

# Transitioning Into Adulthood

*A panel event honoring Jillian Zacks*



Planned by [Achieva](#) and [JFCS](#) (Jewish Family and Community Services) in honor of Jillian Zacks, the recipient of this year's Shore-Whitehill Award.

## Panelists

**Jillian Zacks, Esq., McAndrews Law Offices**

*Topic: Long term planning & special needs trusts*

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Jillian Zacks is an attorney with McAndrews, Mehalick, Connolly, Hulse and Ryan, P.C., where she concentrates her practice in the areas of Estate Planning, Special Needs Trusts, Guardianship, Estate Administration and Orphans' Court Matters. Ms. Zacks works in the Pittsburgh Office.

Ms. Zacks represents individuals of varying net worth in the preparation of personalized estate plans. Ms. Zacks has a concentration in special needs planning and provides comprehensive services which may involve preparation of self-funded or third-party funded special needs trusts, powers of attorney or representing individuals seeking to become a guardian of an adult disabled individual. Ms. Zacks administers estates from death through estate closing, ranging from high net worth clients to insolvent estates. In addition to her estate planning and administration practice, Ms. Zacks represents both individuals and corporate fiduciaries and beneficiaries in Orphans' Court matters.

Ms. Zacks is active in the community providing educational seminars to families, professionals and fellow attorneys on such topics as Estate Planning, Special Needs Trusts, Transition to Adulthood for an Individual with a Disability, and ABLE Accounts. Her dedication to the community extends beyond speaking and assisting families with planning for the future, she is the immediate past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Arc of Greater Pittsburgh and immediate past Chair of the Board of Directors of Jewish Family and Community Services of Pittsburgh (JFCS). Additionally, she serves on the Board

of Directors of Achieva and is a member of the Pittsburgh Estate Planning Council. Due to her efforts and commitment to the autism community, Ms. Zacks was awarded the prestigious Temple Grandin Award by the Autism Connection of Pennsylvania.

### **Education**

- Washington University in St. Louis, A.B. (Political Science and Sociology), 1990
- University of Connecticut School of Law, J.D., 1993
- Temple University School of Law, Estate Planning Certificate, 1997

### **Honors & Affiliations**

- Allegheny County Bar Association – Probate and Trust Law Section, Tax Law Section and Committee on Law and Disability
- Pennsylvania Bar Association – Past Co-Chair of Statewide Mock Trial Competition (2003-2005)
- Estate Planning Council of Pittsburgh
- Arc of Greater Pittsburgh, current Board Member and Chair of the Board of Directors from 2018-2020
- Jewish Family and Community Services of Pittsburgh, current Board member and Chair of the Board of Directors from 2019-2021
- Achieva, current Board Member
- The Pittsburgh Foundation, Past Member of the Professional Advisory Committee
- Friendship Circle of Pittsburgh, Past Board Member
- United Way of Allegheny County 21 & Able, Member of Advisory Committee
- Center for Women, Past Mentor and Volunteer Professional Speaker
- Temple Grandin Award of the Autism Connection of Pennsylvania, 2013 Recipient
- Mermelstein Award, 2020 Recipient

## **Karen Oosterhous, Achieva, Disability Advocate**

*Topic: Planning for college & going to college*

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Karen Oosterhous is an experienced disability rights advocate helping people and their families successfully access services and other resources that enable them to lead lives of personal significance. Karen specializes in helping students with disabilities receive the Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) all children are entitled to by law. She helps students by requesting and reviewing evaluations and related disability documentation; determining classroom accommodations, and working with the school team to establish present levels of function and draft IEP (Individualized Education Plan) goals.

She is a member of the steering committee of the Pittsburgh Local Area Task Force on Special Education (Intermediate Unit 2), and also a member of the Education Law Center's Stakeholder Group on the Education of Immigrant and Refugee students. Karen devotes her free time to serving Pittsburgh's Latino community as an educational advocate.

Karen received her B.A. from the University of Maryland, her M.A. from Georgetown University and also holds a certificate from the Institute of Special Education Advocacy at William & Mary Law School.

## **Regina Sciuillo, Achieva, Disability Advocate**

*Topic: Employment*

*Email: [rsciuillo@achieva.info](mailto:rsciuillo@achieva.info)*

Regina Sciuillo works for Achieva as a Disability Advocate and Family Supports. She has more than 26 years experience in advocacy beginning when her son Nick was born and diagnosed with Down syndrome. Regina supports families and people with disabilities through the many systems they have to navigate, including concerns with a new diagnosis, questions about schooling, transitioning to adulthood, disability systems, family support and systemic advocacy. She is a member of the IU#7 Local Task Force, Westmoreland County Human Rights Committee and a peer supporter with Pennsylvania Parent to Parent.

**Andrew McCormick MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics,  
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; Director of Healthy  
Transitions Program of the Down syndrome Center of Western PA**

*Topic: Healthcare transitions*

*Email: [mccormickaa@upmc.edu](mailto:mccormickaa@upmc.edu)*

Dr. Andrew McCormick is a Pediatrician in the Down Syndrome Center of Western PA with an expertise in Healthcare Transition. He is the Director of the Health Transition Program which is a holistic and longitudinal approach the movement from pediatric to adult-oriented care.

**Dana Gold, JFCS Pittsburgh, COO**

*Topic: Mental health, illness & wellness*

*Email: [dgold@jfcspgh.org](mailto:dgold@jfcspgh.org)*

Dana is COO of JFCS Pittsburgh. She leads JFCS programs including Refugee Resettlement, Immigration Legal Services, and Food and Critical Needs Services for a wide sector of people in need. In addition, she's the creator of "BROKE", a game that creates empathy for people facing the daunting challenges of poverty.

## **About the Shore-Whitehill Award**

The Shore-Whitehill Award, created in 1996, celebrates volunteers who promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in the fabric of Jewish life through advocacy or direct service to individuals and families.

**Awardees are selected on the basis of two criteria:**

- 1) the value of their contributions as champions of inclusion; and
- 2) the commitment of their nominating organization or group to publicly honoring them so they may serve as a springboard for change and inspire further action by others.

The award was named for Robert Whitehill and the late Barbara Shore, who co-chaired a task force on special needs in the Jewish community. The award is given annually by Jewish Residential Services (JRS); an organization that supports individuals with psychiatric, developmental or intellectual disabilities, helping them to live, learn, work and socialize as valued members of the community.