



Contact:
Rita Klein
Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association
216-696-3525
rklein@clemetrobar.org

CMBA to Honor Record Number of Award Recipients at its Third Annual Meeting

CLEVELAND – June 3, 2010 – The winners of five prestigious awards will be announced at the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association's (CMBA) annual meeting on Friday, June 4 at 11:45 a.m. at the Cleveland Marriott Downtown at Key Center.

The annual awards recognize enhancing professionalism and ethics in the Greater Cleveland legal community; outstanding leadership and service to the Bar; and outstanding service to the community of Greater Cleveland.

"This year's awards winners are exceptional," said Mary K. Whitmer, president of the CMBA. "It is both a privilege and honor to recognize our colleagues who go above and beyond to serve our community, our profession and each other."

The Honorable William K. Thomas Professionalism Award

Ian N. Friedman, Ian N. Friedman & Associates, L.L.C.

Established in 2001 and named for the late Judge William K. Thomas, the Professionalism Award is annually awarded to a lawyer or judge who has significantly contributed to the enhancement of professionalism in the Greater Cleveland legal community by exemplifying the goals of the Ohio Supreme Court's 'A Lawyer's Creed' and 'A Lawyer's Aspirational Ideals'. The winner need not be a member of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association.

Rooted in his contributions to open discovery, the CMBA honors Ian Friedman. He has worked tirelessly for change in Ohio's criminal justice system and has exemplified outstanding professionalism in the process. As president of the Ohio Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and in cooperation with prosecutors, defense counsel, and judges across the state, Ian has worked diligently toward a singular vision – open discovery, which becomes law on July 1. He brought together diverse parties with differing interests to work toward fair discovery practices in criminal cases.

Justice for All Volunteer of the Year Awards

The Justice for All (JFA) Committee serves as the oversight committee to coordinate and support the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association's pro bono and public service programs. In this capacity, the committee annually recognizes a volunteer for his/her outstanding service to the community of Greater Cleveland. This year, JFA is honoring three volunteers.

"At the end of the day, you have to be contributing back to your community," said Whitmer. "We are proud of all our volunteers and the time and talent they share, but I'm so pleased that we had not just one, but three individuals to honor this year. Because service to the community comes in a variety of ways, we are pleased to recognize those for their work for both pro bono and public service."

The JFA Committee has resolved to present a special Volunteer of the Year Award posthumously to **William I. Kohn**, an exemplary volunteer who passed away in February of this year. Kohn was instrumental in introducing the innovative Bankruptcy By-Pass Program, a joint program with The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland and the CMBA's Bankruptcy & Commercial Law Section. The Bankruptcy By-Pass Program helps hundreds of low-income debtors each year, most of whom

are senior citizens, resolve debtor-creditor issues. Kohn also created a training program and materials for By-Pass Program volunteers and served as an expert and mentor for pro bono attorneys.

The second award honors **Carter E. Strang** of Tucker Ellis & West LLP (TEW) as the JFA Volunteer of the Year Award for Public Service. Strang served as Chair of the 3Rs Committee for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, during which time he co-authored the program curriculum, incorporating a number of changes to engage the students and better prepare them for the Ohio Graduation Test. Strang has been a tireless captain for the TEW John Hay Early College 3Rs team and has developed creative teaching strategies that have been shared with all 3Rs volunteers. Strang also has helped coach the John Hay High School Mock Trial team to victory twice in the last three years at the Cleveland High School Mock Trial Competition and spearheaded the creation of the innovative Green Initiative at the CMBA. Strang also has served as Tucker Ellis & West's Pipeline Diversity Coordinator for the past three years and has forged a partnership between TEW and John Hay High School's Early College Program that is an outstanding model of law firm/school partnerships.

The third award is the JFA Volunteer of the Year Award is for Pro Bono Service and will be awarded to **Melissa L. Zujkowski** of Ulmer & Berne LLP. Zujkowski has been an active volunteer in the Cleveland Homeless Legal Assistance Program for more than four years. During the past two years, she has served as Chair of the Homeless Program Subcommittee of the JFA. Zujkowski has been instrumental in developing and facilitating new administrative protocols as the program transitioned from an administrative model with a part-time paid lawyer-director to a committee- and volunteer-led initiative. In her role as a volunteer leader of the program, she has taken on primary responsibility for program administration, including communications to the volunteers and referrals for clients who need further services. She volunteers to take on a number of pro bono matters referred from the program each year and has worked on the development of her firm's Pro Bono Landlord-Tenant Program. Additionally, she gives substantial time in service to Legal Aid's Volunteer Lawyers program along with volunteer recruitment at her firm.

Presidents' Award

Historically, the coveted president's award has given by the president of the Association for exceptional service to the Bar and our community. This year, President Mary Whitmer asked Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation President Rick Manoloff to join her in presenting the award. This year, Whitmer and Manoloff will present the first Presidents' Award – please note the s-apostrophe – to **Sherri L. Dahl** of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P.

"Sherri Dahl has been raising money for the Foundation since before I can remember," shared Whitmer. "She has been Fundraising Chair for the past two years and has raised more money for Foundation funded programs than any other lawyer in this Bar Association. By doing so, she has helped and inspired more people than we can count."

"It's hard not to be inspired by Sherri's in-your-face energy and down-with-the-ship commitment," added Manoloff. "Our fundraising ship was hit hard over the last couple of years, giving us two basic options – cut back our programs that do good in the world or work harder than ever to raise the money necessary to keep our good things going forward. As a Foundation, we chose the latter and Sherri carried the flag."

In addition to the award presentations, the 2010 CMBA Annual Meeting also will include the swearing in of the new 2010-2011 officers and trustees of the CMBA. The incoming officers are: Michael N. Ungar, President (Ulmer & Berne LLP); Barbara K. Roman, President-Elect (Meyers, Roman, Friedberg & Lewis); Carter E. Strang, Vice President (Tucker Ellis & West LLP); Jonathan B. Leiken, Vice President of Membership (Jones Day); Albert A. Vondra, Treasurer (PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP); and David R. Watson, Secretary (Executive Director, CMBA).

The six new CMBA Board Trustees, each serving a three-year term that ends at the 2013 CMBA Annual Meeting, are: Darrell A. Clay (Walter & Haverfield LLP), Michael H. Diamant (Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP), Anne Owings Ford (McDonald Hopkins LLC), John R. Liber II (Webster Dubyak & Weyls), Hon. Lauren C. Moore (Cleveland Municipal Court), and Hon. John J. Russo (Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas).

For questions or additional details about the awards or the Annual Meeting, please contact Rita Klein at (216) 696-3525.

About the CMBA

The Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association is a nonprofit organization, operating as a center for legal professionalism in the region and promoting the highest ethical and professionalism standards. Learn more at www.clemetrobar.org.

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