

Got a Book Club?

Do you have a book club? Now you do!

During October, Dauphin County Bar Association's Pro Bono Month, read "*A Knock at Midnight*" by Brittany K. Barnett. For bonus points, purchase the book at Amazon Smile and select MidPenn Legal Services as the charity and Amazon will also donate 0.5% of each eligible purchase that you make to that charity. There are no fees or extra costs. The publisher describes the book as a "riveting memoir is at once a coming-of-age story and a powerful evocation of what it takes to bring hope and justice to a system built to resist them both. ***Amazon Description:***

Brittany K. Barnett was only a law student when she came across the case that would change her life forever—that of Sharanda Jones, single mother, business owner, and, like Brittany, Black daughter of the rural South. A victim of America's devastating war on drugs, Sharanda had been torn away from her young daughter and was serving a life sentence without parole—for a first-time drug offense. In Sharanda, Brittany saw haunting echoes of her own life, as the daughter of a formerly incarcerated mother. As she studied this case, a system came into focus in which widespread racial injustice forms the core of America's addiction to incarceration. Moved by Sharanda's plight, Brittany set to work to gain her freedom.

This had never been the plan. Bright and ambitious, Brittany was a successful accountant on her way to a high-powered future in corporate law. But Sharanda's case opened the door to a harrowing journey through the criminal justice system. By day she moved billion-dollar deals, and by night she worked pro bono to free clients in near hopeless legal battles. Ultimately, her path transformed her understanding of injustice in the courts, of genius languishing behind bars, and the very definition of freedom itself."

Then on **October 27 at 4 PM join us** for complimentary webinar discussion with "*A Knock at Midnight*" author Brittany K. Barnett, a former corporate lawyer who drew inspiration from her family in her tireless clemency work. We hope you can join us for this exciting event. Register on the ABA website or [here](#).

The National Pro Bono Celebration Book Club sponsored by the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. The Committee also compiled a list of suggested books for your book club relevant to pro bono and access to justice topics.

1. [*Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*](#) by Bryan Stevenson ***Amazon Description:*** Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever. *Just Mercy* is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.
2. [*Unbillable Hours: A True Story*](#) by Ian Graham ***Amazon Description:*** The story—part memoir, part hard-hitting expose—of a first-year law associate negotiating the arduous path through a system designed to break those who enter it before it makes them. Landing a job at a prestigious L.A. law firm, complete with a six figure income, signaled the beginning of the good life for Ian Graham. But the harsh reality of life as an associate quickly became evident. The work was grueling and boring, the days were impossibly long, and Graham's sole purpose was to rack up billable hours. But when he took an unpaid pro bono case to escape the drudgery, Graham found the meaning in his work that he'd been looking for. As he worked to free Mario Rocha, a gifted young Latino who had been wrongly convicted at 16 and sentenced to life without parole, the shocking contrast between the greed and hypocrisy of law firm life and Mario's desperate struggle for freedom led Graham to look long and hard at his future as a corporate lawyer. Clear-eyed and moving, written with the drama and speed of a John Grisham novel and the personal appeal of Scott Turow's account of his law school years, *Unbillable Hours* is an arresting personal story with implications for all of us.
3. [*Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*](#) by Matthew Desmond ***Amazon Description:*** In *Evicted*, Princeton sociologist and MacArthur "Genius" Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they each struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Hailed as "wrenching and revelatory" (*The Nation*), "vivid and unsettling" (*New York Review of Books*), *Evicted* transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of twenty-first-century America's most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible.
4. [*Law Man: Memoir of a Jailhouse Lawyer*](#) by Shon Hopwood ***Amazon Description:*** Shon Hopwood was a good kid from a good Nebraskan family. Those who knew him well would never have imagined that, as a young man, he'd be adrift with few prospects and plotting to rob a bank. But he did, committing five armed bank robberies before being apprehended. Serving ten years in federal prison, Shon feared his life was over. He wasn't sure if he could survive a cell block, but he was determined to try. Hopwood pumped-up in the prison gym to defend himself and earned respect on the basketball court. He reconnected with the girl of his dreams from high school through letters and prison visits; and,

crucially, he talked his way into a job in the prison law library. Hopwood slowly taught himself criminal law and began to help fellow inmates rather than himself. He wrote one petition to the Supreme Court, which was chosen to be heard from over 7,000 other petitions submitted by the greater legal community that year. The Justices voted 9-0 in favor of Hopwood's petition when the case was finally heard. What might have been considered luck by some, was dispelled when a second petition from him was selected to be heard by the Supreme Court. He didn't grasp it yet, but Shon's legal work was the start of a new life. Shon works on policy reform, and he is a cofounder of PrisonProfessors.com. He strives to improve outcomes of America's prison system, and he tells his amazing story in Law Man.

5. [Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much](#) by Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir *Amazon Description*: Why do successful people get things done at the last minute? Why does poverty persist? Why do organizations get stuck firefighting? Why do the lonely find it hard to make friends? These questions seem unconnected, yet Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir show that they are all examples of a mind-set produced by scarcity. Drawing on cutting-edge research from behavioral science and economics, Mullainathan and Shafir show that scarcity creates a similar psychology for everyone struggling to manage with less than they need. Busy people fail to manage their time efficiently for the same reasons the poor and those maxed out on credit cards fail to manage their money. The dynamics of scarcity reveal why dieters find it hard to resist temptation, why students and busy executives mismanage their time, and why sugarcane farmers are smarter after harvest than before. Once we start thinking in terms of scarcity and the strategies it imposes, the problems of modern life come into sharper focus. Mullainathan and Shafir discuss how scarcity affects our daily lives, recounting anecdotes of their own foibles and making surprising connections that bring this research alive. Their book provides a new way of understanding why the poor stay poor and the busy stay busy, and it reveals not only how scarcity leads us astray but also how individuals and organizations can better manage scarcity for greater satisfaction and success.
6. [Legal Heroes in the Trump Era](#) by Tahmina Watson and Alex Stonehill. *Amazon Description*: Lawyers are trained to work within the system. We're not advocates for revolution. Most of us aren't even comfortable being labelled "activists." But when the rule of law is in peril, as it is like never before, it is our duty to not just practice law, but to protect it. This book tells the story of 14 "legal heroes" who have responded to the crises of the Trump presidency in innovative and inspiring ways, from advocating for asylum seekers on the southern border, to defending environmental protections in the nation's highest courts. The creativity and sacrifice in these pages are a guide for anyone who believes in the law as a tool to fight oppression and advance the cause of freedom.
7. [My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies](#) by Resmaa Menakem *Amazon Description*: In this groundbreaking book, therapist Resmaa Menakem examines the damage caused by racism in America from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology. The body is where our instincts reside and where we fight, flee, or freeze, and it endures the trauma inflicted by the ills that plague society. Menakem argues this destruction will continue until Americans learn to heal the generational anguish of white supremacy, which is deeply embedded in all our bodies. Our collective agony doesn't just affect African Americans. White Americans suffer their own secondary trauma as well. So do blue Americans—our police. *My Grandmother's Hands* is a call to action for all of us to recognize that racism is not only about the head, but about the body, and introduces an alternative view of what we can do to grow beyond our entrenched racialized divide.
 - Paves the way for a new, body-centered understanding of white supremacy—how it is literally in our blood and our nervous system.
 - Offers a step-by-step healing process based on the latest neuroscience and somatic healing methods, in addition to incisive social commentary.