

A Joyous View of the Holidays: The Annual DBA Holiday Luncheon

The Annual Dayton Bar Association Holiday Luncheon was held at the Wintergarden in Dayton, Ohio on Friday, December 4, 2009. What a nice way to start the "most wonderful time of the year"!



The event was well attended and featured a celebration of lawyers giving freely of their time and expertise. As usual, festivities started with a meet and greet around the punch bowls. The crowd became dense as friends and colleagues met and exchanged pleasantries. (Among those gathered were DBA 25-Year Honorees Vanessa Guenther, Joyce Dietering and Patricia Zimmer). Of special note to this author was the annual presentation of the old Rike's Department Store holiday

window displays, preserved and refurbished and reminding all of the days of holiday shopping downtown and the joyous hustle and bustle of the season.

As the participants sat and began eating, DBA President Thomas Whelley II, Esq. welcomed all and provided an introduction to the theme of the luncheon - the volunteerism and good works of so many Dayton area lawyers. The Dayton Bar Foundation was discussed and all were requested to give as they can. Then 34 25-year DBA members were honored, with those in attendance being called up for special recognition and gifts. Following that, James Kelleher paid special tribute to the Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP) and its staff. Celebrating more than 20 years of honorable service, the VLP has served more than 22,000 clients through the service of 900-1,000 lawyers volunteering time and knowledge to help those in the seven-county Greater Dayton region who were in need. Jim gave special notice and praise to Jeff Senney for his work with the VLP, especially highlighting one family who allegedly owed the IRS more than \$150,000, Sebaly Shillito + Dyer for their pro bono efforts, and VLP Director Helenka Marculewicz, for her years of tireless and passionate work for and leadership of the VLP. (Pictured below: The standing ovation Helenka received in recognition and gratitude of her dedication and service.)

The Honorable Judge Walter Rice then, after comically chiding the DBA for not honoring DBA members who have been in practice for between 46 and 49 years (which included himself and two others in attendance), provided an introduction to and then showed a new video produced by the DBA honoring the Lawyers Giving Back to Their Community program. The Giving Back program includes "Wills for Heroes," the Law & Leadership Institute at the University of Dayton, and of course the VLP. It was touching to see a man of Judge Rice's service and experience speak eloquently of the pride he felt for the legal profession to which he has dedicated his career, due in large part to so many Greater Miami Valley attorneys who have given tirelessly for little or no compensation to the legal needs of non-profit organizations and the disadvantaged.

The luncheon ended on a note of charity and giving which was appropriate for the season. The Editorial Board of the DBA would like to wish all DBA members and their families a festive holiday season and a prolific 2010! ●

*By Mark J. Bamberger, Principal
Bar Briefs Editorial Board*



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