

Answer Call for Raising the Bar Campaign

YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN the headlines in *The Legal Intelligencer* the past few months: "Law Firm X Increases PPP Percent," "Law Firm Y Cuts Expenses but Increases Revenues," "Law Firm Z's Headcount Down; Impacts Revenue."

This reporting only confirms the rollercoaster economic year the legal

community has experienced. The private firms have had to be creative and make some hard choices to keep ahead during the economic challenges of the past year. But I want to publish a headline of my own: "Despite Everything, Law Firm Generosity is Still in Place."

I know this because last year, 66 Philadelphia law firms pledged more than \$1 million to the Raising the Bar campaign to help our public interest grantee agencies. Although the number of firms was fewer than in past years, the generosity of those firms was just as robust.

The "Raising the Bar" campaign represents the primary mechanism for structured, coordinated law firm charitable giving to the Philadelphia legal services community. The original purpose of this campaign when it was begun in 2006 was to increase law firm giving to help the public interest community. Before the advent of Raising the Bar, it was estimated that Philadelphia law firms contributed just \$200 per attorney

By Amy B. Ginensky



for legal services. Now, with \$300 per attorney being the minimum pledge, and many firms contributing much more than that, the campaign has made a huge impact on the public interest agencies.

And our grantees need all the help they can get. If you've been reading my columns this

past year, you've heard my drumbeat that because of the economic crisis, the need for the no-cost or low-cost legal services provided by our public interest colleagues has increased while like a lot of us, their organizations have had to cut staff and resources. The Raising the Bar campaign is one way to help bridge gaps in funding for our grantees. That translates into legal services that have helped to save homes from foreclosure, to save kids from unfair and illegal incarceration, to save women, children and seniors from abuse and to help many, many more of the most vulnerable in our communities.

Now that we are all starting to breathe a little more freely, the co-chairs of the Raising the Bar Committee, Bar Foundation trustees Steve Bizar of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC, and Wendy Beetstone of Hanglely Aronchick Segal and Pudlin, are rolling out the campaign for 2010. They are asking again for the institutional support of the legal community's firms, support that has been

demonstrated in the hardest of times.

As Wendy remarked, this year the campaign plans to acknowledge those firms who have gone beyond the minimum goals set by the Raising the Bar campaign. Some firms, hers included, often give more than the basic \$300 per attorney. "Watching the Winter Olympics gave us the idea to award gold, silver and bronze medals for different levels of giving. This year we are going to acknowledge those firms that contribute more."

Being part of Raising the Bar is easy; it requires committing to donate \$300 (or more) per Philadelphia attorney to the Foundation and/or any of its 33 grantee organizations. And, this commitment can be fulfilled by doing things that the firms have already been doing. For example, when your firm sponsors a Bar Foundation or a Legal Clinic for the Disabled event, that sponsorship counts toward your Raising the Bar pledge. When your firm makes a direct contribution to the Bar Foundation or to Philadelphia VIP, that counts. Or, the Bar Foundation can help with the administration of your charitable donations by distributing funds through a "donor option" program to any

of the 33 legal services agencies that are grantees of the Bar Foundation.

Philadelphia law firms have repeatedly recognized the importance of our nonprofit legal services organizations – the 33 grantees of the Foundation – by their participation in the Raising the Bar Campaign. As Steve, who like Wendy, has twice led the Raising the Bar Campaign, recently said, "All our firms receive many credible requests for support from worthy organizations in our community. But law firms are economic and charitable forces in Philadelphia and have a unique obligation to support the access to justice represented by the Bar Foundation and its network of legal services agencies."

When Steve, Wendy or another member of their Committee call this year, whether you are one of the 66 firms which signed on for 2009, or one that has not yet committed, please take their call and continue the legal community's institutional support of the Raising the Bar Campaign.

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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

Given by **A. Harold Datz**, in memory of **Frank H. Nigro**, father of retired Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice, the **Hon. Russell M. Nigro**.

Given by **A. Harold Datz**, in memory of **Frank "Chic" Bucciarelli**, father and father-in-law of **Dominick J.** and **Mary Bucciarelli**.

Given by **G.A. Taylor Fernley, Arlene Fickler, Susan M. Herschel, Janet Hershey, Robert P. Lawrence, Linda A. Matrunich and Samuel W. Morris, Jr.** in memory of **R. Nicholas Gimbel**, a partner at McCarter & English, a Philadelphia litigator and a man of varied talents, interests and friends. We thank all who have made donations to the Bar Foundation's R. Nicholas Gimbel Fund for Legal Excellence in his memory, including these recent contributors.

22nd Bar Foundation Golf Classic June 21

THE PHILADELPHIA BAR FOUNDATION'S 22nd Annual Golf Classic will be held Monday, June 21 at Huntington Valley Country Club in Huntington Valley, Pa.

The fee for players is \$450. Members of the Young Lawyers Division may play at a discounted fee of \$375. A foursome can play at the discounted rate of \$1,700. Price includes all greens fees, golf cart, lunch, refreshments, dinner and cocktails. For those wishing to attend the cocktail reception and dinner, tickets are \$125.

Several levels of sponsorship are available. Tournament underwriters (\$15,000) get a banner hung at the clubhouse entrance; name on the front cover of the souvenir program as a sponsor of the event; distribution of skills competition prizes to winners; eight players plus four additional guests to cocktail reception; and VIP parking for golfers. Other levels include Tournament Cup/Skills Prize Sponsor (\$7,500); Luncheon, Cocktail



Golf Committee Chair Rod E. Wittenberg practices at the 2009 event.

Buffet, Reception or Putting Contest Sponsor (\$5,000); Golf Cart Signs, Refreshment Cabana Sponsor, \$3,500; and Hole Sponsor (\$2,000).

For more information, contact Lynne Brown at (215) 238-6347.



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For more information about the Bar Foundation Golf Classic, visit www.philabarfoundation.org.