

For Immediate Release
Contact: Mala Mason
Phone: 412.225.9568
Email: mediationwp@mediate.com

Press Statement

**MEDIATION COUNCIL OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA RECOGNIZES
ALLEGHENY COUNTY'S GENERATIONS PROGRAM WITH 2017 CONFLICT RESOLUTION DAY AWARD**

*Mediation Council of Western PA Celebrates Its 35th Anniversary and
receives a Proclamation from Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh*

PITTSBURGH, PA – The Mediation Council of Western Pennsylvania (“MCWP”) is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2017 Conflict Resolution Day Award, the mediators of Allegheny County’s Generations Program. The Generations Program, celebrating its 20th anniversary, is part of the Child Custody Department of the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania. The Generations Program was formally recognized with the award on Thursday, October 19, 2017 during the MCWP’s annual Conflict Resolution Day event. The Conflict Resolution Day event, which also served as an opportunity to celebrate the MCWP’s 35th anniversary, was attended by over 50 distinguished members of Western Pennsylvania’s alternative dispute resolution community.

The mediators of the Generations Program include:

- Bernie Behrend (Behrend Mediation Services)
- Sheila Ford (Sheila Ford, Attorney at Law)
- Kathryn Gibson, MA, Family Mediator (Isaly Counseling Associates)
- Trish Korb, LCSW, BCD (Vita Massage)
- Jean M. Lupariello, Esq. (Mediation Works)
- Lynn MacBeth (Lynn MacBeth and Associates)
- Mary Jane Oppenheim, MSW
- Susan Tanzer, M.Ed. (Mediation Works)
- Robert M. Wilson, Ph.D., Keystone Training and Consulting

Participation in the Generations Program is a mandatory two-part process for individuals involved in a custody dispute. This alternative dispute resolution program includes an educational seminar for adults with an interactive group for children ages six through fifteen, and a mediation orientation session.

The custody mediation session gives parents/caregivers an opportunity to meet with a trained mediator to address issues related to meeting their child(ren)’s needs and to formulate a custody arrangement. Neither children nor attorneys participate in the mediation. Parties meet with a mediator for two to two and a half hours to discuss approaches to a successful parenting plan. The goal of the mediation process is to encourage adults to work together and to be responsible for their own parenting decisions.

Generation mediators are members of the legal or mental health fields with advanced degrees, in addition to having basic and ongoing advanced training in mediation.

The MCWP selected the Generations Program for this award to commemorate the 20 years of service these mediators have given to the community through their mediation work. The program has assisted more than 20,000 families over the years.

Joel S. Pretz, President of MCWP and founder of Pretz Mediation Works, remarked, "As a group, these nine mediators have been at the grassroots of the mediation movement in Pittsburgh. Since its inception, the Generations Program has been an instrumental part of the custody dispute resolution process." He continued, "Over the years, these mediators have carried out their duties under the radar, without recognition, and under their normal rates for these types of services. Due to their dedication to the program, as well as their commitment to the mediation process, the MCWP Board vote was unanimous to give them this year's Conflict Resolution Day award."

The Conflict Resolution Day event commemorated the 35th anniversary of MCWP. To honor this special occasion, MCWP received a proclamation from both Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh.

MCWP was originally incorporated as the Family Mediation Council of Western Pennsylvania (FMC) in 1982. Over the past 35 years, MCWP's members have been a driving force for mediation in the region and have been instrumental in mediation being embraced by a number of arenas including family court, the U.S. Postal Service, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of PA, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of PA, school districts, and local magisterial district judges' offices. Over 50 members strong, the MCWP includes practitioners in fields as diverse as community mediation, business and commercial mediation, workplace mediation, education, bankruptcy, civil litigation, small business and family business disputes, victim/offender mediation, conflict among families over the care of elderly parents and over inheritance issues, and many other areas of interpersonal conflict. In recent years, the Council has partnered with the Alternate Dispute Resolution Committee of the Allegheny County Bar Association, and the Collaborative Law Association of Southwestern Pennsylvania, in presenting the annual Kaplan Lecture (named after Judge Larry Kaplan) and in annual Conflict Resolution Day events, bringing nationally recognized experts in dispute resolution like Ken Cloke, Brad Heckman, Forrest Mosten and Nan Waller Burnett to Pittsburgh for lectures and training programs. The Council also conducts a series of educational roundtables each year for its membership and holds regular Family Mediation Forum meetings.

The 2017 Conflict Resolution Day events were sponsored by a number of generous local individuals and organizations, including:

Platinum Sponsors:

noblemediation, LLC
Pollock Begg Komar Glasser & Vertz LLC

Gold Sponsors:

Bunde, Gillotti, Mulroy & Shultz, P.C.
Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky
The Alternative Group

Silver Sponsors:

Beck & Thomas, P.C.

Carole Katz Alternative Dispute Resolution
Gentile, Horoho & Avalli, P.C.
Howard J. Schulberg, Mediation Services
Law Office of Patricia Wozniak Henk
McCarthy McDonald Schulberg & Joy
Sally Griffith Cimini, Leech Tishman Fuscaldo & Lampl LLC

Bronze Sponsors:

Behrend Mediation Services
Frank Gale Bails Murcko & Pocrass, P.C.
Joel M. Helmrich, Dinsmore & Shohl LLP
Joel S. Pretz, Mediator
Stanley Mitchel, R. Stanley Mitchel P.C.
Roberta Eisen, LPC & Associates

###

Conflict Resolution Day was initiated in 2005 by the U.S. Association for Conflict Resolution to increase public awareness about conflict resolution and its many benefits. Celebrated on the third Thursday in October, Conflict Resolution Day has been recognized and celebrated in more than 22 states, and at least four different countries. A number of counties, cities and states across the United States, including Pittsburgh, have adopted proclamations designating day- or week-long conflict resolution celebrations.

The Mediation Council of Western Pennsylvania (MCWP) is a local organization that serves the public by providing education about mediation, information about mediator qualifications and assistance in finding qualified mediators. The MCWP also serves professional mediators by providing opportunities for advanced mediation training and continuing mediation education credit, standards of practice and a code of ethics. The MCWP is the only association of professional mediators in Western Pennsylvania. Its mission is to promote the use of mediation and other collaborative processes for resolving disputes and managing conflict, and support the professional development of mediation practitioners.