

THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

Let's keep raising the bar!

The Foundation of the Monroe County Bar's 2011 Raise the Bar Annual Appeal is off to a great start! To date, we have raised more than \$21,000 but we still have a ways to go to reach our goal of \$40,000 before the end of September. So please, help us "Raise the Bar" and donate to the annual appeal today.

I understand that we are all approached from a variety of charitable organizations asking for financial assistance, and at times it can be overwhelming. But the foundation is your professional association's organization — it is dedicated to improving the legal community in which you work and practice. We cannot accomplish our goals and make the type of impact that we want and need to make, unless we are supported by each and every member of the bar.

The Foundation of the Monroe County Bar was organized in 1951 to support the charitable and educational programs of the Monroe County Bar Association. The foundation works hard to improve the relationship between the service lawyers offer and the community they serve. It helps to ensure access to the law for underserved populations; it promotes and educates people about the law and the judicial system; and it serves the community's lawyers — and their clients — in specific meaningful ways.

This past spring, through the support of our donors, the foundation was able to award grants to a number of worthy programs. The foundation awarded seven separate grants, including its largest grant to the Rochester Legal Diversity Clerkship Program. The funds will be used to support a first-year law student with one of the legal service providers for a 10-week summer internship in 2012 and to help defray the costs of educational and social programs held for the students throughout the summer.

The foundation awarded another significant grant to the Rochester Teen Court under the umbrella of The Center for Youth. Teen Court is a diversion program operated through the City Court of Rochester for young adults who have committed first-time, non-violent crimes. Defendants whose cases are transferred to teen court have a disposition of their criminal charges by teen peers acting as prosecutors, defense counsel, court personnel and jurors. A Rochester city court judge presides over the proceedings, and teen jurors recommend sentencing.

Two new programs were supported by the Foundation this past Spring — A.C.T. For the Children (Assisting Children through Transition) and Lawyers for Learning. The grant to A.C.T. will be used to continue the A.C.T. For the Children program, which helps

children whose parents divorce or separate by providing information and strategies to parents on ways to interact that engender less stress and conflict.

The program also makes parents more knowledgeable participants in the legal process by providing an overview of the legal process and various options to resolve their differences. This program was previously funded by the courts, but lost funding due to 2011-12 judiciary budget cuts and was temporarily suspended. With the grant awarded by the foundation, the Monroe County Bar Center for Education has assumed administration of the program.

The foundation's grant to Lawyers for Learning will be used toward funding Lawyers for Learning's Peace Camp. As part of the Lawyers for Learning partnership with the Monroe County Bar Center for Education, Peace Camp is designed to give underprivileged children the opportunity to learn the importance of appropriate behavior and working together with civility through team-building events at a camp facility.

The foundation continued to support through grants the Deaf Equal Access Fund, which helps provide association member attorneys with partial reimbursement for the costs of interpreters hired through a collaborative partnership with Lifespan; the Sydney R. Rubin High School Mock Trial Competition, which runs an annual high school mock trial competition; and the Judicial Process Commission's Legal Action Project, which assists more than 400 men and women with criminal convictions reduce the barriers they face when seeking employment.

Unfortunately, while there were a number of wonderful programs that we supported, there were a number of applications that had to be turned away. If we had the support of each and every member of the bar — at whatever contribution level was appropriate for his or her circumstances — I know that we would not need to turn away any worthy program applying for grants.

So please, consider making a contribution today to the 2011 Raise the Bar Annual Appeal. Go to www.mcba.org/Foundation/Donations or simply send your donation to the attention of the Foundation: Telesca Center for Justice, 1 W. Main St., Rochester, N.Y. 14614.

On Sept. 22, we will be hosting a Donor's Appreciation reception to thank everyone who has contributed to this year's Raise the Bar Annual Appeal. I hope to see you there!

Elizabeth A. Wolford is president of the Foundation of the Monroe County Bar and a partner with The Wolford Law Firm LLP.



By **ELIZABETH A. WOLFORD**

Daily Record
Columnist