

For Immediate Release

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NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION  
RECEIVES \$50,000 AWARD

PITTSBURGH, Pa., July 29 – Neighborhood Legal Services Association (NLSA) is the recipient of the 2010 Emil Gumpert award of \$50,000 to expand its *Older & Wiser* project--a special program that is co-sponsored by state legislators serving Southwestern Pennsylvania, which delivers a series of civil law seminars, at no cost, to the elderly and their families.

The award will be used to expand the program and also create an information portal where civil legal aid programs across the Commonwealth and the country easily can access *Older & Wiser* program materials; including informational PowerPoint presentations, takeaway brochures/pamphlets, and promotion materials.

The Emil Gumpert Award recognizes programs, whether public or private, whose principal purpose is to maintain and improve the administration of justice. The award honors the late Honorable Emil Gumpert, Chancellor and Founder of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Through his dedication to the legal profession for more than 50 years, Judge Gumpert's legal career encompassed that of eminent trial lawyer, California State Bar president and trial judge. Arthur H. Stroyd, Jr., Del Sole Cavanaugh Stroyd, LLC., nominated NLSA for the award.

Robert V. Racunas, NLSA Executive Director and NLSA Board President Efrem Grail, Reed Smith, received the award from the American Trial Lawyers. "This award will enable us to continue the important work of teaching elderly people and their families how to navigate common legal situations they may encounter as they grow older," he said. "Since the founding of the program in 2003 we have worked with state legislators in four counties. Now, with this award we can reach and teach more seniors across the State."

Since the project launched, over 4,000 seniors have participated, and more than 98% of those who have attended seminars have indicated that they are satisfied with the instruction they have received.

Pennsylvania State Senator Jay Costa has sponsored *Older & Wiser* sessions and expressed his strong support for the program, noting, “*Older & Wiser* sessions are presented by an expert pro bono attorney. Attendees also receive referral information for legal services (including free and reduced-fee services for those who meet the income requirements) and a takeaway brochure providing additional information on the legal topic covered during the seminar.”

The current slate of *Older & Wiser* seminar topics include: Protections Through Powers of Attorney and Living Wills; Dealing Effectively With a Healthcare Facility; Understanding Retirement; Learning About Last Wills and Living Trusts; Predatory Lending & Older Adults; Navigating Medicaid; and Guarding Against Senior Fraud.

Proposed (new) seminar topics to be developed in the future include: Reverse Mortgages; Pros and Cons of Long-Term Care Insurance; Identify Theft; and Understanding Veteran’s Benefits.

“The *Older & Wiser* program presents a unique partnership opportunity among legal services, state legislators and volunteer attorneys and is a win-win-win for all parties involved,” said Racunas. “With this Emil Gumpert award, very soon all elderly Pennsylvanians and their adult children will have access to vital civil legal information.”

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