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## Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI): cultivating a lifelong commitment to public interest law

### Greetings!

Since its founding in 1977, PILI has cultivated a lifelong commitment to public interest law by creating opportunities for law students and attorneys to provide public interest and pro bono work in Illinois.

We hope you will find this e-newsletter informative and we appreciate your involvement in and support of PILI.

Yours truly,

### [The Staff of the Public Interest Law Initiative](#)

Michael G. Bergmann, Executive Director

Sheila Simhan, Program Manager

Shana Heller-Ogden, Development & Communications Associate

## PILI News

### PILI Announces New Executive Director

The Executive Committee of the Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) announced today that they have appointed Michael G. Bergmann as Executive Director as of December 1, 2010. Bergmann, who joined PILI in 2006 as Pro Bono Initiative Director, has most recently served as PILI's Director of Programs where he expanded and advanced PILI's Pro Bono Initiative and played a critical role in assuring the success of intern, fellow and alumni placement and educational programs. Bergmann further brings to the position his substantial knowledge of the Illinois pro bono community as well as the experience gained through his career long commitment to providing legal services to those in need.

### New Staff Members Join PILI

PILI welcomed two new staff members to the organization in February: Sheila Simhan, Program Manager, and Shana Heller-Ogden, Development & Communications Associate.

Sheila Simhan comes to PILI following two years as an Adjunct Professor and Clinical Fellow at the Small Business Opportunity Center (SBOC) at Northwestern University School of Law. Prior to her time at the SBOC, Sheila was a summer associate in the Chicago office of Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP and the Madison office of Foley & Lardner LLP. Sheila serves on the Board of Directors of campusCATALYST, a nonprofit organization that partners with universities to engage college and business school students in high-impact pro bono consulting for nonprofit organizations. Sheila earned her Juris Doctor, cum laude, from the University of Wisconsin Law School. She graduated cum laude from the University of Wisconsin - Madison with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Legal Studies.

While pursuing a Masters in Nonprofit Management from DePaul University, Shana Heller-Ogden has worked with several Chicago nonprofit organizations including Illinois Legal Aid Online. Shana previously served as a Domestic Violence Education and Outreach

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Vista at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law and a Teen Services Trainer with Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE) in Washington, DC. Shana expects to complete her Masters in August 2011. She is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Valparaiso University with a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education, French and Theology.

#### Annual Awards Luncheon A Success

PILI's 2010 Annual Awards Luncheon took place on December 9, 2010 at the Renaissance Downtown Chicago Hotel. Held in a new location, the event drew over 400 attendees from Chicago and across the state to celebrate the legal profession at its best. PILI Board President James Rolfes of Reed Smith welcomed guests and Michael Bergmann, PILI's newly-named Executive Director, delivered his report before the awards were bestowed.

Jonathan Baum, Partner and Director of Pro Bono Services at Katten Muchin Rosenman, was presented with the Distinguished Public Service Award by Northwestern Professor and PILI Life Director Thomas Morsch. James Beyer accepted the Pro Bono Initiative Award on behalf of Accenture Legal Group. The Distinguished PILI Alumni Awards went to Laurie Mikva (1981 Intern) and Jay Readey (2004 Fellow).

A special thanks to all of our sponsors for their generous support of the Annual Awards Luncheon and PILI's mission of cultivating a lifelong commitment to public interest law. To read more and to see photos from the event, [click here...](#)

## PILI Law Student Internship & Graduate Fellowship Programs

PILI Interns (first or second year law students) and PILI Fellows (recent law school graduates) work in and learn about public interest law, and begin what PILI hopes is a lifelong commitment to public interest law and pro bono work. Below is the latest news about PILI's Internship and Fellowship Programs. Visit PILI's website to learn more about the [Internship](#) and [Fellowship](#) Programs.

#### PILI Receives Major Grant from Polk Bros Foundation

The Polk Bros. Foundation, a longstanding supporter of PILI, recently announced a \$40,000 grant to support PILI's Law Student Internship Program. PILI gratefully acknowledges the continued and steadfast support that the Polk Bros. Foundation has demonstrated over the years to sustain PILI's mission.

#### Application Period for PILI Summer Internships Now Open

The 2011 Summer Internship application period is now open for both 1Ls and 2Ls. The application process will remain open through March 31, 2011, or until every eligible agency has completed its hiring. The online application process allows interested candidates to apply to up to ten Participating Agencies. Summer Interns are expected to work 400 hours and receive a stipend of \$5,000. [Read more...](#)

### [Read more...](#) PILI Alumni Program

Today, over 3,000 law students and graduates have participated in PILI's Internship and Fellowship Programs. The Alumni Program maintains the connection between these public interest lawyers, PILI and the public interest law community. Below is the latest news about PILI's Alumni Program. Visit PILI's website to learn more about its [Alumni Program](#).

#### Alumni Spotlight: 2010 PILI Intern, Johnny Frevert



Although he will not graduate from Valparaiso University School of Law until May, Johnny Frevert is already deeply committed to the public interest. Frevert, the 2010 Intern Representative on PILI's Board of Directors, was hosted by CARPLS for both a summer Internship and a fall school-year Internship where he advised pro-se litigants at CARPLS

Collection, Divorce and Municipal Advice Desks. Reflecting on his two PILI Internships, Frevert is grateful for the "invaluable amount of

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real-world and real-time experience dealing face-to-face with clients and their legal issues." [Read more...](#)

#### **Alumni Spotlight: 2010 PILI Fellow, Lonneke Purucker**

Lonneke Purucker's experience as a PILI Fellow provides her with a grounding reminder of why she became an attorney. Purucker, the 2010 Fellow Representative on PILI's Board of Directors, worked at the downtown office of the Chicago Legal Clinic (CLC) where she handled the intake, evaluation and preparation of Social Security Disability claims. "Working for underserved clients with 'real life' problems, such as an inability to pay a heating bill or feasibly obtain critical mental healthcare, is a tremendous source of perspective when the seemingly insurmountable demands of professional life begin to kick in," observes Purucker. [Read more...](#)



## **PILI Pro Bono Initiative Program**

Through its Pro Bono Initiative, PILI works collaboratively with law firms, corporations, public interest law agencies and law schools to create and promote work environments, programs and opportunities that help new associates and seasoned attorneys actualize their commitment to pro bono work. Below is the latest news about PILI's Pro Bono Initiative. Visit PILI's website to learn more about [PILI's Pro Bono Initiative](#).

#### **Second Annual Law School Roundtable Held in November**

PILI's second annual Law School Pro Bono & Public Interest Law Roundtable took place on November 18, 2010, at McDermott, Will & Emery LLP. Each Illinois law school was invited to send up to five representatives to the program. In addition to pro bono and public interest law faculty and staff, this year the program was expanded to include one student representative from each of the law schools attending. Participants heard updates from PILI and Illinois Legal Aid Online. Melanie Kushnir of the ABA Center for Pro Bono also gave a presentation on creating new pro bono opportunities in law schools. The afternoon concluded with roundtable discussions on a variety of current public interest and pro bono issues. As a complement to its Pro Bono Forum, PILI launched the Law School Pro Bono & Public Interest Law Roundtable program to bring together law school pro bono and public interest law faculty and staff from around Illinois to network, to share information about their programs and to coordinate their efforts across Illinois.

#### **Save the Date for PILI's Celebrating Pro Bono Reception 2011**

PILI's annual reception, Celebrating Pro Bono, will be held on Wednesday, June 15, 2011 from 5:30 to 7:30p.m. at The Ivy Room at Tree Studios. Please save the date and plan to join representatives from law firms, corporate legal departments, law schools and public interest agencies as well as the class of 2011 PILI Interns and Fellows for refreshments and conversation. Additional information about this event will be available on our website soon. Sponsorship opportunities are available. To see a list of our generous sponsors for the 2010 reception, photos from the event and the 2010 Pro Bono Recognition Roster, [click here](#).

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