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CMBA Announces New Officers, Bestows Awards and Celebrates Cleveland at Sixth Annual Meeting

CLEVELAND – June 25, 2013 – This Friday, June 28, the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBA) will host an annual meeting luncheon unlike any in its history. Hosted on the floor of Quicken Loans Arena, the luncheon will include the introduction of new CMBA leaders and presentation of the Bar Association's annual awards, and will also serve as a celebration of Cleveland, showcasing the engagement of the legal community with so many local businesses and nonprofits.

The incoming officers will be: President Jonathan Leiken (Jones Day); President-Elect Bruce G. Hearey (Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C.); Vice President Anne Owings Ford (McDonald Hopkins LLC); Vice President of Membership Darrell A. Clay (Walter | Haverfield LLP); and Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion Sonali B. Wilson (Cleveland State University).

In addition, six new CMBA Board Trustees will be introduced and will each serve a three-year term, ending at the 2016 CMBA Annual Meeting. The new trustees are: Ann-Marie Ahern (McCarthy, Lebit, Crystal & Liffman Co., LPA); Jason Hillman (Cavaliers Operating Company, LLC); Scott M. Lewis (Meyers, Roman, Friedberg & Lewis); Majeed G. Makhoul (Cuyahoga County Department of Law); Raymond M. Malone (BakerHostetler LLP); and Carole S. Rendon (United States Attorney's Office).

"I am honored to have the opportunity to lead the organization that represents such a world-class legal community," said Jonathan Leiken, soon-to-be president of the CMBA. "Cleveland is an amazing community filled with businesses that are collectively invested its growth and success. Our legal community plays a critical role in that success and the CMBA, this year more than ever, will be focused on collaborating in ways that further strengthen Cleveland."

To highlight the unity of Greater Cleveland's community, the CMBA will welcome dozens of companies, law firms, nonprofits, and special guests to this year's event. Some of the special guests include: Mayor Frank Jackson, Senator Sherrod Brown, Chef Doug Katz, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame CEO Greg Harris, Cleveland schools CEO Eric Gordon, Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald, Cleveland State University President Ronald Berkman, University Hospitals CEO Thomas F. Zenty III, Riverside Company CEO Stewart Kohl, Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel, Supreme Court of Ohio Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor, U.S. District Court Judge Solomon Oliver, J.M. Smucker Company Chairman Tim Smucker, Cuyahoga County Inspector General Nailah Byrd, Cleveland Orchestra Board President Dennis LaBarre, Global Cleveland CEO Joy Roller, and many other Cleveland leaders.

At this year's event, the CMBA will recognize the following 2013 CMBA award recipients:

The Honorable William K. Thomas Professionalism Award

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.

This year's recipient is **John H. Lawson**, a sole practitioner in Cleveland who is a passionate and professional advocate for his clients and social justice. He has handled some of the most difficult "high publicity" cases in Ohio and made countless contributions to our profession and community, including playing key roles in creation of the Free Clinic, Save Space, and the Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Justice for All Volunteer of the Year Award

The Justice for All (JFA) Committee serves as the oversight committee to coordinate and support the CMBA's pro bono and public service programs. It annually recognizes a volunteer for his/her outstanding service to the profession and community. **Janice Edgehouse Rieth** of Schneider, Smeltz, Ranney & LaFond P.L.L. is this year's JFA Volunteer of the Year Award recipient. Janice played a key role in the development and success of both the Pro Se and Pro Se "Plus" Divorce Clinics, which serve low income couples seeking a divorce.

The Liberty Bell Award

The Liberty Bell Award is presented to a non-lawyer for contributions made to our legal system. This year's recipient is **Lori Urogdy Eiler**, a recently retired East Cleveland Shaw High School teacher and mock trial coach. Among her many accomplishments is her success with the Shaw High School Mock Trial Team, gaining her well-deserved acclaim, including an Ohio Center for Legal Education annual award that bears her name.

President's Award

Each year, the outgoing president bestows this award to one individual for exceptional service to the Bar and our community. Carter E. Strang of Tucker Ellis LLP – the CMBA outgoing president – selected University Hospitals' Vice President & Deputy General Counsel **Kimberly F. Bixenstine** as the award recipient. Kim has been extensively involved in bar and community work for several decades, including leadership of the Nominating Committee and Law Day Program.

She chaired this year's first-of-its-kind Medical Legal Summit, which drew 275 doctors, attorneys, and others. And she has served as a 3Rs instructor and mentor to a John Hay Early College High School student who recently graduated and is now off to college.

"Her leadership as chair of the Medical Legal Summit resulted in an event that better positioned the Cleveland's legal community and the CMBA as an innovative leader by bringing together Cleveland's two most dynamic professions: law and medicine," said Strang. "As a result of her leadership, we are well situated to expand the Medical Legal Summit into a regional or national event in future years." And her involvement in 3Rs – despite her very busy schedule – is testament to her commitment to Cleveland's students."

The Annual Meeting program begins at 11:45 a.m. and will include musical entertainment by the Rule 11 and the Sanctions. For questions or additional details about the Annual Meeting, please contact Rita Klein at (216) 696-3525.

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 nearly 6,000 members. Learn more at www.clemetrobar.org.

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