

# Executive Director's Report

**Lycoming Law Association**

**Year in Review: 2025**

## Overview

The 2025 year was one of continued stability, engagement, and service for the Lycoming Law Association. The LLA remained focused on supporting its members, upholding the traditions of the local bar, and advancing professionalism, collegiality, and public service within the Lycoming County legal community.

## Membership

Membership levels remained steady throughout 2025, reflecting the Association's continued relevance and value to local practitioners. Active participation by long-standing members, combined with engagement from newer attorneys, helped sustain attendance at meetings and events. The LLA continued to recognize senior members and milestone anniversaries, reinforcing the importance of institutional history.

## Meetings

The LLA and LLA Foundation Annual Meetings offer members a comprehensive overview of the LLA activities, financial status, and leadership transitions.

Throughout 2025, the LLA's committees conducted regularly scheduled meetings, providing members with consistent opportunities to engage, receive updates on bar-related matters, and connect with colleagues. These meetings served as an important forum for the discussion of issues affecting the local legal community.

## Programs & Events

The LLA continued its tradition of providing quality educational and professional programming through its CLE offerings. These programs addressed substantive legal updates, changes in rules and procedures, and emerging issues relevant to local practice, with presentations by experienced attorneys, members of the judiciary, and subject-matter professionals.

The Annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony remained a cornerstone event in 2025, drawing strong attendance and continued enthusiasm from the membership. The banquet provided an opportunity to celebrate the LLA's leadership, recognize attorneys reaching significant membership milestones, and honor individuals whose service and professionalism have had a meaningful impact on the Lycoming County legal community. The event fosters collegiality and strengthens professional relationships in a more social setting.

The LLA celebrated Law Day by sponsoring its annual art and essay contest, and recognizing local students for their thoughtful work. This event reaffirms the LLA's commitment to civic education and public understanding of the law. Cash prizes, including a Grand Prize of \$1,000, was awarded with the assistance of a sponsorship from District Attorney Marino's office.

During 2025, approximately thirty LLA members participated in the Wills for Heroes program by volunteering their time to provide free estate planning documents to about sixty first responders and military. This event continues a meaningful tradition of service to those who serve the community.

The LLA's Young Lawyer Division had another successful Project Linus blanket collection, providing handmade blankets to children in need and extending care and compassion beyond the legal profession into the broader community. About sixty homemade blankets and fifty pounds of blanket making materials were donated as a result of the 2025 collection.

As a result of a major undertaking by the Bar History Committee and Cliff Rieders, a lecture series was established featuring presentations by members of the judiciary and legal professionals. This lecture series offered insights into legal history, the courts, and notable cases, while engaging both LLA members and the public. The *Law and Justice in Lycoming County* exhibit celebrated the legal community and history of the region. The series opened on June 11<sup>th</sup> with Lycoming County Judges Nancy Butts, William Carlucci, and Kenneth Brown sharing insights on local treatment courts, the history of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, and personal experiences on the bench. Later lectures featured Attorney Rieders (June 18<sup>th</sup>) discussing his career and experiences with prejudice in the profession. A distinguished panel of appellate leaders – Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Debra Todd, Superior Court President Judge Anne Lazarus, and Commonwealth Court President Judge Emerita Bonnie Leadbetter – reflected on their journeys in leadership (July 7<sup>th</sup>). Pennsylvania State Senator Gene Yaw also spoke about his legislative role and its intersection with legal issues (July 9<sup>th</sup>). Additional sessions included a presentation (July 16<sup>th</sup>) by Judge Skip Arbuckle on the role of U.S. magistrate judges and a presentation by Jack Humphrey on the life and legacy of Judge Malcolm Muir. The series concluded (August 20<sup>th</sup>) with a program highlighting opportunities in undergraduate legal studies with faculty and students from Pennsylvania College of Technology and Lycoming College. All lectures were designed to engage both legal professionals and the broader public in exploring law, justice, and legal careers in the community.

In September, the LLA joined members of PBA's Zone 4 for an outing to Knoebels Grove. This family-friendly social event reinforces collegiality and work-life balance within the LLA.

The 2025 LLA Annual Picnic, held at the home of Judge Gardner and catered by Don Waltman's, provided members and their families with a warm and welcoming environment to connect outside of the office/courtroom. The event offered a relaxed atmosphere where members could strengthen professional relationships, enjoy conversation with colleagues across practice areas, and celebrate the sense of community within the bar association. The Annual Picnic reinforces the LLA's commitment to balancing professional engagement with social connection, making it a highlight of the year.

The LLA again invited its members to bring their families to the Carpenter Farm for a seasonal gourd or pumpkin. For those who participate, an annual trip to the Carpenter Farm is a lot of fun.

The Young Lawyer's Division of the LLA again organized an Angel Tree toy collection to benefit the Salvation Army's "Toys for Tots" program and the local children receiving services through the Court Appointed Special Advocates program. Members of the LLA enjoy supporting local children and families during the holiday season, reflecting the members' continued commitment to charitable outreach and community service.

## Awards

The LLA's Thomas Wood, Jr. Equal Access to Justice Award was presented to Matt Diemer in recognition of his exceptional pro bono service, through North Penn Legal Services, to individuals who cannot afford legal representation.

The LLA's William E. Nichols Community Service Award was given to Marc Lovecchio for his longstanding public service, mentoring of youth through athletic programs, positive community impact, and professional mentoring.

The LLA Public Service Award was presented to David Bower for his service to the county's drug court program and his longstanding advocacy for substance abuse recovery and support within the community.

The LLA Fair Share and Outstanding Law Firm Achievement Awards recognized members and firms for participation in the LLA Pro Bono Referral Program; individual recipients included attorneys who provided significant volunteer legal services throughout the year, while firms were honored for 100% attorney participation.

The inaugural LLA Louise Larzelere Chatham Award recipient was Julie Steinbacher. The award was established to commemorate the centennial of the first female attorney in Lycoming County and honor a woman exemplifying Chatham's legacy. Julie was selected for her leadership, mentorship, and advocacy for women in the legal profession.

## **Looking Ahead**

Looking ahead to 2026, the LLA will continue focusing on fostering member engagement, maintaining the high quality of programs and services that members have come to expect, and continuing to serve the community.

I would like to thank Judge Gardner, the members of the Executive Committee, Committee Chairs and Past Presidents. Their leadership and commitment continue to strengthen the LLA and its mission. And thanks to the members, whose dedication and involvement made 2025 a successful year.

LYCOMING LAW ASSOCIATION



Michele S. Frey