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## *Pennsylvania Legal Services*

"EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW"

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February 18, 2005

Liberty Bell Nomination Committee  
Erie County Bar Association  
Erie, Pennsylvania

Re: Nomination of Thelma Grady

To the Committee:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Thelma Grady for receipt of your prestigious award. I was very pleased to learn of her nomination as I have known Thelma for a long time, and have known of her dedication to fairness and justice. I can think of no more appropriate recipient. It is especially refreshing that all of the work I know Thelma to do, and which I will discuss below, is in her capacity as a volunteer.

Many in our society, when faced with frustrations over circumstances surrounding them, are content to criticize and do nothing. Thelma is a doer and a problem solver. The way in which I have known Thelma is primarily through her work with others in the state to be sure that the legal rights of low income Pennsylvanians are being protected. While our Constitution guarantees access to the courts by all and due process of law, these are meaningless words without the vigilance of people like Thelma.

She is involved in helping to put on trainings periodically in different parts of the state, to make sure that poor people are informed of their legal and constitutional rights. These trainings include as presenters both politicians and experts in various areas of law. Those in attendance are poor people from across the state who also take this knowledge back to their communities.

Thelma has also been active in promoting legislation and administrative actions of state government to help assure that the interests and rights of poor people are being properly recognized and protected. Her advocacy has included both the need for the state to support civil legal aid and for the state to adequately look out for and provide for the interests of lower income residents.

Fundamental to all of these efforts has been Thelma's respect for and promotion of our legal system as a means of providing fairness and justice to all who come before our courts, regardless of their ability to hire counsel or whether they are even forced at times to represent themselves.

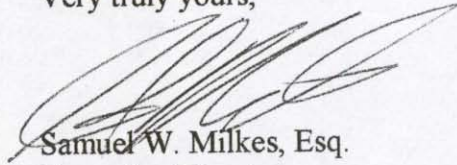
Also key to Thelma's message as she works in her community and gets around the state is that all people – poor people included – have a responsibility to respect the rights of others; to act as responsible citizens by voting, by working with their elected

Liberty Bell Nomination Committee, p. 2

representatives, and by working in their community to better the lives of people around them.

Again, thank you for this opportunity. Please feel free to contact me if further information is needed.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Samuel W. Milkes', written in a cursive style.

Samuel W. Milkes, Esq.  
Executive Director

March 1, 2005

Mr. Robert A. Oakley  
Executive Director  
Northwestern Legal Services  
1001 State Street, Suite 1200  
Erie, PA 16501-1833

Dear Bob:

The National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) is a national charitable organization that was founded in 1911. Its mission is to promote and advocate for access to the American Justice System and quality representation for individuals regardless of ability to pay.

NLADA's programs include public awareness and education projects about America's system of justice and the critical role it has in ensuring execution of America's values regarding equal justice under law. These projects seek to educate American society about rights and responsibilities of a Democratic Society in protecting and insuring individual rights guaranteed by our constitution.

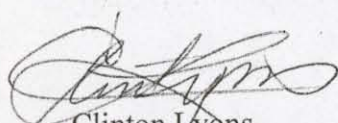
Thelma Grady has served on the NLADA Board of Directors and has been and continues to be a champion of insuring constitutional protection for individuals who are poor.

She has served as chair of the NLADA Client Council that promotes input into NLADA policy decisions by individuals and communities that are poor. She has promoted policies of education and legal help for individuals seeking to define their rights and responsibilities under law. As chair, Thelma worked tirelessly to bring young people who were dependent on some form of public assistance into critical dialogues and policy pronouncements regarding rights and responsibilities. For those of us who have worked with her over the years, we have witnessed her commitment and work in promoting equal justice under law at the state and national level.

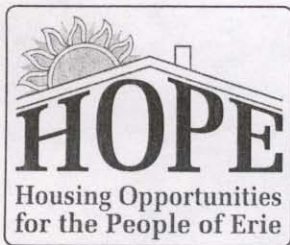
I believe her efforts have affected thousands of low income persons in better understanding and appreciating citizens' rights and responsibilities within our system of law and justice.

There can't be a more deserving person of this award than Thelma Grady and we are proud to recommend her as the recipient of this years' Liberty Bell Award.

Sincerely,



Clinton Lyons  
President & CEO



## HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE

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*Legal Counsel*

February 11, 2005

Robert Oakley, Esquire, Executive Director  
Legal Services of Northwestern Pennsylvania  
1001 State Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Erie, PA 16501

Dear Attorney Oakley:

This letter is being sent to you in support of your nomination of Thelma Grady for the Erie County Bar Association's 2005 *Liberty Bell Award*.

I have known Thelma for over 25 years. During that time, I have observed how she worked diligently for the legal rights of low-income families and individuals throughout Pennsylvania and here in Erie. As you know, she was recognized in 2003 as one of our *Heroes of Public Housing* for her work when she was a public housing resident on behalf of public housing families. This included the organization of tenant councils throughout public housing and of the umbrella organization known as the Erie Tenant Council. Because of the foundation laid by Ms. Grady in the 1980s, the Erie Tenant Council still exists today and is providing services to our residents.

Ms. Grady has tremendous dedication to the causes for which she works and she has provided leadership, guidance, and passion for the legal rights of individuals who need assistance in addressing the inequities in our society.

I do not hesitate to add my support for a much-deserved recognition of Thelma Grady by the Erie County Bar Association.

Sincerely,

John E. Horan  
Executive Director and Secretary

JEH/jc:2.10.4