

## **CITIZENS BANK SUPPORTS BAR FOUNDATION**

CONCORD, NH -- President and CEO of Citizens Bank New Hampshire, Cathleen Schmidt, delivered good news for New Hampshire residents last month when she advised the New Hampshire Bar Foundation that Citizens Bank has a special product offering for Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) managed through its not-for-profit division that includes higher interest rates and services for larger law firms with more sophisticated needs – an action that is likely to yield an additional \$100,000 this year for the NH Bar Foundation’s IOLTA Grants Program. “Citizens Bank’s commitment to the IOLTA program is very significant and a testament to the philanthropic values of Citizens Bank. The additional funds will be awarded by the Foundation primarily to organizations that provide civil legal services for the poor and elderly,” says David Snyder, executive director of the NH Bar Foundation. As one of 15 Leadership Banks in the IOLTA Program in New Hampshire, the interest from Citizens Bank provided 32 percent of the total IOLTA revenue of \$1.82 million dollars during the past year.

Cathleen Schmidt, who is responsible for the overall performance of the state’s largest bank,, along with several colleagues from Citizens Bank - Jeannette Davila, senior vice president, not-for-profit division, Joyce Baldassarre, vice president, not-for profit division, Kathleen Reardon, vice president, public affairs and community relations, and Celia Leonard, vice president and general counsel and member of the NH Bar Foundation board, attended a luncheon at the Bar Foundation on May 4 to meet board members and hear directly from a legal service provider about the good work that is being done through the IOLTA Grants Program. Foundation Board members, Russell Hilliard, Nina Gardner, and Hon. Philip Hollman joined David Snyder, executive director, and Susan Noon, program and communications director, in

welcoming Citizens Bank. Attorney Elliott Berry from New Hampshire Legal Assistance (NHLA) was invited to join the luncheon to talk about the many ways NHLA, an IOLTA Grant recipient, serves residents throughout New Hampshire. For 30 years, Berry has handled a variety of cases for disadvantaged and elderly citizens. For the past 7 years, he has worked diligently to increase access to homeless shelters for those in need and fought tirelessly for the rights of homeless children to be re-admitted to school. He was instrumental in the passage of a law that requires owners of mobile home parks to negotiate with residents to purchase the park before selling to private investors, with the result that at least 70 parks in NH are now resident-owned. Berry's support of building permits for moderate-income housing has been very effective, opening doors in more communities to people of modest means. Ms. Schmidt and all in attendance were deeply moved by Attorney Berry's portrayal of the many difficult situations he helps clients to face and resolve every day.

Hon. Philip Hollman spoke of the need for legal assistance for those who cannot afford an attorney as critical to our society, saying "If people cannot access the legal system to address their grievances, they will have no respect for it." Board member, Nina Gardner, executive director of the New Hampshire Judicial Council, summarized the support the State of New Hampshire provides for legal aid for low-income residents and emphasized the need for IOLTA and other supplemental funds to respond to the ever-growing need for assistance.

The NH Bar Foundation has invested over \$20 million of philanthropic funds in New Hampshire since 1977. The Foundation is supported by the generosity of New Hampshire lawyers and all the banks participating in the IOLTA Program. Through the IOLTA and Justice Grant Programs, the Foundation makes grants in three main areas: access to justice for disadvantaged people, community education about the law, and innovation in the administration of justice.