

PILCOP AWARD

1/19/15

When we think of Dr. King, we ask ourselves if he was there when needed. He was. Did he do the minimum, or did he do more than was expected? He did more than we could ever have expected. Did he imagine a better world for our children? He did. Did he walk the walk of his talk? Oh yes, he walked, and he walked. Did he care – all of the time? Yes, he did. And we knew it.

Is this starting to sound familiar? I am honored this morning to present the Barrister's Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Outstanding Service to the Community to the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, or PILCOP to anyone who knows this region. Founded in 1969, PILCOP has been since that time the go-to organization to set things right – particularly targeting policies and practices that perpetuate discrimination, inequality and poverty. PILCOP lawyers use the law to keep the civil rights movement of the 1960's alive for the continuing number of people

for whom access to equal opportunity remains an unrealized dream. Consistent with one of this award's criteria, which is to pursue social justice and encourage other organizations in the greater Philadelphia region to do the same, PILCOP partners with community groups, advocacy organizations, law firms, legal organizations, colleges and law schools to further expand its impact.

So, I'm supposed to do this in under 3 minutes, so all I can do is the highlights. We all know that despite the outstanding leadership of Dr. William Hite, Philadelphia school children are unfairly disadvantaged by the school funding formula. Enter PILCOP, who along with the Education Law Center, this past Fall filed a lawsuit challenging various state officials with failing to uphold Pennsylvania's constitutional obligation to provide a system of public education that gives all children in Pennsylvania the resources they need to meet state-imposed academic standards and to thrive in today's world.

Together with Boies, Schiller & Flexner, in 2005 PILCOP brought filed a case in Florida on behalf of children who depend on the Medicaid program. Just two weeks ago, a federal judge found that 1.9 million children who depend on the Florida Medicaid program for their medical and dental care are not receiving the care required by federal law, a ruling we certainly hope will pave the way for improvements in medical care for children all across the country. Talk about partnering and talk about impact.

And #Victory: in a huge victory for democracy in area of voter's rights PILCOP led the fight in overturning PA's restrictive voter ID law.

Obviously, this is just a sampling of the depth – and breadth – of PILCOP's impact. Not just for its clients, but for all of us who love justice, PILCOP is there when needed. It consistently does more than we can hope for. The lives of our children are better

because of PILCOP. PILCOP walks the walk of its commitments.

And PILCOP cares – all of the time, improving the lives of

Philadelphia’s most disadvantaged citizens. For that, PILCOP, we

applaud you.

Jennifer Clarke, Executive Director, please come forward and receive both this year’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Outstanding Service to the Community and our deep and abiding gratitude.