



## **PHILADELPHIA LAWYERS FOR SOCIAL EQUITY WINS 2018-2019 BARRA AWARD** **Recognized as an “Exemplary Nonprofit Organization”**

**December 5, 2017 – Wayne, PA** — The Barra Foundation announced today that Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity (PLSE) is a recipient of a Barra Award for 2018-2019. The Barra Awards provide unrestricted operating support to “exemplary nonprofits demonstrating leadership, adaptability and performance.”

Founded in 1963, the Barra Foundation seeks to fuel innovation. As its President, Kristina Wahl, explains, “Innovation for Barra is about creating the conditions for idea generation, testing novel approaches to well-defined problems, and sharing lessons learned about what works and what doesn’t.” In presenting the Barra Awards this year, she said of its recipients, “The Awards provide the organizations with some financial breathing room and their leaders with opportunities to learn from their peers—a diverse and inspiring network of entrepreneurial thinkers from across the nonprofit sector.”

“On behalf of those who founded PLSE in 2010 and who have been so energetic and innovative in its first seven years, especially Mike Lee who has served as its Executive Director and managing attorney since its beginnings, and staff attorney Zane Johnson who has allowed us to expand our reach so greatly over the past two years, I thank the Barra Foundation for this great honor,” said attorney Ryan Allen Hancock, Chair of PLSE’s Board of Directors and Chair of the Employment Law Department of Willig, Williams & Davidson.

“We have to change the narrative about criminal records from being a prejudicial character stigma, to being just a record of past government action that should expire in appropriate circumstances,” Hancock notes, “Convictions are static; people change. It is in the best interest of everyone, including the City and its many communities, as well as the defendants and their families, to allow each of us to reach our potential as a productive, contributing, tax-paying member of society. The Barra Award will inspire and give us new energy to continue expanding the reach and the breadth of our programs.” These programs include the development of a new, community-based, technology-supported process for applying to the Governor for pardons by those whose post-conviction lives demonstrate true rehabilitation.

### **About The Barra Foundation**

[The Barra Foundation](#) invests in innovation to inspire change that strengthens communities in the Greater Philadelphia region. Through its Catalyst Fund and Barra Awards, the Foundation provides approximately \$4 million in annual grants that are focused on supporting innovation in and across the fields of arts & culture, education, health, and human services. To learn more about the Barra Awards program, [click here](#).

### **About Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity**

PLSE serves low income individuals who have been arrested and/or convicted of crimes and whose criminal records hold them back from achieving better jobs, better housing, higher quality of lives for themselves and their families. PLSE pursues these objectives through individual representation, strategic litigation, community education, research, and legislative advocacy. To learn more about PLSE, [click here](#).