

## Judges Share Wisdom for Successful Appearances

By Jennifer R. Etkin and Deborah B. Richman

THE PHILADELPHIA BAR ASSOCIATION Workers' Compensation Section co-chairs, Hon. Todd B. Seelig, Workers' Compensation Office of Adjudication; Alexis Handrich; and Andrea Rock, welcomed back members for 2018 on Jan. 26. The Section kicked off the new year with its first monthly Philadelphia Bar Association CLE lunch-and-learn titled "If I Went Back to Private Practice, How I Would Do Things Differently: A Judge's Perspective." Moderated by Judge Seelig, attendees were given tips and suggestions from Workers' Compensation Judges Sandra R. Craig, Francine Lincicome, Tina Maria Rago and Erin Young, as they discussed ways they would do things differently if they went back to private practice.

The judges focused on brief writing, presenting testimony, conducting depositions, time management and handling exhibits. They told practitioners to know their cases and prepare documents, facts and witnesses prior to the hearing, even if

attorneys are covering the hearing for associates. The judges also encouraged communication between opposing parties in advance of the hearing, familiarizing oneself with a judge's courtroom procedures and attending mediations with appropriate authority to accept, modify or reject settlement proposals. Regarding brief writing, they discussed the importance of editing to avoid long-winded and repetitious arguments, while accurately citing to the record and addressing harmful evidence. Fellow workers' compensation judges and many practitioners specializing in workers' compensation from throughout the Philadelphia area attended the lunch-and-learn while earning one substantive CLE credit.

In conjunction with the lunch-and-learn program, Section members enthusiastically supported its annual sock drive to benefit St. John's Hospice. Organized by Deborah B. Richman and Jennifer A. Etkin, cochairs of the Section's Charitable Events Committee, Section members donated more than 300 pairs of men's athletic socks. The socks were delivered to a grateful staff at St. John's Hospice and prepared for immediate distribution to the



Photo by Thomas E. Rogers

**Judge Sandra R. Craig (left to right), Judge Francine Lincicome, Judge Todd B. Seelig, Judge Tina Maria Rago and Judge Erin Young at the Philadelphia Bar Association CLE on Jan. 26.**

men who rely on the shelter for food and social services. Clean and dry socks are a critical component of a wardrobe for the city's homeless. Aside from keeping the men warm, clean socks can prevent foot infections that can lead to more significant health issues. The Section has created a close working relationship with St. John's Hospice in recent years, and members volunteer to help serve hot lunches to the men multiple times each year. During the holiday season, the Section also col-

lects monetary donations from members to cater a hot lunch for the men with Tastykake desserts.

---

*Jennifer R. Etkin (jennifer.etkin@etkinandassoc.com), associate at the Law Offices of Michael A. Etkin & Associates, and Deborah B. Richman (DRichman@tthlaw.com), associate at Thomas, Thomas & Hafer LLP, are cochairs of the Workers' Compensation Section Charitable Events and Community Service Committee.*