



Contact:
Rita Klein
Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association
216-539-3713 (direct), 216-696-3525, 440-263-3056 (mobile)
rklein@clemetrobar.org

Bar Association Response to Conviction of Judge Steven J. Terry

CLEVELAND – June 13, 2011 – CMBA President Barbara K. Roman issued this statement following the recent conviction of former Judge Steven Terry:

Today is unquestionably a sad day for our community. As one would expect, the conviction of Judge Terry is troubling to the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, and to the lawyers and judges in our community who comprise our membership. We recognize the fact that an independent, impartial and fair judiciary is indispensable to our system of justice. We understand, in the wake of this conviction, that front page publicity and evidence introduced at trial may cause some to question the overall soundness and integrity of our bench. In reality, our community should instead be reassured on several fronts:

- This conviction demonstrates, beyond doubt, that **no one** – including a judge – is above the law.
- The bar continues to have complete confidence in both the overall integrity and quality of the judges in Northeast Ohio. While it's tempting to extrapolate from the conviction of a former judge, the reality is this was about the unlawful acts of a single person; it is neither a reflection of a systemic problem in the local judiciary nor a representation of how other judges conduct themselves on the bench.
- It's a fact that our local bench is largely populated by judges who, day in and day out, demonstrate exactly the type of dedication, judgment, care, intellect, integrity and commitment citizens can -- and should -- expect. This bar association proudly stands behind those judges and thanks them for their outstanding service on behalf of all of us.
- Finally, we respect the jury's verdict and Judge Lioi's thoughtful and careful handling of this sensitive trial. We hasten to point out that, like any other citizen, Judge Terry has the right to appeal. Perhaps ironically, it is the trial itself, followed by any such appeal, that represents the true backbone of our system of justice. We call this due process, and it represents a triumph of our rule of law. We should all celebrate that fact.

About the CMBA

The nonprofit Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association operates as a center for legal professionalism in the region, promoting the highest ethical and professional standards. Serving the largest legal community in the state, the CMBA has more than 5,500 members. Learn more at www.clemetrobar.org.

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