

# Washington County Bar Association

Incorporated in 1892, WCBA is committed to maintaining the honor and dignity of the profession of law, cultivating social relations among its members, and increasing its usefulness in promoting the due administration of justice.



# *What is WCBA?*

- WCBA is a non-profit professional trade association serving 480 members (attorneys; judges are honorary members)
- 65% of attorneys in county are members (membership is voluntary)
- 80% of members have primary office addresses in Washington County
- 25% of members are women
- 20% of members have been practicing fewer than 5 years or are 38 years of age or younger

# *Professional Networking*

***WCBA provides members a forum for discussing ideas and strategies...***

- Bar Association business meetings (~6/year)
- Practice area sections (Estate, Family, Criminal, Civil, Energy) and Young Lawyers' Division meet quarterly
- 10 committees to assist Bench, Bar & Public
- Annual 1-day Winter Bench Bar (attended by 80% of members); annual 3-day Summer Bench Bar (for bar members and their families)
- Nationally recognized Mentoring Program for new attorneys
- Professional leadership opportunities, including an annual Board Retreat to discuss governance issues

# *Continuing Legal Education*

***...and opportunities for sharing knowledge, improving skills, and increasing professional excellence:***

- Attorneys are required to take 12 hours of Continuing Legal Education per year
- WCBA is an accredited provider of CLE and coordinates ~60 seminars/yr and two annual conferences (total attendees in 2011: 1,541)
- Member benefit: CLE offered at reduced rates for members at an average of \$21/credit (average cost in PA is \$51/credit)

# *Public Service Committees*

***WCBA's 10 committees operate to benefit the public, the justice system, the profession, and members:***

- Fee Dispute Committee to mediate fee issues between clients and attorneys (violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct handled by Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of PA)
- Professionalism: Ethics, CLE, Unauthorized Practice of Law, Special Professional Awareness
- Court Relations
- Member Relations
- Public Relations & Services
- Pro Bono & Lawyer Referral Services

# *Social Activities for Members*

***WCBA strives to increase professional collegiality and camaraderie:***

- Annual Bar Picnic & Steak Fry
- Annual Bar Banquet
- Golf outings
- Wellness events
- Happy Hours at the Bar Office
- Family nights at the ballpark
- Annual Young Lawyers v. Senior Bar Softball Challenge

# *Referral Programs for Public*

***WCBA helps members build their client base and helps the public find appropriate legal resources:***

- Lawyer Referral Service – \$30 initial consultation fee, ~1,000 referrals/year
- Pro Bono/Conflict program – free legal assistance for income-eligible and case-eligible clients unable to be represented by legal aid
- Modest Means program – reduced fee legal assistance for eligible clients within 200% of the poverty level
- Limited Representation Custody Program – free legal assistance for eligible clients within 200% of the poverty level at the first, crucial stages of custody proceedings.

# *Legal & Public Notices*

***WCBA publishes notices required by law for the benefit of the public, the legal community, and the several Courts of Washington County:***

- *Washington County Reports*, weekly legal journal
- By subscription (\$65/yr)
- Notices include estate, commercial, corporation, Sheriff Sales, fictitious names, trial lists, judges' opinions, etc.
- Public notices posted weekly to website
- Accepts sponsors – a cost-effective way to reach the legal community with services it can use



# *Public Education Programs*

***WCBA educates the public about the law, while improving public perception of the profession...***

- Annual Law Day “Season” of events
- Classic Law Film Series
- People’s Law School seminar series
- “Now that you are 18” program for H.S. Seniors
- Host district PA H.S. Mock Trial Competitions
- Courthouse Tours & Speakers Bureau
- Law Explorers/Boy Scouts Learning for Life program
- “I Signed the Constitution!”
- Law School for Non-Profit Organizations
- “Justice Day” program for Leadership Washington

# *Awards for Public Education*

## ***... and just to toot our own horn a bit:***

- 1999 PA-DPW award for Reduced Fee Adoption Project Referrals with CYS
- 2009 ABA “Community & Educational Outreach” Award for WNJR radio program “The American Justice System: A Day in the Life of...”
- 2006 ABA’s list of “Best of Best projects: a review of 32 of the most stellar programs in the history of best projects” for our Classic Law Film Series
- 2004 ABA “Outstanding Law Day Activity” award
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place team in the 2006 Law Explorers’ National Mock Trial Competition

# *Community Activities*

## ***WCBA promotes community involvement...***

- “Lawyers on Ladders” Habitat for Humanity days
- “Law Suits Wanted” City Mission clothing drive
- Blood drives, Food Bank food drives
- Charity Softball Challenge, Charity Mini-Golf
- League of Women Voters “Voter’s Guide” sponsor
- Young Lawyers’ “Wills for Heroes” project
- “Get Help Now, PA!” help desk, Summer 2009
- Members provide ~1,000+ pro bono hrs/month in volunteer & board service in the community

# [ *Bar Foundation* ]

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## ***...and direct financial support of law-related community activities:***

- Washington County Bar Foundation created in 1989 as the 501c3 charitable arm of the Association
- Gives ~\$25,000/year to legal services for the indigent and law-related education programs
- Two \$1,000 annual scholarships to Washington County residents studying at Pitt and Duquesne law schools

## *How to find us*

- 119 South College Street  
Washington, PA 15301
- 724.225.6710 or  
wcba@washcobar.org
- [www.washcobar.org](http://www.washcobar.org)

