

## HELPING HANDS

# MidPenn Legal Services celebrates 50 years of offering legal services

BY LINDA A. LOVETT

MidPenn Legal Services, a nonprofit, public interest law firm, was founded in 1969 to provide free civil legal aid to individuals and families who lack the financial resources to pay for such services. We service 18 counties in Central Pennsylvania, including Centre.

Dr. Rose Cologne, Dorothy Poulos, James M. Rayback, H. Denning Mason, Benjamin Novak, Thomas Schwartz, Austin Owen Furst and Fredrick Farber were among the notables who brought legal services to Centre County in what was known then as Keystone Legal Services. These community leaders recognized that everyone deserves their day in court

regardless of income. In a criminal matter, if you cannot afford an attorney one is appointed to you. This is not the case in civil proceedings.

In situations where a family's housing or income is in jeopardy, access to civil legal services is crucial and a lawyer is often necessary to help sort out the issues and provide guidance on the proper course of action. To help individuals and families in crisis, MidPenn attorneys and paralegals handle a variety of civil matters; including child custody, domestic violence, housing, elder law, expungement, tax controversies, public benefits and consumer issues.

MidPenn also maintains an extensive legal library of educational materials on our website, [\[penn.org\]\(http://penn.org\). These are available to anyone in need of legal information. Anyone requiring civil legal assistance can call our Coordinated Intake Unit at 1-800-326-9177 to find out if we are able to help.](http://www.mid-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

As a nonprofit law firm, MidPenn is dependent on grants and private donations to help us provide free legal services. We are a partner agency of various United Ways, including Centre County United Way. The grant from Centre County United Way helps to fund our Housing Advocacy Project and increases the resources available to Centre County families who are at risk of becoming homeless.

To celebrate our 50th anniversary, MidPenn will be hosting an open house at our State College office, 3500 E. College Ave., Suite 1295, on Sept. 24, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. We invite you to join us and learn more about our work and how legal services benefits the community.