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**Tampa Bay Times Prize-Winning Columnist
To Be Keynote Speaker at
Pro Bono Ceremony**

CLEARWATER - The Sixth Judicial Circuit's Pro Bono Committee is pleased to announce that Tim Nickens, a Pulitzer-Prize winning columnist for the Tampa Bay Times, will be the keynote speaker at this year's ceremony honoring those who have done exemplary pro bono work in Pinellas and Pasco counties.

Mr. Nickens will be giving his remarks at what will be the Sixth Circuit's Third Annual Recognition Ceremony, where lawyers, law students, law firms and paralegals will be praised for the legal work they have done without remuneration on behalf of those who lack the financial means to pay for legal services. Many individuals in our community are struggling to meet their basic needs and there is a very real and pervasive need for legal assistance in every area of the law.



Tim Nickens

The Pro Bono Committee's mission is to increase awareness, recognition and accountability for pro bono legal service in the Sixth Circuit. The Committee, formerly under the leadership of Circuit Judge Kimberly Todd, and now under the leadership of Circuit Judge Susan St. John, decided to undertake its own awards system as of 2015.

All attorneys when admitted to the Florida Bar take an oath which states, "I will never reject from any consideration personal or to myself the cause of the defenseless or oppressed."

There are attorneys who do pro bono hours or donate to a legal aid organization because they are required to by the Florida Bar. This event recognizes and celebrates those attorneys who have gone above and beyond what is required of them and have made pro bono a priority in their busy lives.

One nominee for one pro bono award is a lawyer who attends a bi-monthly pro bono housing clinic and who routinely stops landlords from evicting single parents for specious reasons. Another nominee is a Stetson University College of Law student who founded an organization designed to help foster children navigate the labyrinth of the benefits they are entitled to.

Nominations sought from across the Sixth Judicial Circuit were voted on by the Committee in the categories of outstanding pro bono work by an attorney, law firm, paralegal and law student. There is also a special "chair" award.

The Sixth Circuit Pro Bono Committee is honored to have Mr. Nickens speak at the ceremony. Nickens, the editor of editorials for the Times, won, along with colleague Daniel Ruth, the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing for a series of editorials that successfully campaigned to resume adding fluoride to the drinking water in Pinellas County.

The ceremony will be held on April 21 in Courtroom One at the County Justice Center in Clearwater, at 14250 49th Street North. The program begins at 3:00pm and is open to the public.