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Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association Annual Award Winners Announced

CLEVELAND – June 3, 2016 –Today the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBA) announced and honored its 2016 annual award recipients at its [annual meeting and inaugural luncheon](#) held at the Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland.

At the luncheon, the following awards were bestowed:

The Honorable William K. Thomas Professionalism Award

Established in 2001 and named for the late U.S. District 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 "Lawyer's Creed" and "Aspirational Ideals." This year, the selection committee for the award chose to honor **David A. Kutik** of Jones Day.

For decades, Kutik has been a champion for equal access to justice and used his influence and position as a well-respected litigator to advance the cause of pro bono. He has helped to reshape what it means to fulfill our professional commitment to pro bono and he has done so in sustainable, measurable ways.

His leadership has brought local, state and national acclaim to our bar association and elevated what it means to personify professionalism. As chair of the Ohio State Bar Association's Pro Bono Task Force, he authored a rule adopted in 2014 that allowed attorneys in the state to receive one credit hour of continuing legal education for every six hours of pro bono legal services performed, making Ohio one of only 11 states to offer this.

A past recipient of the ABA's highest recognition for pro bono leadership, he also serves as Jones Day's Cleveland Office Pro Bono and Public Service Coordinator. He has served as president and also a trustee of The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland as well as chair of its Pro Bono Committee. He is a past president of the then-Cleveland Bar Association when, through his "Our Commitment to Our Community" initiative, he enlisted law firms and lawyers throughout Cleveland to volunteer for public service and pro bono projects. He has been the vice president of the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation and will assume the role of president this month.

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 Cleveland community in pro bono and public service. This year, Jennifer Himmelein of Cavitch, Familo & Durkin Co., LPA was named the 2016 JFA Volunteer of the Year in recognition of her exemplary leadership and service to the Pro Se and Pro Se "Plus" Divorce Clinics, a program of the CMBA in partnership with The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

Himmelein has been a driving force behind the recent overhaul of the clinics that help nearly 200 financially needy individuals, who seek a simple divorce and have nowhere else to turn, to take the first steps necessary to move on with their lives.

She has been instrumental in continually improving the clinics and re-evaluating how to best serve the community. She also works closely with the Domestic Relations Court to ensure the program addresses the court's needs as well as those being served. She works tirelessly to recruit additional volunteers to keep the program strong.

President's Award

Each year, the outgoing president bestows this award to one or more individuals for exceptional service to the Bar and our community. Anne Owings Ford, the CMBA's outgoing president, selected Judge Jean Murrell Capers as this year's recipient.

At 103 years of age, Judge Capers has spent nearly 70 years as a lawyer, city council person and judge, serving the greater Cleveland community every step of the way. A vibrantly intelligent woman of color, Judge Capers has always followed the precepts of her parents laid down almost a century ago: get an education; do your best; serve your community.

Judge Capers began her professional life as a teacher, having attended Western Reserve University on athletic and academic scholarships, but worried that she was not doing all she could to help the people in her community. She concluded she would go to law school, and graduated from the then-Cleveland Law School, passing the bar in 1945. Serving first as an assistant police prosecutor and then as a city council person, she remained at the heart of Cleveland government service for over a decade. An unsuccessful bid for the office of Mayor of Cleveland brought Judge Capers to the attention of then-Governor James Rhodes, who appointed her to a municipal court seat, which she retained through election by the people until her retirement in 1986.

Judge Capers has continued being active in the community and in the private practice of law ever since, focusing primarily on issues of elder law. She has said, "The elderly are still believing 98 percent of what they're told, and 96 percent of what they are told is not true."

For her unceasing advocacy for the unheard in our community, and her tireless devotion to the cause of justice and the law, the Honorable Jean Murrell Capers is the 2016 President's Award recipient.

The CMBA thanks the sponsors supporting this year's annual meeting. **Platinum:** All Covered, Inc.; Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP; **Gold:** Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP; Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association; Maloney & Novotny LLC; Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur LLP; Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell LLP; Toshiba Business Solutions; Walter | Haverfield LLP; **Silver:** Avalon Document Services; Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP; Case Western Reserve University Law School; Cavitch, Familo & Durkin Co., LPA; Cliffs Natural Resources, Inc.; Frantz Ward LLP; Gallagher Sharp LLP; Giffen & Kaminski LLC; Greater Cleveland Partnership; Hennes Communications; Jones Day; McDonald Hopkins LLC; Nurenberg, Paris, Heller & McCarthy Co., LPA; Oswald Companies; Parker Hannifin Corporation; PNC Wealth Management; Reminger Co., LPA; Singerman, Mills, Desberg & Kauntz Co., LPA; Spangenberg, Shibley & Liber LLP; Stephanoff Rennillo LLC; Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP; Thompson Hine LLP; Tucker Ellis LLP; Ulmer & Berne LLP; Vorys, Sater, Seymour & Pease LLP; **Table Sponsors:** BakerHostetler LLP; Berns, Ockner & Greenberger LLC; Buckley King LPA; Cleveland Clinic; Cleveland-Marshall College of Law; Diebold, Inc.; The Ford Family; Forest City Realty Trust, Inc.; Grant Thornton LLP; Jackson Lewis P.C.; Legal Aid Society of Cleveland; The Manoloff Family; Meyers, Roman, Friedberg & Lewis LPA; Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C.; Reminger Co., LPA; Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP; Thrasher, Dinsmore & Dolan LPA. **In-Kind Printing Sponsors:** Avalon Document Services; Hudson Printing. **Sponsors current as of press release distribution*

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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