



THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

FULTON BUILDING

16TH FLOOR

200 NORTH THIRD STREET

HARRISBURG, PA 17101

March 15, 2016

THOMAS G. SAYLOR  
CHIEF JUSTICE

(717) 772-1599

Wesley R. Payne, IV, Esquire, Chair  
Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network  
118 Locust Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania is dedicated to ensuring that the civil legal needs of those who cannot afford the services of a lawyer are met. All Pennsylvanians deserve their day in court. The IOLTA Board is the Court's mechanism for supporting and sustaining legal aid organizations that serve this purpose.

When interest rates fell dramatically in 2008, the IOLTA Board's capacity for grant-making was severely curtailed. What used to generate \$12 million per year dropped to only \$3 million. The Court responded by increasing the attorney registration fee by \$25 and directed those funds support the IOLTA Board's mission, generating more than \$11 million since 2009. I am pleased to say that in Pennsylvania every attorney contributes financially to the sustainability of legal services to the poor.

This evening you will recognize six law firms that have gone above and beyond in carrying out the Court's additional action requiring that 50 percent of class action residual funds be directed to the IOLTA Board. Since that rule took effect in 2012, 18 cases have produced more than \$3.4 million to support civil legal services.

The firms being recognized tonight are responsible for more than 87 percent of the total revenue generated by the Court's class action residual rule. In one case 50 percent of the residuals were directed to IOLTA and the other 50 percent was directed to Community Legal Services, the largest provider of civil legal services in Philadelphia. In a second case, 100 percent of the funds were directed to the IOLTA Board. These actions have had a huge impact for Pennsylvania's legal aid programs.

The first group of firms being recognized was part of the *Samuel-Bassett v. Kia Motors America* case and includes Feldman Shepherd, LLP; Donovan Axler, LLC; and Francis & Mailman, PC. The second group of firms being recognized was part of the *In Re: Harleysville Mutual* case, including Barrack, Rodos & Bacine; Kessler, Topaz, Meltzer & Check LLP; and Wohl & Fruchter LLP.

I thank these firms and all of you for your commitment to legal service. Your service reflects the best of our profession.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas G. Saylor

cc: Donovan Axler, LLC