

Harrisonburg Attorneys Recognized for Pro Bono Services

Blue Ridge Legal Services, the non-profit legal aid society serving the Shenandoah and Roanoke Valleys, recognized four Harrisonburg attorneys for their exceptional pro bono work during the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association's annual Professionalism Seminar on October 10.

Honored were W. Kent Bowers, Dana J. Cornett, James O. Clough, and Michael D. Beckler, all solo practitioners.

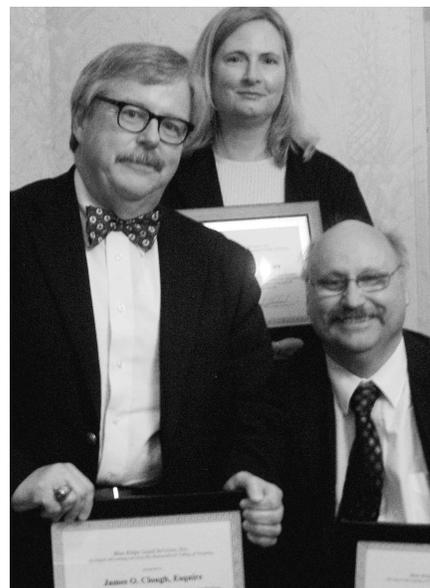
Blue Ridge Legal Services Pro Bono Referral Coordinator, Vanessa Keasler Gogia, recognized the recipients for the quality of pro bono services they provided their clients and their dedication to promoting equal access to justice for local low-income residents who otherwise could not afford to obtain legal assistance. The pro bono awards presentation is a long-standing 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 volun-

teers concluded 138 pro bono cases for low-income local residents, and during the last eighteen months, approximately 75 percent of the bar's firms and solo practitioners were involved in pro bono representation through the pro bono referral program.

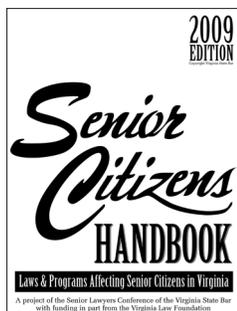
During the last three decades, this program has garnered statewide and national acclaim, including the national Legal Services Corporation's Rural Pro Bono Attorneys of the Year Award in 1993, the Virginia State Bar's Lewis Powell Pro Bono award in 1998, the American Bar Association's prestigious Harrison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

"At a time when legal aid organizations are facing devastating budget cuts and debilitating reductions in legal staff, the exemplary work of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association and this year's honorees highlight the importance of local pro bono efforts," said Gogia. "By actively participating in a referral program to provide pro bono services to economically disadvantaged members of their community, members of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar Association help satisfy an increasing



Honored were James O. Clough, Dana J. Cornett, and Michael D. Beckler. W. Kent Rogers is not pictured.

need for legal services that would otherwise go unmet. Their contributions demonstrate the essential role private attorneys collaborating with legal aid programs can play in preserving and promoting the ideal of equal access to justice," she said.



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