

From Refugee to *Amicus Curiae* Committee Member

In 1994 **Henry Yampolsky** arrived here from Kiev as a fourteen year old political and religious refugee. In July 2012, he became the *Amicus Curiae* Committee's newest member. How did a non-English speaking teenager in the mid-1990s win election to a committee that requires a high level of advocacy skills in 2012? Ask him and he'll tell you that he drew his inspiration and aspirations from plaintiff attorneys. They helped the Yampolsky family make the difficult transition to the United States, and served as tremendous role models for Henry.

Within a year of the Yampolsky family's arrival here, Mrs. Yampolsky, then the family's only breadwinner, was wrongly terminated from her employment. It was a devastating blow — the family lost its only meager means of support. But through social services, the family obtained assistance from PAJ Member **John Kennedy** of O'Malley Harris Durkin & Perry, P.C., Scranton.

Kennedy helped the Yampolskys navigate and understand the American justice system. He did so with compassion and a willingness to take the time needed, all while bridging the language barrier. Happily, Kennedy obtained a positive outcome. And he did it all *pro bono*.

Meanwhile, Henry Yampolsky was absorbing the curriculum of Scranton High School. Beyond his studies, he intended to try out for the swim team. Through a friendly prank,

he wound up trying out for — and making — the speech and debate team instead. On the debate team he met a volunteer coach, another plaintiff attorney, Kimberly Borland, who along with his wife, Ruth, are the principals of the Wilkes-Barre firm, Borland & Borland, L.L.P.



Henry Yampolsky, Esq.

The Borlands took Henry under their wing and continued his American education that Kennedy had begun. In many ways, the Borlands became part of Henry's extended family. They threw him a surprise party to celebrate his gaining US citizenship and wrote his law school recommendation. But watching Kim Borland in court, knowing exactly

how much this kind of work can help people, solidified Yampolsky's desire to become a trial lawyer. He was admitted to the Bar in 2005 and is now a Senior Associate with **Galfand Berger, LLP**, Philadelphia.

When he was elected to the *Amicus Curiae* Committee in July, Yampolsky thanked the Committee members in an email and told them, "The Trial Lawyers I came in contact with not only ensured the survival of my family, they shaped my concept of the American Justice System and inspired me to follow in their footsteps." *Amicus* Committee Chair, **George Rassias**, said "We enthusiastically welcome Henry and look forward to the energy and unique perspective he brings to the Committee." ■