

Changing Times Call for Changing Gala

IN 1978, JIMMY CARTER WAS PRESIDENT. Unemployment was 6.1 percent and a first-class stamp cost 15 cents. "Annie Hall" won the Oscar for best picture in 1978 and the first "test-tube" baby was born.

And in 1978, a group of Philadelphia Bar Foundation supporters conceived of the first Andrew Hamilton Ball to raise money for the Bar Foundation and its mission of providing equal access to justice for all.

During its 30-plus years, the Ball (which became the Gala in 2006) has raised millions of dollars to help the Philadelphia Bar Foundation give grants to the Philadelphia public interest legal organizations that ensure a fair and just society, help the poor, care for our children and the elderly, address health and disability issues, focus on issues affecting women and improve community welfare.

But nothing we have seen in the past 30 years has been anything like the economic crisis we are experiencing now. Sure there was Black Monday in 1987, the savings and loan debacle, the burst of the tech bubble and the economic repercussions of 9/11. But not since the Great Depression have we been faced with this kind of economic challenge.

So, how do nonprofits raise money in times like these? And for the Bar Foundation specifically, what do we do about our special event fundraisers that have been such a valuable source of funding for grantees as well as an opportunity to show that Philadelphia lawyers care?

In these challenging times one could fairly ask, "Why have this event at all?" Our answer is that it provides an important source of funding for our nonprofit legal services grantees and is an opportunity for our entire legal commu-

nity to come together in support of the public interest bar.

We would be sticking our heads in the sand, however, if we just did what we always do. Philadelphia lawyers do care about our public interest community, but all of us are facing today's economic reality and tightening our belts. While the Bar Foundation needs to provide an opportunity for all of us to come together this year to show our support, it also needs to do so in a way which reduces the costs and maximizes the amount we can allocate to our grantees.

So, after 31 years, the Andrew Hamilton Gala is changing, at least for this year. Just as black tie became optional and the Ball became the Gala, the Andrew Hamilton Gala is becoming the Andrew Hamilton Benefit.

On Saturday, Nov. 21 at 7 p.m. at the Please Touch Museum in Memorial Hall in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia lawyers will gather as they have since 1978 to support the Philadelphia Bar Foundation and the public interest organizations it funds. However, we will be doing everything possible to reduce the cost of a ticket (subscriber tickets will be half of what they were last year) so that as many of us as possible in the legal community can attend and raise as much grant funding as possible. Although the details have not been all nailed down, it will be a wonderful, though less formal and expensive evening, with food, drink, dancing and sharing of common purpose.

Wendy Beetlestone, Bar Foundation treasurer, and our former Chancellor,

By Amy Ginensky



A. Michael Pratt, are co-chairing the Benefit, and leading the charge. As Wendy reports they are well on the way to accomplishing these goals. "We've assembled a team of out-of-the-box, creative thinkers who are volunteering their time and effort to deliver a high-quality event within tight cost controls. We're pushing our vendors for every penny of saving. We're looking for freebies wherever we can get them. We're determined to do everything we can to raise significant funds for our grantees while throwing the party of the season," she said.

The Andrew Hamilton event is too storied and has too much tradition to let it go. Conceived through the creative energies of Paul Carpenter Dewey, Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association in 1978; Marvin Comisky who had been a Chancellor as well as a past President of the Bar Foundation; and Catherine Apothaker, the Ball quickly became the Bar Foundation's major fundraiser. On the 20th anniversary of the event, then-Chancellor Edward F. Chacker wrote, "Twenty years ago, who would have predicted that the Andrew Hamilton Ball would become one of the city's leading social and charitable events? Then as now, the Philadelphia legal community realized that lawyers must take the lead to guarantee equal access to justice."

Save the Date

Andrew Hamilton Benefit
to support the
Philadelphia Bar Foundation
Saturday, Nov. 21, 2009
Please Touch Museum
7 to 11 p.m.

As Ed said, lawyers have a special responsibility to help the poor, children, the disabled and those who are especially vulnerable in times of crisis have access to legal representation. The Andrew Hamilton Benefit is the public symbol of the Philadelphia legal profession's commitment to this notion. The event helps not only the public interest legal organizations and the clients they serve, but the legal profession itself. By showing that it cares about our justice system and the assistance it provides to the community, the profession grows in stature.

In today's world, we can all save money by attending a less fancy party. What we can't do is not continue to be there for the public interest legal community. So mark your calendars and join us on Nov. 21 to celebrate the strength of our legal community and reaffirm together that Philadelphia lawyers care.

Amy B. Ginensky, a partner at Pepper Hamilton LLP, is president of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation.



WebCheck

To contribute to the Philadelphia Bar Foundation, visit the Foundation's page at philadelphiabar.org.



Huntingdon Valley Country Club will host the 21st Annual Philadelphia Bar Foundation Golf Classic on Monday, June 22. Visit philadelphiabar.org to register.

Bar Foundation Golf Classic June 22

THE PHILADELPHIA BAR FOUNDATION'S 21st Annual Golf Classic is moving to a new location.

The event will be held Monday, June 22 at Huntingdon Valley Country Club in Huntingdon Valley, Pa.

The general fee for players is \$375. Members of the Young Lawyers Division may play at a discounted fee of \$350. Price includes all greens fees, golf cart, lunch, refreshments, dinner and cocktails.

Several levels of sponsorship are available. Tournament Underwriters

(\$15,000) get a banner hung at clubhouse entrance; name on the front cover of the souvenir program as 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 Buffet, Reception or Putting Contest Sponsor (\$5,000) and Hole Sponsor (\$2,000). For more information, contact Lynne Brown at (215) 238-6347.