

Harrisonburg Attorneys Honored for Pro Bono Work

Blue Ridge Legal Services, the Valley's non-profit legal aid society, recognized three Harrisonburg attorneys and a Harrisonburg law firm for extraordinary pro bono work during the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association's annual Professionalism Seminar on October 12.

Honored were Patrick M. Connell of Wharton, Aldhizer & Weaver; Hannah W. Hutman, a solo practitioner; and Roland M.L. Santos, also a solo practitioner.

The law firm of Hoover Penrod PLC was honored for the diligent provision of pro bono services by its attorneys. Notably, one of the cases handled by the attorneys at Hoover Penrod last year resulted in a unanimous Virginia Supreme Court decision overturning widespread payday lending practices.

Blue Ridge Legal Services' Executive Director John E. Whitfield recognized these award recipients for the quality of pro bono services they provided to their clients and their dedication to promoting equal access to justice for local low-income residents who otherwise could not afford to obtain legal assistance. The pro bono awards presentation is a longstanding tradition recognizing particularly noteworthy pro bono contributions of members of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association.

Since 1982, Blue Ridge Legal Services and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association have collaborated in this pro bono referral program to provide free legal services to financially disadvantaged members of the community. Last year, the bar closed 145 pro bono cases for low-income local residents, and during the last eighteen months, eighty-five percent of the bar's firms and solo practitioners were involved in pro bono representation through the pro bono referral program.



Connell



Hutman



Santos



The law firm of Hoover Penrod was among the honorees recognized by Blue Ridge Legal Services during the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association's Professionalism Seminar on October 12. The firm was recognized for the diligent provision of pro bono services by its attorneys. Pictured from back left are Lawrence H. Hoover Jr., Grant D. Penrod, Richard A. Baugh, M. Bruce Wallinger, Laura S. Evick, David A. Penrod, John N. Crist, Dale A. Davenport, Jacob T. Penrod, and Dillina W. Stickley.

During the last three decades, this program has garnered statewide and national acclaim, including the national Legal Services Corporation's Rural Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year Award in 1993, the Virginia State Bar's Lewis Powell Pro Bono award in 1998, the American Bar Association's prestigious Harrison Tweed Award in 1995, and a Pro Bono Service Award from the Legal Services Corporation in 2011.

As a partner-agency of the United Way, Blue Ridge Legal Services provides free civil legal assistance to low-income residents of the Shenandoah and Roanoke Valleys through its staff and volunteer attorneys across its service area.