

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*

**2022  
EXCELLENCE  
AWARDS  
CEREMONY**

Pennsylvania  
**Legal Aid** Network



*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

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*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

Welcome

**MAX LAUN, ESQ.**

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PENNSYLVANIA LEGAL AID NETWORK, INC.

Acknowledgement of Sponsors

In Remembrance

—∞—  
Dinner Buffet

—∞—  
Introduction of Featured Speaker

**DEBBY FREEDMAN, ESQ.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

Featured Remarks

**MARY GAY SCANLON**

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE (PA-5)  
CO-CHAIR OF THE CONGRESSIONAL ACCESS TO LEGAL AID CAUCUS

—∞—  
Awards Program

PRESENTATION OF SAMUEL W. MILKES  
OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD

PRESENTATION OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

—∞—  
Program Conclusion

**BRUCE PERRY**

MEMBER, PLAN, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

*Samuel W. Milkes*  
*Outstanding Leadership Award*

In honor of those who have dedicated their careers in legal aid to advancing the mission of expanding access to civil legal services and equal justice for all.

Together, the recipients have decades of experience navigating the legal aid system through its many ups and downs, becoming mentors, role models, and friends without ever losing sight of pursuing justice for all. Their legacy of leadership with integrity stands as a guiding light to all who dedicate their careers to legal aid.

**Robert V. Racunas, Esq.**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMERITUS  
NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES  
PITTSBURGH, PA**

**Nominated by: The Project Directors of the  
Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network**

**Mark Schwartz, Esq.**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EMERITUS  
REGIONAL HOUSING LEGAL SERVICES  
GLENSIDE, PA**

**Nominated by: The Project Directors of the  
Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network**

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Randy & Debbie Blough**

**VOLUNTEERS**

**HONEY BROOK FOOD PANTRY · HONEY BROOK, PA**

Nominated by: Shawn Boehringer, Esq., Executive Director and Keshia James, Esq., Deputy Director for Advocacy, Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania

**Liz Maria Chacko, Esq.**

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR**

**JUSTICE AT WORK · PHILADELPHIA, PA**

Nominated by: Meredith Rapkin, Esq., Executive Director, Justice at Work; Jennifer Lee, Esq., Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, Temple University Beasley School of Law

**Consumer Subcommittee of the  
Medical Assistance Advisory Committee**

**HARRISBURG, PA**

Nominated by: Laval Miller-Wilson, Esq., Executive Director, Pennsylvania Health Law Project, and Pennsylvania Health Law Project Staff

**John Gandrud, Esq.**

**MANAGING ATTORNEY**

**NORTHWESTERN LEGAL SERVICES · ERIE, PA**

Nominated by: Jacqueline Lager, Esq., Executive Director, Northwestern Legal Services

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Doreen Mitchell**

**SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR**

**NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES • PITTSBURGH, PA**

Nominated by: Robert V. Racunas, Esq., Executive Director Emeritus and  
Christine Kirby, Director of Development, Neighborhood Legal Services

**Morgan Lewis**

**LAW FIRM • PHILADELPHIA, PA**

Nominated by: Debby Freedman, Esq., Executive Director, Community Legal  
Services

**Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention  
Collaborative**

**PITTSBURGH, PA**

Nominated by: Robert Damewood, Esq., Senior Staff Attorney, Regional  
Housing Legal Services

**Julia Simon-Mishel, Esq.**

**SUPERVISING ATTORNEY**

**PHILADELPHIA LEGAL ASSISTANCE • PHILADELPHIA, PA**

Nominated by: Maureen Olives, Esq., Managing Attorney, Philadelphia Legal  
Assistance and Sharon Dietrich, Esq., Litigation Director, Community Legal  
Services

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Robert V. Racunas, Esq.**

For over 40 years, Robert V. Racunas served as Executive Director for Neighborhood Legal Services, responsible for the overall management of NLS and expanding on its mission of access to justice.

Bob attended the University of Pittsburgh on athletic and Senatorial scholarships. He received his Juris Doctorate from the University's School of Law as an Owens Fellow.

After graduation, Bob joined NLS as a staff attorney and was named the Managing Attorney for the McKeesport and Clairton offices. In 1976, he became the program Deputy Director responsible for Beaver, Butler, and Lawrence counties. The NLS Board of Directors appointed him Executive Director in July 1980.

Bob has been involved in many community and legal activities. He was Chair of his local Zoning and Appeals Board for thirteen years. He has served as Chair of the Allegheny County Bar Association Federal Court Section, as a hearing officer for the Disciplinary Board, as a member of its Board of Governors, as well as President of the more than 6,000 member bar association.

Bob has also been a member of the House of Delegates of both the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the American Bar Association. His awards include the University of Pittsburgh Letterman of Distinction, the Community Service Award from the Josh Gibson Foundation, a Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network Excellence Award, the 2006 University of Pittsburgh School of Law Alumni of the Year Award, and a recipient of a University of Pittsburgh Chancellor's Medallion.



*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Mark Schwartz, Esq.**

Mark Schwartz served as Regional Housing Legal Services Executive Director for nearly 40 years, advocating for affordable housing for Pennsylvanians. He continues to provide support to the organization as Of Counsel.

Mark joined Regional Housing Legal Services as a staff attorney in 1974, only a year after the organization was formed, helping to expand its reach while building out policy and advocacy for affordable housing and access to utilities. He introduced the Pennsylvania Utility Law Project to Regional Housing Legal Services, and was instrumental in the creation of the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania as well as the Pennsylvania Health Law Project. Mark was heavily involved with the creation and implementation of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit in Pennsylvania, currently the central source of financing for new affordable housing.

Mark was one of the founders and longtime President of the Junior Jewish Basketball League in the Philadelphia area, as well as one of the founders of the Delaware Valley Synagogue League (softball), and the Eric Zucker Memorial Scholarship Fund. Mark was a Vice-President of East Abington Little League and is an active member of Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Elkins Park.

Mark graduated from Temple University and Villanova University Law School. He and his wife, Bernice, a pre-school professional, reside in Abington Township. They have two sons, Jon and Andy, and three granddaughters Lily, Josie, and Jackson.

# *Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.* **EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

## **Randy & Debbie Blough**

*Randy and Debbie Blough are retired scientists who volunteer at the Honey Brook Food Pantry in Chester County, where they collect clothes for pantry clients and help families apply for food stamps and navigate issues like utility shutoffs. In 2018, they uncovered a hidden inequity affecting mobile homeowners in Pennsylvania. The Bloughs realized the only way to remedy the problem was through a tax reassessment, so they cobbled together donations to cover filing fees, learned how to go through the reassessment appeal process, and filed appeals for 22 food pantry clients. In all 22 cases, mobile home reassessments were granted, saving clients \$20,000 in taxes that year. In 2019, news of Debbie and Randy's groundbreaking work resulted in a partnership between Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania and the United Way of Chester County, known as the Chester County Mobile Home Property Tax Reassessment Project. Debbie and Randy played a crucial role in organizing this first-of-its-kind program, providing training and materials to a team of 30 volunteers. Due to the project's immense impact and success, a second mobile home tax reassessment project was recently launched in Bucks County.*

## **Liz Maria Chacko, Esq.**

*Liz Maria Chacko is the Deputy Director of Justice at Work, providing oversight for all legal services. Liz has been with Justice at Work since 2006 and has remained steadfast in her commitment to improving the availability and quality of civil legal services for low-income people in Pennsylvania. Liz has served on the Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission's Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking, and has been an advisor to Oxfam America and the Southern Poverty Law Center. She is a former member of the board of the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition and is currently an adjunct professor at University of Pennsylvania Carey School of Law. She received her law degree from Boston College Law School, where she served on the editorial board of the Boston College Journal of Law and Social Justice. Liz was the first member of her family born in the United States and became interested in immigrants' rights and workers' rights because of her own history and her family's migration experience.*

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Consumer Subcommittee of the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee**

*The Consumer Subcommittee of Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance Advisory Committee addresses inequities and improves healthcare access within Pennsylvania's Medicaid program. It is comprised of fifteen members from across the state who advocate on behalf of the more than 3.3 million Pennsylvanians who depend on Medicaid to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Each member of the Subcommittee has firsthand experience with the Medicaid system because they are past or present beneficiaries, have family members who are recipients, or work for welfare rights organizations. One of the nation's most active consumer advisory groups, the Subcommittee meets monthly with Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services to discuss policies and programs that could affect low-income recipients. In addition to offering consumers a seat at the table with state policymakers, the group plays a leading role in promoting an accessible, equitable, and high-quality Medicaid program in Pennsylvania. Louise Brookins founded the Subcommittee in the 1980s, and her daughter, Sonia Brookins, continues its work as the current Chair.*

**John Gandrud, Esq.**

*John Gandrud has dedicated himself to serving legal aid and Northwestern Legal Services' client community for 36 years. John first joined Northwestern Legal Services as a Staff Attorney, gaining valuable experience in a wide range of cases. In 1997, John was recognized by the Client's Council of Erie County "for his unceasing efforts to ensure quality legal services to all people of the client community." John helped to create the Central Intake Unit in 1996, eventually becoming its Managing Attorney a year later. John was instrumental in developing an online intake system in 2011. He also serves as administrator for their case management system. In addition to these duties, John provides telephone legal assistance to residents in Northwestern Legal Services' entire 10-county service area. From 1996 to present, he has helped approximately 25,000 clients in the areas of housing, family, consumer, education and expungement law. John is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and served in the National Guard for 20 years.*

# *Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.* **EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

## Doreen Mitchell

*Doreen Mitchell is the Special Projects Coordinator for Housing for Neighborhood Legal Services. She is the point of contact expediting referral processes among project partners from housing eviction and foreclosure prevention program operators. She started her career with Neighborhood Legal Services as a receptionist, later becoming an Intake Specialist, Protection from Abuse Intake Coordinator, and Expungement Coordinator. Doreen champions legal aid efforts by taking additional steps to identify ways to serve more clients, such as volunteering to conduct outreach presentations and promoting legal aid in the community. She also facilitates in-person and online expungement outreach in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, and Lawrence counties. Doreen serves as the Co-President of the Iron City Legal Assistance Workers Union and is an active member of her program's labor management committee. She is also the unofficial social director at Neighborhood Legal Services, organizing birthday parties, holiday gatherings, going away parties, and other events.*

## Morgan Lewis

*From their founding in Philadelphia in 1873, to a team of 2,200 lawyers and specialists providing services around the globe, Morgan Lewis is committed to serving the public good, starting in its community.*

*Besides specializing in corporate, transactional, litigation, and regulatory services to clients in major industries worldwide, Morgan Lewis provides free legal services to nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations whose mission is to serve vulnerable individuals and communities. Each year, Morgan Lewis attorneys donate more than 120,000 hours to pro bono work, providing more than 1,800 clients with pro bono support in a wide range of cases in five key areas:*

*Social Security disability, veterans' benefits, access to education, healthcare, and housing. Since 2018, 100% of its lawyers have met the firm's Pro Bono Challenge of donating at least 20 hours to pro bono service annually. In Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia team has been a particularly important pro bono partner to Community Legal Services.*

*In March 2021, a team of attorneys from Morgan Lewis and Community Legal Services helped to negotiate an extraordinary resolution in a landmark case versus the USDA, securing more than \$700 million in emergency assistance for over 650,000 families.*

# *Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.* **EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

## **Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative**

*In June 2020, Community Justice Project, the Hill District Consensus Group, and the Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation joined forces to address the impending eviction crisis. The project has since grown into an independent organization known as RentHelp Pittsburgh, whose mission is to stabilize Allegheny County's most vulnerable households. Advocates working on behalf of these groups employ an integrated eviction response system that combines outreach and rapid response efforts, resource navigation and mediation, and legal defense services. Their work is supported by ongoing partnerships with Carnegie Mellon University's CREATE Lab, Pittsburgh Union of Regional Renters, and other service providers—together forming the Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative. In addition to providing tenants with rent relief services, these affiliated community organizations help tenants access broader support like childcare, food assistance, healthcare, and job training. As a result of their collective efforts, hundreds of families have been able to remain in their homes.*

## **Julia Simon-Mishel, Esq.**

*Julia Simon-Mishel is the Supervising Attorney of the Unemployment Compensation Unit at Philadelphia Legal Assistance, where she represents low-wage workers in unemployment matters. Julia has represented over 700 clients and has an active appellate practice pursuing impact unemployment cases in Pennsylvania courts. She serves by appointment on Pennsylvania's Unemployment Compensation Benefit Modernization Advisory Committee and has testified by invitation before the Pennsylvania legislature many times on issues affecting her clients. During the pandemic, Julia spearheaded community outreach and education about unemployment programs in Pennsylvania, working closely with social service organizations, community groups, legal services organizations, and local officials to help tens of thousands of workers access benefits. Prior to joining Philadelphia Legal Assistance, she clerked for the Honorable Norma L. Shapiro of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Julia was recently named one of the American Bar Association's "One the Rise: Top 40 Young Lawyers" and a Super Lawyers "Rising Star" in Pennsylvania. She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and Brandeis University.*

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

## The Honorable Mary Gay Scanlon

Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon has dedicated her career to serving the most vulnerable – first as a lawyer and now in Congress. She was first sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives on November 13, 2018, following a special election, and currently represents Pennsylvania’s 5th Congressional District.

Congresswoman Scanlon’s legislative priorities include voting rights, access to justice, education, supporting economic growth for her region, common-sense gun safety, and ending hunger. All these priorities align with Congresswoman Scanlon’s main goal as an elected official: protecting and improving the lives of America’s children, families, veterans, and seniors. She currently serves on the House Judiciary Committee, House Committee on Rules, and Committee on House Administration, and chairs the House Caucuses on Access to Legal Aid and Youth Mentoring.

As a staunch believer that everyone is entitled to equal protection under the law, Congresswoman Scanlon previously worked as national pro bono counsel at a major U.S. law firm, where she directed and supervised over 600 lawyers across 15 offices in providing more than 50,000 hours of pro bono legal services annually to low-income clients and nonprofit organizations. Under her leadership, the pro bono program worked on critical issues, including voting rights, child advocacy, immigration, public benefits, and criminal justice reform.

Before her election to the U.S. House of Representatives, Congresswoman Scanlon also served as an attorney at the Education Law Center, president of her local school board, and co-chair of the Voting Rights Task Force of the Association of Pro Bono Counsel. She is a graduate of Colgate University and the University of Pennsylvania Law School. The Congresswoman and her husband, Mark, reside in Swarthmore and have three adult children.

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*  
**EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

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*Your Other Partner*

*The Pennsylvania Bar Association salutes  
the 2022 Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network  
Award Winners. Through its Pro Bono Office,  
the PBA partners with PLAN to improve  
access to justice for the neediest among us.*

### **2022 PLAN Excellence Awards**

*The Consumer Subcommittee of the Medical Assistance  
Advisory Committee*

*Doreen Mitchell*

*John Gandrud, Esq*

*Julia Simon-Mishel, Esq*

*Liz Chacko, Esq*

*Morgan Lewis*

*Randy & Debbie Blough*

*Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative*

*Robert Racunas, Esq and Mark Schwartz, Esq, both  
receiving the Samuel W. Milkes Outstanding Leadership  
Award*

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# *Congratulations*



and best wishes to all of the  
2022 Excellence Awards winners!

James and Linda DeAngelo

**-GOLD SPONSOR-**

Congratulations to the 2022  
Excellence Award honorees,  
and to Bob Racunas and  
Mark Schwartz, recipients of  
the Samuel W. Milkes  
Outstanding Leadership  
Award.

Thanks for all you do in  
pursuit of equal justice for all!

*Max Laun and Diana Petruska*

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congratulates all of the  
Pennsylvania Legal Aid  
Network's Excellence  
Award Recipients!

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**-SILVER SPONSOR-**

We congratulate all of the 2022 Excellence Award winners, with special thanks to Mark Schwartz and Bob Racunas for their steadfast commitment and leadership in the public interest community.

Kudos to Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon for her longtime support of Pennsylvania's public interest community, and then stepping up to serve in Congress.

Eve Biskind Klothen, Esq. & Kenneth L. Klothen, Esq.

**-BRONZE SPONSOR-**

# Congratulations

*to the 2022 Excellence Award honorees*

Randy and Debbie Blough

Liz Chacko, Esq.

Consumer Subcommittee of the  
Medical Assistance Advisory Committee

John Gandrud, Esq.

Doreen Mitchell

Morgan Lewis

Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative

Julia Simon-Mishel, Esq.

*and to the Samuel W. Milkes*

*Outstanding Leadership recipients*

Robert Racunas, Esq. and Mark Schwartz, Esq.

*Thank you for your*

*commitment to equal justice!*

Allen Harberg, Esq.

**-BRONZE SPONSOR-**



SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania Interest on  
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The Pennsylvania IOLTA Board  
congratulates all the  
2022 Excellence Award Honorees

*We applaud your dedication to  
extending the arm of justice  
to the less fortunate in our communities.*

**Pennsylvania IOLTA Board**

Barry M. Simpson, Esq., Chair  
Vanessa Garrett Harley, Esq., Vice-Chair  
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Hon. Stephanie A. Domitrovich, Treasurer  
Kenneth M. Argentieri, Esq.  
Dave Feidt, Esq.  
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Samuel W. Milkes, Esq.  
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**Congratulations to the  
2022 PLAN  
Excellence Awards Recipients!**

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## PROUD SPONSOR

We are pleased to share in the mission to provide equal access to justice for all in Pennsylvania and in communities across our global platform.

**Congratulations** to the honored members and friends of the legal aid community receiving the 2022 Excellence Award.

K&L Gates LLP. Global counsel across five continents. Learn more about our commitment to pro bono work at [klgates.com/pro-bono](https://klgates.com/pro-bono).

**-BRONZE SPONSOR-**

The Allegheny County Bar Association and  
The Allegheny County Bar Foundation  
Congratulate

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ROBERT  
RACUNAS,  
ESQ.

---

for being honored with the  
SAMUEL W. MILKES  
OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD

and for your years of service  
to the Pittsburgh legal community

*The*  *of Pittsburgh's Legal Community®*



**PRO BONO  
CENTER**  
Allegheny County Bar Foundation



[www.acbf.org](http://www.acbf.org) | [www.pittsburghprobono.org](http://www.pittsburghprobono.org)

# Hats Off to All of Tonight's Excellence Award Recipients!

**WITH SPECIAL KUDOS TO  
MY FORMER STUDENT AND TA**

*Julia Simon-Mishel*

for her amazing work to get unemployment benefits  
to workers during the pandemic.

**EVERLASTING APPRECIATION TO**

*Morgan Lewis*

for always being there to support CLS  
and help seek justice for its clients.



**AND CONGRATULATIONS TO**

*Mark Schwartz and Bob Racunas*

with gratitude for their years of support,  
mentorship, inspiration, and friendship.  
You guys showed me how to be a better leader.

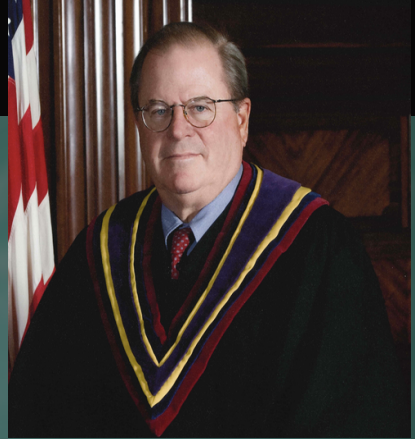
Catherine Carr

Former Executive Director, Community Legal Services  
Current Legal Aid Consultant and Continuing Supporter  
of PLAN's work for equal justice.

*The Clients Council of  
Pennsylvania would like to  
congratulate all of the 2022  
Excellence Award Recipients.*

*Life is more comfortable for  
all those you serve, and  
we thank you!*





Chief Justice Emeritus

Ronald Castille congratulates all of the Excellence Award Honorees for the great work they do to promote access to justice.

Special congratulations goes to the recipients of the Samuel W. Milkes Outstanding Leadership Award, Bob Racunas and Mark Schwartz, for their decades of exceptional leadership and steadfast commitment to equal justice for all.

Community Legal Services of Philadelphia  
**Congratulates**

# Morgan Lewis

*PLAN Excellence Award Winner*

*Samuel W. Milkes Outstanding  
Leadership Award Winners*



Mark Schwartz, Esq.



Robert V. Racunas, Esq.

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## And Excellence Award Winners

Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative  
Consumer Subcommittee of the Medical  
Assistance Advisory Committee

Doreen Mitchell

John Gandrud, Esq.

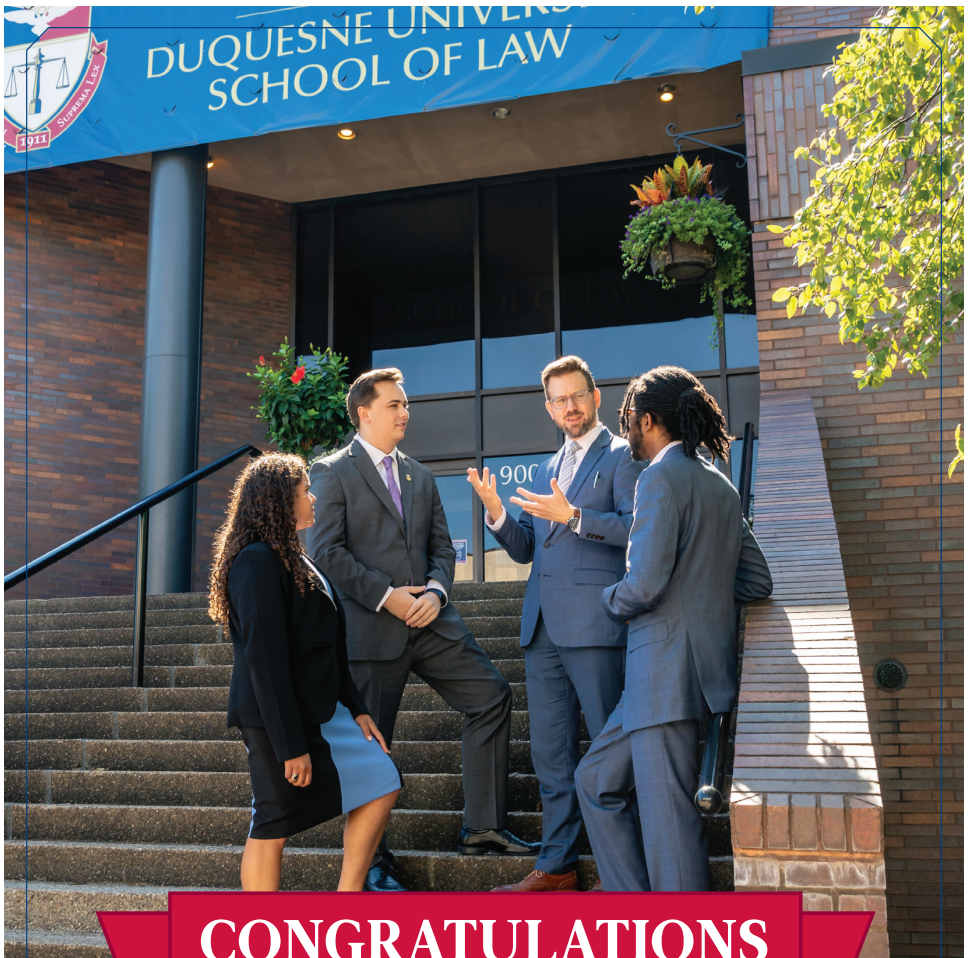
Julia Simon-Mishel, Esq.

Liz Chacko, Esq.

Randy & Debbie Blough







**CONGRATULATIONS**

**Duquesne University**  
and  
**President Ken Gormley**  
honor tonight's award winners  
for outstanding leadership  
in support of accessible, quality legal aid.





## Congratulations Liz!

We are thrilled that you were selected to receive this 2022 PLAN Excellence Award in recognition of all of your many years of incredible work on behalf of Justice at Work and our clients. Thank you for being an amazing attorney, role model, mentor, friend and colleague. Your dedication to our clients and their goals is an inspiration to all of us. We are so proud to work alongside you, and we can't wait to see all the great things the future will bring.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO  
TO THE 2022  
EXCELLENCE AWARDS RECIPIENTS  
FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE**

**Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative**

**Consumer Subcommittee of the Medical Assistance  
Advisory Committee**

**Doreen Mitchell**

**John Gandrud, Esq.**

**Julia Simon-Mishel, Esq.**

**Liz Chacko, Esq.**

**Morgan Lewis**

**Randy & Debbie Blough**

**and to the recipients of the  
*Samuel W. Milkes Outstanding Leadership Award:*  
**Mark Schwartz, Esq. & Robert Racunas, Esq.****



**President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark  
Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas**

With appreciation for years  
of inspired leadership  
and service from

Mark Schwartz

and

Bob Racunas

---

Judge Gerald McHugh

The LASP Board of Directors & Staff congratulate

# Debbie and Randy Blough

on their 2022

## PLAN Excellence Award for Lay Advocacy



In 2018, retired scientists **Debbie and Randy Blough** discovered that mobile homes are overtaxed during their volunteer work at Honey Brook Food Pantry in Chester County. They researched the problem and successfully appealed 22 tax assessments on their own.

Since then, Debbie and Randy have worked with **Legal Aid of Southeastern PA** and **United Way of Chester County** to develop the **Chester County Mobile Home Tax Reassessment Project**. From 2019-21, the partnership has helped 756 residents save an average of \$883 per year per home, or almost \$10.6 million over 10 years.

This project would not exist without the Bloughs' inspired lay advocacy to help Chester County residents.

[lasp.org/chester-county-mobile-home-tax-reassessments](https://lasp.org/chester-county-mobile-home-tax-reassessments)



LASP will celebrate 20+ years of service to Bucks, Chester, Delaware & Montgomery counties at the **Fête for Justice** May 19, 2022. **LASP20.org**



DOREEN MITCHELL

# Congratulations!

on receiving the 2022 Pennsylvania  
Legal Aid Network, Inc. Excellence  
Award!

Congratulations to all of the  
PLAN Excellence Award Honorees!



**BOB RACUNAS**

**Congratulations!**

on receiving the Samuel W. Milkes  
Outstanding Leadership in Support of  
Legal Services Award!

And for your leadership of NLS for over forty years!

Congratulations to all of the  
PLAN Excellence Award Honorees!



# Neighborhood Legal Services

Board of Directors, Staff,  
and Supporters  
celebrate Bob's distinguished  
legal aid career

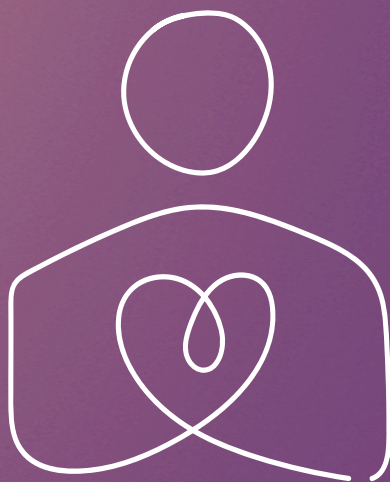


**BOB RACUNAS**

Congratulations on tonight's well  
deserved honor!



*Congratulations to the  
Consumer Subcommittee  
of the Medical Assistance  
Advisory Committee!*



*Philadelphia Welfare Rights  
appreciates all of your time and  
dedication used to assist the state  
with making the Medical Assistance  
Program work for the recipients.*

*Historically, your excellence has  
been showing and you deserve to  
be honored!*

**PENNSYLVANIA**  
**Health Law**  
**PROJECT**

PHLP congratulates all the 2022 PLAN Excellence awardees, especially the members of the Consumer Subcommittee:

Sonia Brookins  
Liz Healey  
Richard Kovalesky  
Rochelle Jackson  
Ronel Baccus  
Emmanuel DeVaughn  
Minta Livengood  
Linda Bergman

Marsha White-Mathis  
Lauren Henderson  
Cindy Keely  
Victoria Salerno  
Meghann Luczkowski  
Marjorie Jackson Crowder  
Jayme Scali  
Lauren Bennett

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## **Louise Brookins: Tireless Crusader**

1925 - 2005

Louise Brookins founded the Consumer Subcommittee in the 1980s and chaired it until she passed away. The Subcommittee has channeled the health care needs of millions of Pennsylvanians who rely on Medicaid. PHLP is proud to serve as counsel to one of the most active Medicaid consumer advisory committees in the country.



[www.phlp.org](http://www.phlp.org)

PHILADELPHIA | HARRISBURG | PITTSBURGH  
*Helping People in Need Get the Healthcare They Deserve*



**Congratulations  
to Julia Simon-Mishel  
and all of the  
2022 PLAN Excellence  
Awardees.**



**Her proud colleagues at Philadelphia  
Legal Assistance thank Julia for her  
extraordinary leadership, her tireless  
work ethic, and her tenacity in  
representing workers in Philadelphia, the  
Commonwealth, and beyond.**

# Congratulations



to the recipients of the 2022 Excellence Awards

Randy & Debbie Blough

Liz Chacko, Esq.

Consumer Subcommittee of the  
Medical Assistance Advisory Committee

John Gandrud, Esq.

Doreen Mitchell

Morgan Lewis

Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative

Julia Simon-Mishel, Esq.

Joan M. Tutak, Esq.

Thank you for your outstanding  
commitment to Pennsylvanians in need!

*from the staff of Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*

Congratulations to the 2022 recipients  
of the Samuel W. Milkes Outstanding  
Leadership Award

*Bob Racunas*

and

*Mark Schwartz*

for your years of leadership,  
advocacy, and commitment to  
equal justice. Thank you for  
making a difference in the  
lives of so many!

*from the staff at  
Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.*

Congratulations to  
Julia Simon-Mishel



John Lavelle, Jr., and  
the rest of the *Gilliam v. USDA*  
team at Morgan Lewis, and  
the other Excellence Award winners!

---

From the Philadelphia Legal  
Services Union



# Congratulations Mark Schwartz & Bob Racunas

for receiving the  
*Samuel W. Milkes Outstanding Leadership Award*  
and

# Crystal Jennings

for receiving a PLAN Excellence Award  
as part of the Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative!

Regional Housing Legal Services (RHLS) is a nonprofit law firm with unique expertise in affordable, sustainable housing and its related components — community and economic development, utility matters, and preservation of homeownership. RHLS provides innovative project and policy solutions that help create sustainable communities offering decent, safe, and affordable housing for lower-income Pennsylvanians.

**RHLS is a proud member of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network.**

Visit [rhls.org](http://rhls.org) to learn more.



**CONGRATULATIONS**  
to the distinguished recipients of  
the 2022 PLAN Excellence Award:

Randy & Debbie Blough

Liz Chacko, Esq.

Consumer Subcommittee of the  
Medical Assistance Advisory Committee

John Gandrud, Esq.

Doreen Mitchell

Morgan Lewis

Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative

Julia Simon-Mishel, Esq.

**You all do important work to better the lives  
of low income Pennsylvanians,  
and it is great to see you recognized!**

---

**CONGRATULATIONS**

**to the recipients of the Samuel W. Milkes  
Outstanding Leadership Award:**

Robert Racunas, Esq. & Mark Schwartz, Esq.

You have both devoted your careers in incredible ways, not only to better the lives of low income Pennsylvanians, but also to enhance the delivery of legal services in your communities and across Pennsylvania.

*Sam Milkes and Jan Terpening*





would like to extend  
their congratulations to

**Jessica Durkin**  
**Kevin Quisenberry**  
**Swain Uber**

and the members of the  
Pittsburgh Eviction Prevention Collaborative.  
Thank you for coming together to make a  
difference in the lives of so many!



213 NORTH FRONT STREET, HARRISBURG, PA 17101 (717) 232-7536 FAX (717) 234-4562

To All Awardees:

**Congratulations and Thank You!**





**Central Baptist Church**  
2200 Wylie Avenue ~ Historic Hill District  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Phone 412.566.1437  
**Rev. Victor J. Grigsby, Pastor**



**Deaconess Doreen Mitchell**

*We applaud your commitment to improve the quality of life for people throughout the Pittsburgh Community through your service unto God, leadership, and the gift of blessing others. All you do for others does not go unnoticed especially in the sight of God.*

***Congratulations for being the recipient of the 2022 PLAN Excellence Award!***

**Congratulations To**

**Mark Schwartz, Esquire**

Executive Director Emeritus  
Regional Housing Legal Services

&

**Robert V. Racunas, Esquire**

Executive Director Emeritus  
Neighborhood Legal Services

As Recipients of the

**Samuel W. Milkes Outstanding Leadership Award**

From

**The Pennsylvania Project Directors Association**



**SOUTHWESTERN  
PENNSYLVANIA  
LEGAL AID**

congratulates  
**BOB RACUNAS**

**on the well-deserved Samuel W. Milkes  
Outstanding Leadership award.**

**Thank you, Bob, for your many years of steadfast  
dedication to southwestern Pennsylvanians in  
need while being a partner and mentor to  
countless fellow public servants.**

— “ —

Liz is everything one could look for in a mentor, teacher, leader, and friend. Without her continual encouragement and selfless guidance, I would not be where I am now. As a patient leader steadfastly committed to public interest, she is truly an inspiration for all prospective attorneys like me. Liz's lasting impact will remain not only within the legal service community, but with myself as well for a long time to come!

— ” —

*-Athena Buell Becerra*



For households with insufficient income, poverty is often the hidden adversary in civil legal proceedings, especially for those without an attorney by their side.

The free civil legal services provided by the programs of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network protect the individuals and families who need it most and can afford it least.

*Learn more about our programs & support our work!  
[www.palegalaid.net](http://www.palegalaid.net)*





**Pennsylvania**  
**Legal Aid** Network

*Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc. is a client centered organization that provides leadership, funding, and support to improve the availability and quality of civil legal aid for low-income people and victims of domestic violence in Pennsylvania.*

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.  
The Louise Brookins Building  
118 Locust Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
800-322-7572

[www.palegalaid.net](http://www.palegalaid.net)