

EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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Pennsylvania
Legal Aid | **50**
YEARS
Network



STATEMENT IN RECOGNITION OF 50 YEARS

Pennsylvania Legal Services Center, now known as the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc., was incorporated on March 5, 1973. The signatures of Amanda Coleman, Fred Speaker, J. Richard Gray, Laurence M. Lavin, and William R. Klaus, our first Board of Directors, serve as evidence of this historic moment.

As we begin our 50th year of service, we reflect with gratitude on the beginning of a journey that has brought us to where we are today.

In 1972, the Pennsylvania Legal Services and Community Legal Services Act was signed into law by the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Governor Milton J. Shapp. This legislation was one of the earliest of its kind in the United States, and it served as a model for other states seeking to enhance access to legal aid for low-income individuals.

It was also crucial, because it paved the way for the establishment of our organization, which was founded on the belief that access to legal aid is an essential feature of our justice system, and that we have a duty as a society to provide those facing critical civil legal challenges with help, information, and representation, irrespective of their financial means.

Today, we continue to be a beacon of hope and justice for underserved residents throughout the state and have one of the most robust legal aid networks in the country, thanks in part to the collective power of those who support our mission.

We are grateful for the staff members, partners, supporters, volunteers, and funders who have helped us serve our clients throughout the years. We reflect on the memories we have shared and the countless lives we have touched through our work. We celebrate the resilience and strength of the communities we support and the triumphs we have achieved together.

The work ahead of us is as important as ever, as is the need for us to adopt new models and approaches that respond to the environment in which we now live. At stake is nothing less than the fundamental principle of equal justice under the law upon which this nation, state, and organization were founded.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
EXCELLENCE
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Welcome

JAYME M. CASSIDY, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PENNSYLVANIA LEGAL AID NETWORK, INC.

Acknowledgement of Sponsors

In Remembrance

Featured Remarks

COLONEL WILL A. GUNN
GENERAL COUNSEL, LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Brief Intermission

AUCTION CLOSING AT 6:30PM

Champagne Toast

MAX W. LAUN, ESQ.
BOARD PRESIDENT, PENNSYLVANIA LEGAL AID NETWORK, INC.

Awards Program

PRESENTATION OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHIEF JUSTICE CASTILLE
PRESENTATION OF SAMUEL W. MILKES
OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD

Program Conclusion

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
EXCELLENCE
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We are grateful to the following sponsors for their generous support of this year's ceremony.

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Champagne Toast

Hilton Harrisburg

Event Favors

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#9 Coal Mine Museum

AACA Museum

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Frontstream

Karen Hallion

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Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins

***Thank you to these generous
organizations and individuals for
their in-kind donations.***

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
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COLONEL WILL A. GUNN



Will A. Gunn is the General Counsel and Vice President for Legal Affairs for the Legal Services Corporation. In 2009, he was appointed by President Barack Obama as the General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and served in that role for five years.

Col. Gunn graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy with military honors and graduated cum laude from Harvard Law School where he served as President of the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. He also holds an LL.M in environmental law from George Washington University, a Masters in National Resource Strategy from the National Defense University, and a Masters in Ministry (with a focus on Leadership) from Lancaster Bible College.

In 2003, he was selected as the first-ever Chief Defense Counsel for the DoD Office of Military Commissions. In that role, Col. Gunn established an office that defends detainees brought before military commissions at the Guantanamo Prison Camp. He served as a White House Fellow during the George H. W. Bush Administration and after retiring from the Air Force as a colonel in 2005, he served as CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington.

Col. Gunn has chaired the ABA's 2021 National Law Day commemoration; the ABA Youth at Risk Commission; and the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity. He has served on several boards, is a deacon in his local church, and has received numerous awards including an honorary doctorate from Nova Southeastern University and the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau's Outstanding Alumni Award.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
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2023 BEST PRO BONO ADVOCATE
MICHAEL D. SIMON, ESQ.



For forty years, Michael Simon has devoted his time and expertise to pro bono work. In 1983, he became one of the first volunteer attorneys in the Juvenile Court system where he represented children in dependency proceedings.

After relocating to Los Angeles in 1985, he continued to volunteer his time at the Asian Pacific Legal Center and weekly walk-in unemployment clinics in Central and West Los Angeles, mentoring local law students. Upon his return to Pittsburgh in 1995, he began volunteering for Neighborhood Legal Services' pro bono program—a relationship that continues to this day.

For 25 years, Michael was an adjunct professor at Duquesne Law School. He also formed the Unemployment Compensation Clinic at Duquesne Law School, which handled hearings and appeals to the Unemployment Compensation Board of Review and Commonwealth Court. Prior to the closure of the clinic, Michael had assisted more than 1,000 clients and has since taken over its pending cases while continuing to take referrals from the programs that utilized the Clinic.

Michael is a member of Roe & Simon LLC. Outside of work, he has a deep appreciation of Italian culture, and enjoys reading, writing, and speaking Italian. He also enjoys cooking and travel and was a scuba divemaster and spear fisherman during his time in Los Angeles.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
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2023 BEST ATTORNEY ADVOCATE
ROBERT W. BALLENGER, ESQ.



Robert Ballenger is an attorney at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, where he provides direct representation to low-income Philadelphians to assist in restoring and maintaining essential utility services.

Robert serves as lead counsel in CLS's role as Public Advocate, where he represents residential Philadelphia utility customers in Philadelphia Gas Works annual budget proceedings as well as Philadelphia Water Department rate increase proceedings and appeals.

Robert also represents groups whose low-income members rely upon utilities to provide affordable service and robust consumer protections. He is a contributor to the Pennsylvania Consumer Law and Pennsylvania Real Estate Tax Sales and Municipal Claims treatises.

Prior to joining Community Legal Services, he practiced for several years at an international law firm, advising clients on ERISA and other employee benefit matters. Robert received his B.A., M.S.W., and J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, where he served as associate editor and a member of the editorial board of the Law Review.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
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2023 BEST NON-ATTORNEY ADVOCATE
KIMBERLY J. TARBELL



Kimberly Tarbell is the Director of Operations at Laurel Legal Services, Inc., where she handles the program's central administrative and accounting duties. Kim's tireless dedication and leadership have been a source of inspiration to everyone around her.

Kim's journey at Laurel Legal Services is a testament to her exceptional talents and hard work. Beginning as an Executive Assistant and Board Secretary, she quickly advanced to become the Director of Development and Marketing, before eventually being promoted to Director of Operations.

Kim's passion for legal aid and its clients shows in all that she takes on: from planning and facilitating all fundraising efforts to building a six-county Community Partnership Program; from creating newsletters and social media posts to website maintenance and board meeting preparation; and from payroll and human resources duties to handling journal entries and audit work – all of these and more showcase Kim's commitment to her work and her community.

When she isn't working, Kim enjoys her hobbies. In the warmer months, you'll find her outside in her garden or hiking with her husband. In the colder months, she loves to bake, cross-stitch, or curl up with her cats and read a good novel.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS

2023 BEST COMMUNITY ADVOCACY



Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (PLSE) was founded in 2011 by three civil rights attorneys who were at the forefront of an emerging criminal justice reform movement targeting the barriers that prevent people from securing employment, housing, and education opportunities.

With a long-term vision of redefining criminal records as a measure of growth and a pardon as an expected and predictable release from the criminal justice system, PLSE founded the Pardon Project in 2018. As a result of their efforts to reform the pardon process and make it free and accessible to all, over 2,000 people apply each year, with a two-thirds success rate.

PLSE has collaborated with legal aid organizations in all of PLAN's regions and has established volunteer Pardon Projects in over a dozen counties. This initiative has inspired neighbors to assist each other, providing PLAN agencies with new resources to better serve their clients. The PLSE's unwavering commitment to criminal justice reform and its consequential impact have earned them a well-deserved recognition.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS

SAMUEL W. MILKES
OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD
Karen Stokes



Karen has been an instrumental part of our organization since 2008, and we are immensely thankful for the unwavering dedication, diligence, and outstanding leadership she has demonstrated over the years.

Karen's enduring commitment to public interest work has been a guiding light throughout her professional journey. With 30 years of nonprofit accounting and grants management experience, combined with a Bachelor of Business Administration (Professional Accountancy) degree from Pennsylvania State University, Karen plays an integral role at PLAN, Inc. as Director of Finance. She is a cherished role model and mentor to countless staff members and members in our community, and she has often shared how meaningful it has been for her to dedicate her entire career to nonprofit accounting.

As Karen approaches her retirement in June, we want to express our profound gratitude for her service and extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes for a fulfilling retirement. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside such an exceptional individual, and we know that her husband and two sons will enjoy spending more time with her while she travels, kayaks, hikes, bikes, gardens, and crafts with her five granddaughters. We also know that Karen will continue to make a difference by supporting Girls on the Run and other organizations close to her heart.

Thank you,

**Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network,
for improving access to justice for
50 years!**

**The Pennsylvania Bar Association and the
Pennsylvania Bar Foundation join in saluting
this year's award winners:**

Best Attorney Advocate Award:

Robert W. Ballenger

Best Non-Attorney Advocate Award:

Kimberly J. Tarbell

Best Community Advocacy Award:

*The Pardon Project, Philadelphia Lawyers for
Social Equity*

Best Pro Bono Advocate Award:

Michael D. Simon



-GOLD SPONSOR-

Congratulations to the
2023 Excellence Award
honorees, and to the
Pennsylvania Legal Aid
Network, on their
golden anniversary.



Thank you for 50 years
of service, and best
wishes for 50 more,
and beyond!

Max Laun, Esq. and Diana Petruska

-GOLD SPONSOR-

CONGRATULATIONS TO
PLAN
FOR 50 YEARS OF
STRIVING TO FULFILL
THE CAHN LEGACY



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For more information about
Professor Cahn and his contributions
to a more just society, please visit

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**Congratulations to the
2023 PLAN Excellence
Awards Recipients!**

MaherDuessel

**For over 30 years,
Maher Duessel has provided
audit, tax and consulting services to non-profits
including organizations providing legal aid.**



-SILVER SPONSOR-

A bronze statue of Lady Justice, blindfolded and holding a scale of justice, is positioned on the left side of the page. The background is a soft, golden glow with a large, bright sun or moon in the upper left corner.

McNees Wallace & Nurick
is pleased to sponsor the
2023 Excellence Awards and
congratulates the awardees
for their tireless efforts to
expand access to legal
services to underserved
communities.

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**Congratulations to all
the 2023 Excellence
Awards honorees,
and to PLAN on their
50th anniversary!**

Michael J. McDonald, Esq.

-SILVER SPONSOR-



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE 2023 AWARDEES

We are proud to support the important work of the
PENNSYLVANIA LEGAL AID NETWORK.
We CONGRATULATE you on 50 YEARS of promoting
quality and fairness in the legal system.

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**Congratulations
to the 2023
Excellence Award
honorees**



Wes Payne, Esq.

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Congratulations



to PLAN on 50 years of service and
to all the 2023 Award winners!

James and Linda DeAngelo

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CONGRATULATIONS

**to the 2023 Pennsylvania
Legal Aid Network Excellence
Award Winners**

**PRACTICE
GREATNESS**

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**Celebrating
Pennsylvania Legal Aid
Network**

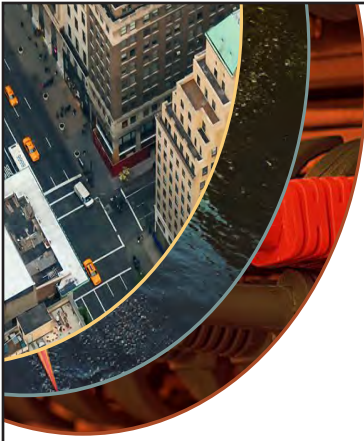
for
Fifty Years of Leadership
on
Access to Justice

Judge Gerald Austin McHugh

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IOLTA Board Chair 1996-2003

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Congratulations

to the 2023 Excellence Award Honorees

Best Attorney Advocate:
Robert W. Ballenger, Esq.

Best Community Advocacy Award:
The Pardon Project,
Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity

Best Pro Bono Advocate Award:
Michael D. Simon, Esq.

Best Non-Attorney Advocate:
Kimberly J. Tarbell



and to the

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
on their 50-year anniversary!

Allen Harberg, Esq.

-BRONZE SPONSOR-

Congratulations Excellence Award Winners!



*Congratulations
PA Legal Aid Network
for 50 years of
outstanding service*



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-BRONZE SPONSOR-

We congratulate all of the
2023 Excellence Award
winners and thank them for
their steadfast commitment
and leadership in the public
interest community.

**Kudos to the past and present
boards, staff, and supporters
of PLAN, as together
we celebrate 50 years
of advocacy for justice.**


Eve Biskind Klothen & Kenneth L. Klothen

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SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
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**THE PENNSYLVANIA IOLTA BOARD
CONGRATULATES
THE PENNSYLVANIA LEGAL AID NETWORK
ON ITS 50th ANNIVERSARY
AND ALL THE
2023 EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES**

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

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50 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE!



Congratulations to the 2023 Excellence Award
Recipients for Outstanding Public Service & Servant
Leadership

Robert W. Ballenger, Esquire
Best Attorney Advocate

Kimberly J. Tarbell
Best Non-Attorney Advocate

**Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity—The
Pardon Project**
Best Community Advocacy

Michael D. Simon, Esquire
Best Pro Bono Advocate



President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark
Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas

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We are pleased to celebrate members who 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 2023 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.

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“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

- MARGARET MEAD

2023
Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS

Congratulations to all of this year's Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network Excellence Award Winners. Your friends and colleagues in Montgomery County applaud you for all you've done to earn this very special honor.



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-BRONZE SPONSOR-

*As we recognize the excellence of those working
on behalf of our clients, let us also honor
the public servants who are doing so as well*

The Pardon Project thanks

The Staff of the PA Board of Pardons

**for the truly amazing reforms in policies
and procedures you have been
achieving over the past four years**

**With energy and hard work, you have greatly
expanded access to second chances for all
Pennsylvanians, but especially for those without
resources, lawyers or hope, demonstrating by
your diligence, courtesy, and respect
your passionate commitment to**

Equal Justice Under Law



**PARDON
PROJECT**

www.PardonMePA.org

-BRONZE SPONSOR-


Congratulations

**PENNSYLVANIA
LEGAL AID NETWORK**

on its
50TH ANNIVERSARY

and to
MICHAEL SIMON, ESQ.

and all the winners
of the Excellence Awards

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



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CENTER**

Allegheny County Bar Foundation



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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 Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network on their anniversary of five decades of exceptional leadership and

steadfast commitment to equal justice for all.



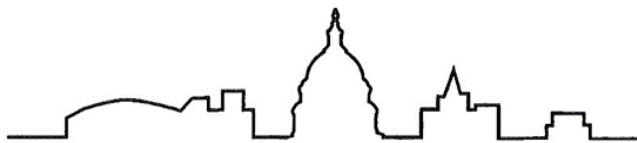
Community Legal Services congratulates



Robert W. Ballenger, Esq.
Best Attorney Advocate Award

and all of the other recipients of the
PLAN Excellence Awards.

**CLS also congratulates PLAN
on 50 years
of fighting for justice for all!**



Dauphin County Bar Association

213 NORTH FRONT STREET, HARRISBURG, PA 17101 (717) 232-7536 FAX (717) 234-4582

**The Dauphin County Bar Association
congratulates the
Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network on**

50 years

**of supporting free civil legal services to low-income
Pennsylvanians**

and another year of

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

**in expanding access to legal services across the
Commonwealth.**



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1898-2023



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CONGRATULATIONS!

Duquesne University President

Ken Gormley,

Dean April Barton,

and the

**Thomas R. Kline School of Law
of Duquesne University**

Congratulate

Professor Michael D. Simon, Esq.,

**recipient of the 2023 Best Pro Bono Advocate Award,
and all of the award winners.**

Pennsylvania | 50
Legal Aid Network





MidPenn
LEGAL SERVICES

**On behalf of the
Board of Directors and Staff of
MidPenn Legal Services**

*Happy
50th Anniversary*

**To The
Pennsylvania Legal Aid
Network**



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On Behalf Of
The Pennsylvania Project
Directors Association

*Happy
50th Anniversary*

To The
Pennsylvania Legal Aid
Network

Congratulations, Karen

on receiving the Samuel W. Milkes Leadership Award!

PLAN thanks Karen Stokes for her exemplary service, innovative thoughts, and professionalism that have helped ensure the maintenance of the highest principles of integrity and dedication throughout the PLAN Network.

*We wish her all the best as she starts
a new chapter in her life!*



from the staff at Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.

**Congratulations to the
2023 Excellence Award recipients!**

PLAN is honored to recognize these noble advocates who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to disadvantaged and underrepresented clients across the Commonwealth.

Your progressive advocacy helps us advance our goal of collaborative communities, equitable justice, and strong futures in Pennsylvania.

from the staff at Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.

***Congratulations to PLAN
and to the
2023 Excellence Awardees!***



***Philadelphia Welfare Rights thanks
this year's honorees for their
commitment to excellence, and
congratulates PLAN on 50 years of
advocating for those in need.***

CONGRATULATIONS
to the recipients of the 2023 Excellence Awards

Best Attorney Advocate:

Robert W. Ballenger, Esq.

Best Non-Attorney Advocate:

Kimberly J. Tarbell

Best Community Advocacy Award:

The Pardon Project, Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity

Best Pro Bono Advocate Award:

Michael D. Simon, Esq.

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

**Congratulations to
Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
on your 50th anniversary!**

**Working hard to make the first challenge in
America's Constitution a reality:**

*"We the People of the United States,
in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice..."*

Sam Milkes and Jan Terpening



Congratulations!

MICHAEL D. SIMON, ESQ.



on receiving the 2023 Best
Pro Bono Advocate Award!

Congratulations to all of the
PLAN Award Honorees!

Welfare Pride, Inc.
congratulates the
PA Legal Aid Network on
their 50th anniversary,
and thanks the 2023
Excellence Award Honorees
for their dedication to
helping underrepresented
Pennsylvanians.





**The Bucks County Bar Association & Foundation
proudly support the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network
as they celebrate 50 years of service.**

Congratulations to the 2023 Honorees!

CONGRATULATIONS PLAN & TONIGHT'S AWARDEES!

**On behalf of the Consumer Subcommittee
of the Medical Assistance Advisory Committee:**

Sonia Brookins, Chair
Minta Livengood, Vice Chair
Marsha White-Mathis
Ronel Baccus
Lauren Bennett
Rochelle Jackson

Lauren Henderson
Liz Healey
Meghann Luczkowski
Jayme Scali
Victoria Schiano
Bobbi Landis
Cindy Keely



Congratulations to the
Pennsylvania Legal
Aid Network
for 50 years of
supporting access to
justice



www.rhls.org



Congratulations to
the Pennsylvania
Legal Aid Network for
50 years of invaluable
leadership and
commitment to serve
those most in need.



**SOUTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA
LEGAL AID**

Congratulations

to **Robert W. Ballenger of Community Legal Services, a past law student leader at Philadelphia Legal Assistance and invaluable colleague,**

Kimberly J. Tarbell, Michael D. Simon, and The Pardon Project, Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity.

Thank you to the 2023 PLAN Excellence Award recipients for all you do to uplift our client communities.



Congratulations

to PLAN on **50** incredible years, and to all the awardees on their achievements!



WWW.PHLP.ORG



Congratulations

to Kim Tarbell for the well-deserved honor of Best Non-Attorney Advocate.

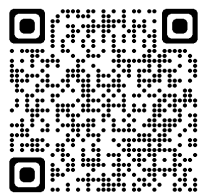
Thank you, Kim, for your tireless efforts- we appreciate you!



**SOUTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA
LEGAL AID**

Pennsylvania
Legal Aid | **50**
YEARS
Network

In honor of our anniversary,
we're running our
\$50 for 50 campaign
through March 2024.



While we invite you to make a special donation of \$50,
we are grateful for all donations of any amount!

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.



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Harrisburg, PA 17101

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Fax (717) 233- 4088
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