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Newsroom: Celebrating a Unique Pro Bono Model

Roger Williams University School of Law

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Newsroom

Celebrating a Unique Pro Bono Model

The best and brightest of the Rhode Island legal profession gather to support the Pro Bono Collaborative in aiding the state's most vulnerable populations.



PROVIDENCE, June 1, 2012 – The best and brightest of the

Rhode Island legal profession gathered Thursday night to support the state's most vulnerable populations.

Held at the Rotunda at One Citizen's Plaza in Providence, the 3rd Annual Pro Bono Collaborative Cocktail Reception brought together well over 100 luminaries of the bench and bar, faculty, staff, alumni and students to raise funds to support this unique vehicle for providing legal services to low-income citizens of the Ocean State.

Attendees included the Honorable Paul Suttell, Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court; the Honorable Edward Clifton of the Rhode Island Superior Court; the Honorable Stephen J. Fortunato, Jr., of the Rhode Island Superior Court; and Robert Barge, executive director of Rhode Island Legal Services.

The Pro Bono Collaborative (PBC) at Roger Williams University School of Law was established in 2006 in an effort to leverage the largely-untapped legal resources of the state's larger, more prominent law firms. The PBC connects these firms with community organizations to help maximize the efficient delivery of legal aid. What began as a small pilot project has since expanded into an organization with around 20 active projects, offering a model that could be replicated on a national scale.

"The PBC is a wonderful model for pro bono, directed at the type of work that law firms do best," said Chief Justice Suttell. "There are many citizens in Rhode Island with unmet legal needs, and anything we can do to provide help to those people is wonderful for the legal system, for the judicial system and the law firms; and students get a lot out of it as well - it's great practical experience for them."

The reception was aptly themed "Only in Rhode Island" to underscore the unique nature of the organization. Speakers included RWU Law Dean David A. Logan; PBC director Eliza Vorenberg; Dylan Griffis '12, who participated in the PBC while a student; Erika J. Lindberg, a participating attorney from Providence firm of Edwards Wildman; and Meghan Hughes, executive director of Year Up, a participating community organization.

The event's Host Committee included chair Timothy J. Groves, Taylor Duane Barton & Gilman LLP; Robert Clark Corrente, Burns & Levinson LLP; Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, McAuley Ministries; Mitchell R. Edwards, Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP; Linn Foster Freedman, Nixon Peabody LLP; RWU Law Dean David A. Logan; Elizabeth B. Oliveira, Brown University Office of Planned Giving; David J. Pellegrino, Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP; Stephen M. Prignano, Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP; Benjamin L. Rackliffe, Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC; J. Richard Ratcliffe, Ratcliffe Harten Burke & Galamaga LLP; and Joseph D. Whelan, Whelan & Siket LLP.