

Philadelphia VIP Volunteer of the Month

At the conclusion of his first solo VIP case, volunteer Bob Scott wrote in his closing survey: “It was a learning experience. I need a couple more cases to form a conclusion about how I feel about working with VIP. However, early impressions are positive.” Five years later, Scott is a VIP Board member, one of the organization’s most treasured ambassadors, and a go-to volunteer.

Scott’s path to the legal profession and to VIP was somewhat unconventional. After college, he worked as a city planner in upstate New York. While he loved that work, he remembers thinking “just as a project would start to get particularly interesting, lawyers always stepped in and took it over.” So, he went back to school, earning his law degree from Rutgers University. At 34, he started as an associate at Morgan Lewis in the Business and Finances group.



Scott traces his strong connection to pro bono work to 2008, when he was serving as general counsel at TE Connectivity and leading the company’s corporate and social responsibility program, TE Responsibility Advantage.

TE Connectivity, a global technology company, is considered a leader in corporate social responsibility—an approach whereby a company holds itself accountable for its social, economic, and environmental impact and seeks both to create shareholder value and benefit its community. Scott took this message to heart, setting up volunteer opportunities for himself and his colleagues at VIP’s nonprofit and small business clinics.

After retiring in 2013, Scott broadened his engagement with VIP by taking ongoing cases, in addition to attending clinics as he had done at TE. Through his interactions with his individual clients, Bob became deeply invested in VIP and pro bono work.

“My impression of pro bono service evolved a lot once I started working with real people for months at a time. I feel very connected to my clients and think that’s what makes me keep coming back for more cases.”

Scott’s most memorable case happens to be one of his most recent. Mr. P wanted to get insurance for his house, but ran into challenges because his deceased parents were the owners of record. Mr. P needed to prove he was the rightful owner of the property and was referred to Scott via VIP. After helping Mr. P probate his father’s estate and obtain title to the house, Scott learned that Mr. P had been diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer. Scott quickly helped Mr. P draft a will. Only a few weeks later, Mr. P passed away. Having a will in place spared Mr. P’s partner, daughter, and grandson from having “to go through what he went through, and that really drives it home for me,” Scott said.

Scott’s service with VIP and close work with his clients has offered him deeper insight into the poverty that affects so many Philadelphians. “Bob brings to his pro bono work a wonderful combination of lawyerly seriousness and extraordinary empathy,” says Rida Haq, Director of Volunteer Engagement. “His commitment to being of service, and the connection he forges with his clients, inspires all of us and makes him an excellent ambassador for VIP.”

Scott’s work on guardianship cases has enabled him to make a foray into the courtroom, a new practice setting after his years as a corporate lawyer. For those lawyers who are hesitant about doing pro bono work, whether because they’re unfamiliar with the types of cases involved or don’t think they have the time or experience to do so, Scott says not to worry – VIP tackles those issues, and more, head on. “I always feel like someone has my back,” he says. He relishes sharing his VIP experiences, expressing how much he has gained personally, to encourage other lawyers to get involved.

When asked what surprised him most about pro bono work, Scott says, “I was surprised at how hard and complex it is, but what surprised me the most is how much I enjoy it. I’ve never had a [VIP] client I didn’t like working with.”

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