

## Law Day Celebrated with Luncheon Highlighting Right to Vote

On April 30, 2014 the Berks County Bar Association hosted more than 225 guests at our annual celebration of Law Day, a day set aside to highlight the importance of law in our society.

This year's year theme is **American Democracy and the Rule of Law: Why Every Vote Matters**. After all, to have "a government of the people, by the people and for the people," it is necessary that all eligible citizens vote. Each year the BCBA Law Day Committee conducts an Essay Contest for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Graders of Berks County. This year, these questions were posed: When you become 18 years old, you will be able to vote in elections. Will you want to vote when you are able? Why or why not? Why do you think voting is an important right?

More than twenty essays were received and, after much deliberation, the Committee decided to award prizes as follows: **First** – Kaylie Vu of LaSalle Academy; **Second** – Emmanuela Alaimo of Kutztown Area Middle School; and **Third** – Nevaeh Johnson of Reiffton Middle School in Exeter Township.

In her essay, Kaylie wrote of her parents being immigrants from Vietnam. They "left behind everything they had and risked their lives in the pursuit of freedom . . . Being the daughter of immigrants, who came from a Communist country, has made me cherish my right to vote. Seeing the sacrifices my parents have gone through to earn the right to vote makes my vote much more meaningful. With that in mind, when I turn eighteen, I will be the first in line to vote!"

The winner of the County Mock Trial Championship was also announced. Students from Conrad Weiser went toe-to-toe with the student litigators from Governor Mifflin. Both schools have a strong tradition of excellence in mock trial competition. On this occasion, Conrad Weiser won. Congratulations, Scouts! A tip of the hat for a job well done to the Mustangs!

A featured highlight of the celebration was the announcement of the recipient of the Howard M. Fox Memorial Scholarship. It is going to Nickolas Reck, a graduate of Daniel Boone High School and a first year law student at Columbia University, New York City.

Given the theme for Law Day, the natural choice for keynote speaker was the famous suffragist Susan B. Anthony. Being portrayed by Marjorie Goldman, an actress with the American Historical Theatre in Philadelphia, Ms. Anthony spoke of her experience fighting for the right to vote during a time when women were not seen as equal to men and even could not own property. Her valiant efforts led to the adoption of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution granting women the right to vote. Having fought so hard for the right to vote, it needs to be exercised.

Fitting comments to end the luncheon, because, indeed, every vote matters!