

It Takes a Village

BY BRANDON BROWN

It takes a village to raise a child. I have been blessed to have a strong village around me. Since 13 years old I have had the honor of having the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association as a part of my village. As a student at John Hay Early College High School, I remember when three attorneys from Tucker Ellis came into my classroom to teach the class about our legal rights, responsibilities, and realities. At the time, I did not know that the 3Rs program or the CMBA would set me on a path that would lead me to pursue and graduate law school.

The 3Rs program was a gateway into the legal profession I doubt I would have otherwise found. I knew few professionals in my life at the time, and no attorneys. Although I always saw myself as having a bright future, I wasn't sure which direction I wanted to take my career. Having the chance to speak face-to-face with real attorneys who understood the law and the way we as citizens operated within the law was a powerful tool for a young man. Especially a young Black man. I was empowered by the knowledge imparted to me through those few sessions a month. Ultimately, that empowerment is what drew me to pursue the legal field as a profession.

After 3Rs left the classroom, my thirst for the law only increased. Fortunately, the volunteers from 3Rs also volunteered to help our inaugural Cleveland Mock Trial Team. In the same year that the New York Giants pulled off the improbable upset of the powerhouse New England Patriots, our mock trial team won the championship in its first year. The experience of winning was unforgettable, but what I most remember was most was the attorneys that came to help us. Their confidence and expertise was undeniable. Those volunteers helped shape my own

confidence in my abilities, which eventually led to my first internship at Tucker Ellis.

Through the CMBA's High School Internship Program, I worked at Tucker Ellis for the summers between my high school years. While many of my peers were working in restaurants or camps, I developed a feel for what it meant to be a professional. I gained the experience of working with real attorneys in a respected firm in Cleveland. I gained more members and supporters in my village. I built relationships



that have lasted to this day. As I look back, that all started with 3Rs, and the time people were willing to invest in me.

Growing up, my parents taught me that everyone should invest in the next generation. They taught me that I owed it to the people who have invested in me to reach back once I achieve my goals. Inevitably, our hard work today will be in the hands of the generation of tomorrow. It is our responsibility as professional and role models to both build ourselves and guide our

youth. From a young age, I took those words to mean that I should take advantage of every opportunity presented to me, to gain a level of success that will allow me to reach back and help another. The 3Rs program embodies those same ideals my parents instilled in me: mentorship and scholarship. Now, as a recent law school graduate, I have the chance reach back.

It is no secret that throughout the country, particularly in minority communities, there is a lack of trust in the justice system. It is our

responsibility as legal professionals to help repair the damaged reputation of our field. That starts at home, in our own communities. The CMBA has continued to show their commitment to community growth by continuing programs such as 3Rs and the Louis Stokes Scholars Program.

Once I graduated from high school, I attended Oberlin College. While there, I maintained contact with the CMBA and, after my second year of college, I was accepted into the inaugural class of the Louis Stokes Scholars Program. The Louis Stokes Scholars Program is a pipeline initiative created for students graduating from the Cleveland and East Cleveland School Districts. The program affords the students selected the opportunity to work in law

firms, courts, legal aids, and businesses. Being selected for the program afforded me another chance to build my village. Throughout my three summers in the program, I worked for Tucker Ellis, the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, and the Eighth District Court of Appeals. Each of those experiences gave me a unique and fresh view of the legal profession. Additionally, each gave me experience that I leaned on throughout law school, and will continue to carry into my legal career.

As I applied for law schools, I had a level of insight into the legal community above that of my peers. That insight led me to Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. While there, I still leaned on and continued to cultivate my relationship with the Cleveland-Metropolitan Bar Association. After my first year in law school, I was selected to be a part of the Minority Clerkship Program, and had the opportunity to work at Reminger Co., LPA. This opportunity provided me with another layer of experience. Ultimately, a lot of my legal experience and knowledge I have today stems directly from my interactions with the CMBA.

As I reflect on how far I've come, from a classroom at John Hay Early College, to a graduate of Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, I am grateful for all the opportunities afforded to me, and the time that people have invested in me over the years. Every young person needs someone to invest in them. The Bar Association has created programs that invite volunteers to make a difference in a young person's life. I encourage all who can become involved in some way.

It takes a village to raise a child, but my village at the CMBA has helped me well into adulthood. My journey is not over. As my job search continues, I plan to continue to use the Bar Association as a resource for networking and cultivating ideas. I hope that my story inspires all attorneys to get involved in the CMBA, as mentors and members. Young and aspiring attorneys should take advantage of the various programs and opportunities to build a stronger and more inclusive legal community. Seasoned attorneys should look at the Bar Association as a chance to pass along their vast arrays of knowledge to younger attorneys. All attorneys should get involved as mentors of youth. Mentorship is critical to the continued success of our communities.

The CMBA continues to be my village and support system. I look forward to seeing what they come up with next.



Brandon Brown was born and raised on Cleveland's east side. While at John Hay Early College High, Brandon took part in the Cleveland Mock Trial Competition and had the opportunity to work for Tucker Ellis LLP. During the summers at Oberlin College, Brandon worked at the 8th District Court of Appeals and the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas through the Louis Stokes Scholars Program. Brandon graduated from C|M Law in May 2017 and passed the July 2017 Bar Exam. He is currently seeking employment. He has been a CMBA member since 2015. He can be reached at (216) 543-1103 or brown.oberlin14@gmail.com.

Is Your Firm's E-mail System Exposed to Ransomware, Phishing, or Spear Phishing Attacks?

FBI reports Spear-phishing, alone, cost businesses over 5 Billion Dollars in 2015

We prepare you so that you won't have to pay to unlock your data

Offering a Free E-mail Security assessment to:

- Scan your firm's inboxes for dangerous e-mails
- Available for Office 365
- Find which of your firm's users are most at risk
- Suggest a surveillance plan to protect your firm's e-mail network

Micro Systems Management is proud to introduce our newest Sales Engineer Associate:



Adam Alletto

I am a Graduate of Ohio University with a degree in Information & Telecommunication Systems. Anchored a team that won the coveted "Accenture Challenge", scoring the highest overall score in the history of the challenge. I have spent 3 years in IT sales and Business-class Solutions, and I am ready to help your firm defend its critical data from any threat.



1991 Crocker Road, Suite 222 • Westlake, Ohio
440.892.9997 • www.msmctech.com



Congratulations
John W. Hofstetter
on being named among
the inaugural class of
CMBA Emerging Leaders.

Kastner Westman & Wilkins, LLC
Management-side labor and employment law



kwwlaborlaw.com | 330.867.9998