutter, Sayde and Shelley have been practicing a "Dancing with the Stars"-like routine choreographed by the Society Hill Dance Academy to be performed with their partners (David Ladov and professional dancers from the Dance Academy). Not only will these good sports be showing off their moves, they are helping to promote the Benefit and its goal of providing needed funding for the Bar Foundation's grants to the public interest legal community of Philadelphia.

6. You'll get to see the newly renovated Please Touch Museum® at Memorial Hall.

If you don't have kids, or your kids are past the age to go to Please Touch, you probably haven't seen the new museum and the renovation of Memorial Hall, one of the few buildings remaining from the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, the first

By Amy Ginensky



American world's fair, held in Fairmount Park. The Hamilton Hall area of the Museum, where the main part of the Benefit will be held, is one of Philadelphia's grandest and most beautiful public spaces.

I should mention that in response to my earlier article on the 1876 Centennial Exhibition,

we received a letter from the executive director of the Parkside Historic Preservation Corporation, concerning what he explained was the shameful treatment of African American and Native Americans at the Exhibition. Quite frankly, I was not aware of this aspect of the history and figuring most of the readers of this column are not either, I asked him if he could give us a web site so that those wanting to learn more could. Visit <http://www3.villanova.edu/centennial/odum01.htm>.

5. There will be a raffle drawing for five incredible prizes.

The planning committee for the Andrew Hamilton Benefit has gathered five exciting donated prizes – a painting by a leading member of the New York School of Abstract Expressionists; a dinner for eight cooked in your home by a personal chef who trained with master chef Eric Ripert; a hand-woven Turkish rug donated by Material Culture; a dress designed for you by an award-winning Philadelphia University design student; and a dance party for 20 at the Society Hill Dance Academy. And every dollar of the \$100 raffle ticket price goes to Bar Foundation grants for legal services.

4. You'll have a chance to spend time with your colleagues outside of boardrooms and courtrooms.

Carr to Receive Foundation Award; Dechert and Berner Klaw Honored with Citizens Bank Pro Bono Award

THE PHILADELPHIA BAR FOUNDATION will present the 2009 Philadelphia Bar Foundation Award to Cathy Carr, executive director of Community Legal Services and the 2009 Citizens Bank Pro Bono Award to the law firms Dechert, LLP and Berner Klaw & Watson LLP.

The presentations will be made at the Foundation's Andrew Hamilton Benefit on Saturday, Nov. 21.

"This year's award winners demonstrate an exceptional commitment to legal services and the advancement of equal access to justice," said Bar Foundation Executive Director Gene Sirni.

The Philadelphia Bar Foundation Award was created to honor the memory of Louis D. Apothaker, a prominent Philadelphia attorney and past president of the Bar Foundation.

This award is given to an outstanding attorney who is dedicating his or her life to promoting the ideal of equal access to justice for all by working in the non-profit legal services community. A \$2,500 award is presented in recognition of excellence in providing direct legal services to the poor and the underprivileged in Philadelphia.

Created in 2003, The Citizens Bank Pro Bono Award is presented annually by Citizens Bank, the Philadelphia Bar Association and the Philadelphia Bar Foundation to a Philadelphia law firm or corporate legal department that demonstrates outstanding volunteer efforts in providing legal services to those in need. The recipient of the Citizens Bank Award designates the award's \$10,000 prize to a qualifying law-related public service agency.

How often is it that you say to a colleague you meet on the street, wow, we should have lunch and catch up? Well, the Benefit provides that opportunity. It is a gathering of terrific people, whom you otherwise have too little time to enjoy.

3. It is a "relative" bargain.

In recognition of the "great recession" and the havoc it has wrought on the legal community, we have slashed in half the ticket price for the night. We have done so by making the party "less fancy," but keeping the fun and purpose of the night. Don't worry, there will still be good music, drink and food.

2. The Andrew Hamilton Benefit

gives you and the legal community a chance to show that Philadelphia lawyers care.

The Andrew Hamilton Benefit is the public symbol of the Philadelphia legal profession's commitment to the notion that lawyers have a special responsibility to help the poor, children and those who are especially vulnerable have access to legal representation. By showing that it cares about our justice system and the assistance it provides to the community, the profession grows in stature.

But the most important reason to attend the Andrew Hamilton Benefit:

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Phila. VIP Honors Miriam Jacobson as Volunteer of the Month

PHILADELPHIA VIP HAS RECOGNIZED Miriam N. Jacobson as Volunteer of the Month for her outstanding assistance to VIP clients.

Jacobson began "volunteering" with VIP as a part-time tangled title staff attorney in 2003, putting in many, many more hours than were asked as in-house homeownership expert, while still maintaining a private practice. When her formal relationship with VIP ended in 2008, she was quick to continue her com-

mitment to VIP and our clients as a private attorney. Since VIP's Philly FRE program began in June of 2008, she has attended 17 conciliation conference sessions and assisted 15 mortgage foreclosure clients. With her extensive knowledge of real estate law, she is particularly well-suited to assist those mortgage foreclosure clients who have ancillary title problems.



Jacobson

She has also continued to mentor VIP staff on substantive real estate issues and is a crucial resource when complex homeownership matters arise.

Jacobson is also a very active member of the Tangled Title Fund Advisory Committee, reviewing applicants' cases every month and offering her expertise in tangled title issues to volunteer attorneys. She approaches every mat-

ter she handles with great care, deliberation, and patience, giving every client the time and consideration that they deserve. Because of her dedication to VIP and her immense expertise, innumerable VIP clients' homes have been saved over the years.

For her commitment and dedication to VIP's homeownership and mortgage foreclosure clients, Philadelphia VIP offers its heartfelt appreciation to Miriam N. Jacobson.

Foundation

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1. Nearly half of the low-income people who need legal services can't get them because the nonprofit organizations serving them lack resources.

All the Bar Foundation grantee agencies are reporting increased demand for legal services at the same time that the economic crisis squeezes their ability to meet the demands. As one executive director put it, "It feels like we're performing triage as the need for our services far outweighs our capacity."

And when people can't get the legal help they need, bad things happen to them and our community. The family whose home is foreclosed for lack of legal representation may end up homeless. The person who loses health benefits because he couldn't get a lawyer to help decipher the insur-

ance regulations ends up in the emergency room without coverage and impacts the entire health care system. The abused child who could have been saved if she had a lawyer is not just a statistic, but a shattered human life.

For better or worse, we are the stewards of the American justice system. It is up to us to make sure that "equal justice for all" is not an empty promise. Supporting the Andrew Hamilton Benefit with tickets or sponsorships helps the Bar Foundation – the Philadelphia lawyers' foundation – give needed funding to the public interest organizations who make that guarantee a reality.

So, join us, our Mayor, the City Solicitor and Chancellor, and together, we can make a difference.

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

Frontline

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our social fabric, history and culture.

The Philadelphia region is blessed to have six local law schools: Drexel, Rutgers, Temple, Villanova, Widener and Penn, which is ranked eighth in the nation. While each program is unique, all provide relevant and practical education, graduating law students who bring energy, optimism and experience to our legal community.

At our recent Bench-Bar and Annual Conference, we heard City Council members speak about what it will take to make Philadelphia the next great city. To avoid brain drain, we must root our talent here, making sure that graduates grow, flourish and share in economic prosperity.

That is not to say that we don't want to lure others to our community to increase our diversity. But neither should we exclude our local talent.

Let us also keep in mind a recurring theme – "How do we define success?" – that was repeatedly heard at our groundbreaking Diversity Summit in September. For many in the room, success was defined as the ability to have control over their destiny, to have meaningful relationships with clients, to be valued for their own unique experience. And, most importantly, for permission to

occasionally falter, then pick up and go on.

Clearly, the cookie-cutter mold of one-size-fits-all no longer works in a multicultural world. A prep school education followed by a small, elite liberal arts college education plus an elite law school education is a wonderful thing. But it is not the only thing.

With respect to Justice Scalia, I believe that the elitism expressed earlier is outmoded, ivory tower thinking. Economics has leveled the playing field. Frankly, it's a brave and brand new world. I suggest that anyone with smarts, ambition, talent and willingness to think outside the box can succeed, especially when we keep in mind that success is defined in different ways.

Looking forward as my year as Chancellor draws to a close, my greatest hope is that the economic recovery truly takes hold, and that firms who have either laid off lawyers or delayed hiring will look again in their own backyards. Together, let us make a concerted effort to keep Philadelphia's best and brightest here in the City of Brotherly Love.

I wish you all a wonderful season of thanksgiving and reflection!

Sayde J. Ladov, a principal with OffitKurman, is Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association. Her e-mail address is chancellor@philabar.org.

Mock Trial

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Division, in collaboration with Temple Law's LEAP Institute, welcomes volunteer participation by all members of the bar. Volunteers may commit as little as a few hours at a time and will leave impressed by the students and rewarded by the volunteering experience.

Volunteer coaches and instructors are needed for the Nov. 7 camp, as well as volunteer judges. Camp instructors will set aside the full day of Nov. 7 to lead small group sessions that will apply trial advocacy concepts introduced in brief lectures. Coaches will typically meet about once a week with their teams, either on a weekday afternoon or weekend day. Volunteer judges will commit to judge a

three-hour round of competition during a weekday, weeknight or weekend between Jan. 25, 2010 and Feb. 27, 2010.

Judges can choose to judge as many rounds as schedules permit and judges do not need trial experience to participate. All volunteers need is a willingness to give some time and be wowed by the high school students.

Joshu Harris (Joshu.Harris@phila.gov) is an assistant district attorney and co-chair of the Young Lawyers Division's Mock Trial Committee.

Become a Volunteer

To volunteer as a coach, instructor or judge for the Nov. 7 Mock Trial Camp, contact Joshu Harris at jlh67@georgetown.edu.

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Philadelphia Bar Foundation
invites you to the
2009 Andrew Hamilton Benefit

Saturday, Nov. 21, 2009

MAKING THE
WORLD FAIR
For Philadelphians

Please join us at Please Touch Museum®
at Memorial Hall Site of the first official
World's Fair in the United States
For tickets, visit PhilaBarFoundation.org