



July Volunteer of the Month: Tim Holman, Esq.

For VIP volunteer Timothy Holman, the desire to work with underserved clients springs from his roots. Born in Watertown, N.Y., Holman was the first in his family to earn a four-year college degree. Tim funded his own education through student loans, Pell Grants, and by working part time while in college and law school. He spent most of the year between completing his undergraduate studies at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y., and starting law school at Temple working as a laborer in a sawmill. Holman never forgot where he came from.

"I think that all lawyers fortunate enough to practice in the private sector have a duty to provide pro bono service and to help those who are less fortunate or unable to afford our services," says Holman, a partner with Smith Kane Holman LLC. "Having grown up with modest means, I'm very familiar with issues surrounding lack of funds to pay for things that a person needs. I have a special affinity for folks who are of modest means and who need help."

Hannah Snow, pro bono case manager at VIP, calls Holman a "stellar" volunteer and invaluable member of the team. "He has shown dedication to helping community members seeking guardianship of a loved one, including by mentoring new volunteers on their cases and generously sharing his knowledge and expertise with VIP staff," Snow said.



As a young attorney working at Duane, Morris & Heckscher, Holman was mentored by veteran litigator Henry Reath. "Toward the latter part of his career, Mr. Reath spent a lot of time helping folks in prison who had no one else to advance their causes," Holman says. "He was heavily involved with the Innocence Project. He was an important figure in my early legal life, and I was inspired by his example."

That inspiration led Holman to explore ways in which he could reach out and help clients who could not otherwise afford representation, which led him to VIP. He found his services were most needed in cases filed in Philadelphia's Orphans' Court, which serves to protect the personal and property rights of all persons and entities who are otherwise incapable of managing their own affairs. The Court's name stems from the definition of orphan as one lacking protection.

In his pro bono work, Holman helps families reach agreements on estates (while always ready to litigate if necessary), including the division of assets in matters, and helps them obtain guardianship over their incapacitated family members. "Orphans' court cases can be complicated, and cases involving small estates can be just as complicated as larger ones," Holman says. "It's deeply gratifying to help these folks, who would never be able to afford the kinds of legal services we provide."

To Holman, his pro bono cases are just as important as the often high stakes trust and estate litigation and commercial litigation matters he handles in his private practice. "In my pro bono cases, I've had the pleasure of meeting very nice people who perform heroic service and assistance to their families," Holman says. "I'm moved by their commitment to their family members. I am also moved by the commitment and dedication of the younger VIP volunteers I have had the privilege to mentor and assist in their VIP Orphans' Court cases."

When he can put his legal skills to work for someone who could not otherwise afford them, Holman says there is a reward for him as well, a reminder of where he came from. "It makes you appreciate even more what you have," he says. "It makes you feel good to do good."



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