FROM THE PRESIDENT

Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The October President’s message focused on our Bar Association’s pro bono initiatives. As I reflected on all that our Association and its members have done and continue to do as related to pro bono, I was reminded of a statistic that I heard long ago when I first began to volunteer and get involved in community service: lawyers as a profession donate more time, talents, and treasures than any other profession, often more than other professions combined. While I don’t recall exactly what source provided this statistic, the import of it has always remained with me and is just one more example of why I am so proud to be a member of our profession.

Anecdotally, during passing conversations just in the past month or so with members, I’ve heard about some of my colleagues’ community involvement. Karen Adinolfi of Roetzel & Andress and a member of our Akron Bar board, serves as president of the Akron Blind Center; Amanda Bridenstine, a member of our New Lawyers section remains actively involved in “The Gift of Christmas,” an annual outreach to Stark County Homeless Shelters; Mary Jo Lockshin of Key Bank and a member of several Bar committees including our Becker Fund, serves on the boards of the Tuesday Musical Association and the National Alliance for Mental Illness; and Larry Vuillemin continues his amazing service through Heart to Heart Communications. I know these few examples barely scratch the surface. My conversations and the statistic I referenced above about lawyers’ service that has remained with me for all these years sparked the idea for the topic for this month’s message. For, in my opinion, no other profession responds so well and in so many ways to the persistent and urgent question posed by Dr. King.

So, the goal of this message is two-fold. First, let’s take a minute to reflect on and appreciate all that lawyers do for the many communities in which they live, work, and serve. And, secondly, let’s also consider the many opportunities that remain for our continued community service.

With respect to the first goal, let’s compile our own information on all that our members do in service to our community. Would you please respond to a brief survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/DMBW338 and share some information on your own community service? It’s quick and easy...just two questions: your name and what you do on behalf of our communities. It can be related to our profession, but more broadly and just as importantly, any other community involvement. Our Bar staff will then compile this information, and we can generate our own statistics that I believe will reveal our local legal community to be just as giving as those in the study I recall from so many years ago. I will share the results of this survey with you in an upcoming President’s message.

Secondly, be aware of and continue to consider ways you can continue to serve - we all know that there are many. Of course, we have our own pro bono work in our Bar Association.
For example, on January 7, 2017, all members are invited to attend training on how to help citizens restore their driver’s licenses. Regardless of your practice area, you can help meet this pressing need by providing valuable service to members of our community.

In addition to pro bono activities, there are other ways we can offer community service.

Our Gala is February 4, 2017. Casey Cramer, Elliot Kolkovich, and other Gala committee members are working to provide another fabulous and meaningful event for our members. Remember, the proceeds of this event provide scholarships for very deserving law students. Consider attending, obtaining or contributing an item for the auction, or both!

Our United Way campaign is quickly coming to a close, and our President-Elect, Dave Lewis, has provided inspirational leadership of our involvement in this year’s campaign. If you haven’t already donated, there is still time to consider your own involvement with and support of United Way.

Finally, consider new service opportunities beyond our Association as well, for we all know that the needs are many and varied. You might consider the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank, Akron Children’s Hospital, or any number of agencies that turn up in a simple Google search for “volunteer opportunities Akron.” Two other resources are www.volunteermatch.org and www.greatnonprofits.org/city/akron/OH.

Thanks for all that you have done, continue to do, and will do in many ways that benefit so many. My warmest wishes to you and those you hold dear for a joyous and blessed holiday season.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

Margaret Andreeff Matejkovic
Akron Bar Association President