

LAET Gives Pro Bono Awards

CHATTANOOGA – Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET) hosted its Annual Pro Bono Night last Thursday, June 21st at Bessie Smith Hall in Chattanooga. The event celebrated local attorneys who have donated time and civil legal services during the past year to aid those who otherwise could not afford an attorney.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of four annual awards. The Chief Justice William M. Barker Equal Access to Justice Award is selected by members of LAET's Pro Bono Lawyers Chattanooga Hall of Fame, and recognizes an attorney who has made a significant contribution to advancing the cause of access to justice in Tennessee. The 2016 recipient is Chattanooga attorney William A. "Trey" Harris, III, who was honored for his dedicated service to the LAET Board of Directors since in 2002. He has also served as LAET Board President and has been a tireless Pro Bono attorney.

The Bruce C. Bailey Volunteer Lawyer of the Year Award is given to a volunteer attorney who went above and beyond in the delivery of pro bono civil legal services in the previous year. Susan R. Gruber was recognized for her efforts as one of LAET's most dedicated and productive volunteer attorneys. Ms. Gruber has kept regular office hours in LAET's Chattanooga office during the past several years.

The Pro Bono Firm of the Year Award went to the Law Offices of David Coates, and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Chattanooga Area received the Alexander Hamilton Award. The two organizations were honored for their joint efforts in presenting a one-day estate planning clinic where more than 40 families received estate planning documents. The Pro Bono Firm of the Year Award recognizes a law firm that has made a significant impact on pro bono legal work during the past year. The Alexander Hamilton Award is given to an organization outside the legal profession that has partnered with LAET to advance the cause of justice for clients shared by both organizations. Hamilton County Chancellor Jeff Atherton served as Masters of Ceremony. Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Roger A. Page gave the keynote address. The evening also featured heavy hors d'oeuvres, complimentary beverages, a silent auction, and acoustic guitar entertainment.

All proceeds from the event benefit the Chattanooga-area programs of Legal Aid of East Tennessee. For more information about this event, contact Bill Evans at (865) 637-0484. For more information about Legal Aid of East Tennessee's programs and services, contact LAET's Chattanooga office at (423) 756-4013.

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