

REMARKS OF OUTGOING PRESIDENT

Elizabeth J. Watters

“Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need.”

I began last year as CBA President with this quote from Kahill Gilbran, along with a request that you join me in making the most of the year by giving more than you thought you could through your time, talents and ideas; Not letting your pride stand in the way of taking what you needed from the CBA to ensure your professional success; and demanding that the CBA continue to be a national leader in providing attorneys what they need, when they need it most.

My sincere thanks to all of you who did exactly that. 1200 of you purchased an Easy Pass, and then followed that with a demand for high-level, in-depth CLEs by selling out our Master Series. The CLE task force chaired by Greg Travaglio went above and beyond with their offerings.

Members asked for and received new committees, including the LGBT and Not for Profit committees, a solo and small firm practice institute, a domestic practice institute; the new, annual, David H. Bodiker Criminal Law Seminar, a wellness fair and technology boot camp. The Just Take One pro bono initiative was created; the CBA joined with the Moritz College of Law for the Race Judicata 5K run; and we entered into a partnership with the Legal Aid Society of Columbus and the Ohio Attorney General’s office to launch a new pro bono initiative – the Consumer Assistance Project, focused on consumer debt issues.

At the same time, the CBA continued to do what we do best – the Columbus Bar Leadership Academy, the Minority Clerkship program and Diversity Initiative, updates to our Code of Regulations through lively and important discussions, our Lawyer Referral Service, and the Columbus Lawyer Finder on-line marketing service, which is now so popular that new limits on the numbers of attorneys advertising in each practice area have been established.

I know it seems like a lot, and it was. But much of it was innovative and groundbreaking. Even now, at the end of my term, there are two initiatives that I hope will be implemented this fall – the residency program to assist newly admitted attorneys who are not employed, and a partnership with the Greater Columbus Arts Council to provide pro bono legal services to struggling artists.

So, all in all, I hope that the CBA was able to provide to you – its members – with what you needed most this year. And, I hope that I was able to do my part to continue the CBA’s national reputation of being the neighborhood bar that really listens to and caters to its members. Thank you for this experience.

I want to take the time to thank some very special people who made my year as President so rewarding:

1. First, Judge McIntosh, who has been an outstanding President-elect and who, I am sure, will be a terrific President. Steve -- I have truly enjoyed working with you this past year and I wish you all the best.

2. Second, to the Past Presidents of the CBA. At the top of that list are the six fantastic ladies that have come before me – Sandy, Heather, Kim, Sally, Belinda & Kathleen – you are my role models and, thankfully, my friends; To the many Presidents I encountered at ABA and Ohio State Bar meetings, and, of course my partners, Steve Fitch and Frank Ray, thank you for your kind words and your willingness to roll up your sleeves and make a difference. I look forward to joining your ranks;

3. Third, I want to thank the CBA Board for their wonderful service this year. This was a thoughtful, diverse group who brought important perspectives to the Boardroom, and who always worked in a friendly and professional manner. It was my great pleasure to work so closely with you.

4. I am also grateful to my family – my parents, Richard and Jeanine – who made it possible for me to serve this year. They never hesitated when I needed a babysitter, and they went above and beyond by joining my daughter and I at the ABA's mid-year meeting in Orlando, Florida. While my 8 year old, Meghan, got the Disney trip she was promised at last year's annual meeting, my parents got much more than they bargained for. But, they never complained. Not even when my dad got sick on the rides or when my mom ended up in a wheelchair at the Magic Kingdom. You have been the absolute best, and I love you. Meghan isn't here today because it is her last day of school, and as you can appreciate, she decided that she would rather go to her class' pool party. But, I am sure if she were here she would tell me to wrap it up.

5. And so, taking her cue, I want to end by thanking Alex Lagusch and the CBA staff for all of their incredible work – day in and day out. You may not be aware of the caliber of people we have working with us at the CBA, but they are the gold standard for bar associations. The absolute best. They did more this year with less, and shouldered on without complaint. It was their efforts that allowed the Columbus Bar to expand its member benefits this year, despite the economy. I am indebted to you all.

Sandy Anderson once told me that when I became CBA President, Alex Lagusch would become my best friend. Today, I can look back and see exactly what she meant. I am so grateful to you, Alex, for your nurturing support, your big picture thinking, and your infectious energy.

What an advocate you are for the members of the CBA. There is a reason why the Columbus Bar has been – under your direction – the premier metro bar in the country for the last 33 years. I suspect that you have the same love for the CBA that you did when you first became the Executive Director. Whether it is taking

the risk to invest in an idea like Columbus Lawyer Finder or looking at old events in new ways, you always pushed us creatively, while ensuring that everyone was always having fun. And it is this daring to think outside the box that makes you irreplaceable. You will be dearly missed, but have earned the retirement that I hope you and Jane enjoy.

Thank you.