

## Don't Let Commitment Waver in Hard Times

"WHEN PEOPLE ARE in trouble or scared, that's when they need an advocate; this is why what you do as lawyers is so important," said Steven Korman, president and CEO of Korman Communities, at a recent meeting of law firm leaders hosted by the Philadelphia Bar Foundation. And it is why he urged these leaders to support the Raising the Bar Campaign, which financially assists our public interest colleagues in providing services to those who are the most troubled and scared and yet without resources to pay for representation.

This is a unique time. State IOLTA funds for Philadelphia legal service agencies will drop by 10 percent for fiscal year 2009-2010. And in May, the Senate passed its version of the state budget that eliminates all funding for legal services. At this writing, lobbying efforts are underway to get that money put back in the budget, but the message is clear – maintaining legal services funding is in jeopardy.

So, what we do as lawyers at this time of trouble is doubly important. It really counts.

The Philadelphia Bar Foundation has set a goal to maintain the funding it gives to the legal services agencies at last year's levels. It is critical we meet that goal, and we will need support to do so. The

By Amy Ginensky



Foundation's job is not only to raise the funds to make its own grants but, as the legal community's foundation, its mission includes advocating the continued support by the law firms of the grantee organizations as well.

The Raising the Bar campaign has been the Philadelphia legal com-

munity's most significant institutional effort in support of the Bar Foundation and its network of nonprofit legal service providers. A joint initiative of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation and the Philadelphia Bar Association, the campaign was inspired by former Bar Association Chancellor Alan M. Feldman, who in 2006 challenged every law firm, large and small, to contribute the sum of \$300 per lawyer. In 2008, Bar Association Chancellor A. Michael Pratt asked law firms to institutionalize their Raising the Bar contributions and to those that could, Raise the Bar Higher by increasing by 10 percent their commitment for the next three years.

Since its inception, more than 100 local law firms have participated in the Campaign, and their pledges have totaled more than \$4 million. And last year, 27 firms agreed to Raise the Bar Higher. There are several ways for a law firm to contribute to Raising the Bar. Firms can make direct donations to the Philadel-



Steve Korman (from left), his wife, Jennifer, and Henry M. Kuller gather at the Bar Foundation's Raising the Bar event on May 7 at Blank Rome LLP.

phia Bar Foundation; donate to any of the Philadelphia public interest agencies supported by the Bar Foundation; make a donation to the Bar Foundation with a "donor option" to any or all of the grantees supported by the Bar Foundation; or it can choose any combination of these options. It all counts.

Obviously, this year is a challenge. So the Bar Foundation gathered leaders of the law firms on May 7 to confront these challenges and ask for their support. The reception was sponsored by Navigant Consulting and held in the Comisky Center courtesy of Blank Rome LLP.

We invited Steve Korman to speak. We did so because while his company, like our firms, faces challenges, he remains an outspoken supporter of people, families and their livelihoods in the current economy. Some may remember when the economic downturn worsened, Korman took out full-page ads in *The New York Times* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* to urge companies and firms, in deciding their game plans, to remember, as much as feasible, the needs of their employ-

ees and their families. At our meeting, Korman discussed his and his company's experience in meeting the trials of 2009, as well as in the past, and advocated that charities cannot be forgotten in these trying economic times. His unwavering commitment to a plethora of charitable organizations and his devotion to remembering those in need represents a poignant call to action for all of us.

We at the Bar Foundation echo that call. And, leaders of firms, if you have not heard it yet, you will hear it soon. Steve Bizar, chair of the Raising the Bar Campaign and Bar Foundation trustee, will call you and ask that your firm pledge to the Raising the Bar campaign at least at the rate originally proposed by Alan Feldman back in 2006. And for those who may be able to do more, we ask that you consider it, especially this year. For you can be assured, what your firm does, counts.

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

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### 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 Huntington Valley Country Club in Huntington 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.

# Raising the Bar Donors Thanked By Foundation

RAISING THE BAR IS THE PHILADELPHIA legal community's most significant institutional effort in support of the Bar Foundation and its network of non-profit legal services providers. More than 100 local law firms participate annually and their pledges since 2006 have totaled more than \$4 million. The following is a list of contributors:

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# Plenary Tackles Systemic Advocacy

■ By Ria C. Momblanco

IN 1999 AND IN 2007, THE JUVENILE Law Center received two separate and uncannily similar calls concerning children in Luzerne County who had been adjudicated delinquent after appearing before former Luzerne County President Judge Mark Ciavarella – without counsel and without being adequately informed of their constitutional right to an attorney.

Although the JLC achieved a reversal of the adjudications in both instances, the 2007 phone call prompted the JLC to conclude that more needed to be done. The fact that both of these strangely similar cases had occurred before Ciavarella raised a red-flag that there might be a need for a “systems change” with respect to the treatment of juvenile defendants in Luzerne County.

The JLC's further efforts resulted in the well-publicized Pennsylvania Supreme Court order to vacate the adjudications and expunge the records of a large class of youth who appeared before Ciavarella between 2003 and 2008.

At the April 29 Public Interest Section plenary program on systemic advocacy, Marsha Levick, deputy director and chief counsel of the JLC, described the various strategies employed to investigate and litigate the constitutional rights violations occurring in Luzerne County.

Panelists Cathy Carr, executive director of Community Legal Services; Michael

**Marsha Levick**

described the various strategies employed to investigate and litigate the constitutional rights violations occurring in Luzerne County.

Churchill, of counsel at the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia; Mark Murphy, legal director of the Disability Rights Network; Janet Stotland, co-director of the Education Law Center; along with moderator Angus Love, executive director of the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, hailed the JLC's efforts as exemplifying the paradigm of systemic advocacy.

According to Love, the first step in executing that paradigm is to recognize patterns of bad conduct amidst what may be an overwhelming swell of individual cases. In the case of Luzerne County, it was the recurring pattern of behavior in Ciavarella's courtroom that alerted the JLC to the need to further investigate Luzerne County's Juvenile Court system.

The next step, according to Carr, is to communicate and connect with those who may be able to help with gathering more information. For example, when

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