

2022 Earl G. Harrison Pro Bono Award

Raymond J. Hunter



Raymond J. Hunter, a partner in the Litigation Services Department, the Railroad Practice Group, and the Insurance Services Group, is being honored by the Firm with the 2022 Earl G. Harrison Pro Bono Award. This award is presented annually to an attorney who has a distinguished record of pro bono service of enduring value to the public good.

Mr. Hunter concentrates his practice primarily in the areas of representation of commercial property owners and lessees, from retail establishments to heavy industry such as railroads, in casualty and contract litigation. He also represents the automotive and trucking industry in product liability litigation.

He is a member of the National Association of Railroad Trial Counsel; the Keystone State Railroad Association; American Short Line & Regional Rail Association; and the Delaware County United for Sensible Gun Policy. He graduated from Northern Arizona University in 1998 *cum laude* with a B.S. in Speech Communications, and received a J.D. from Villanova University School of Law in 2001.

On behalf of our client, City of Philadelphia, we defeated the attempt of a gun-rights organization, Gun Owners of America (“GOA”) and four individual members thereof, to obtain declaratory relief and an injunction negating the City’s ability to enforce an ordinance prohibiting unlicensed manufacturing of “ghost guns.” GOA argued that the ordinance was preempted by the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act (UFA) and was also violative of Article 1, Section 21 of the PA Constitution (the state equivalent of the Second Amendment) and was void for vagueness.

In his opinion, Hon. Joshua Roberts of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas held that, as argued by the City, there was no indication in the plain text of the UFA that the Pennsylvania legislature intended to subsume the entire field of firearms regulation and that, in its opinion in *Ortiz v. Commonwealth*, 681 A.2d 152, 155 (Pa. 1996), the leading Pennsylvania Supreme Court case addressing the issue, the court echoed the specific language of UFA in finding that preemptive effect of the UFA extended only to the four specific categories of actions expressly set forth therein: “possession, ownership, transfer, and transportation” of “firearms”. The City ordinance, Judge Roberts agreed, pertained only to parts, components, and equipment, none of which constituted “firearms” under PA law, and the ordinance did not prohibit GOA’s members in any way from possessing, owning, transferring, or transporting firearms – including completed “ghost guns.” GOA’s remaining Constitutional claims were dismissed in short order via a footnote in the court’s opinion.

Plaintiffs have filed an appeal to the Commonwealth Court.