



## THE “CALL” TO SERVE

Patrick J. Krebs

If you ask volunteers what inspires them to donate their time, talent, and treasure to a particular organization or cause, you might hear them say that they feel a “calling” from a higher power to serve and give back to those in need. My road to becoming the President of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation was no different. I too was called to serve by a higher power. Only in my case the call was an actual phone call, and the higher power was longtime partner-in-charge of Taft’s Cleveland office, Steve O’Bryan. If my memory serves me correctly, that call went something like this: “Krebsie, its OB. I just volunteered you to serve as a Trustee for the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation. It’s a great organization that does great work for people in our community. Thanks for agreeing to do this.” I responded the only way you can when you have no choice in the matter: “Thanks for thinking of me Steve.”

When I first started out as a Trustee six years ago, I didn’t know much about the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation or its mission. My only exposure to the Foundation up until that point was attending the Foundation’s signature fundraising event, Rock the Foundation. Although it is an outstanding party, I had no clue what the money raised at that event and at the Foundation’s annual Halloween Run was actually being used for. My first few years as a Trustee opened my eyes to the critical role that the Foundation plays in funding all of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association’s award-winning programs like 3Rs – Rights, Responsibilities, Realities; the Cleveland Homeless Legal Assistance Program; Law Day; the Louis Stokes Scholars Program; the Cleveland Mock Trial Competition, and so many others. Simply stated, without the funds raised by the Foundation at Rock the Foundation and the Halloween Run, these impactful and life-changing programs would cease to exist.

Although you could say the initial decision for me to become a Trustee for the Foundation was essentially made for me, the decision for me to continue on and serve a second term as a Trustee was all mine. In my second term I took on various leadership positions within the Foundation, including as Vice President of Special Events. In that position I oversaw the Foundation’s fundraising events. I took on that responsibility, and now the responsibility of President of the Foundation, because I believe in the Foundation’s “Lawyers Giving Back” public outreach and pro bono legal service programs. Those programs have a real and lasting impact on people in the Cleveland community and beyond.

As I reflect on my last six years with the Foundation and prepare for the next year as President of the Foundation, I am struck by a deep sense of pride and gratitude. I am proud to be an attorney in this legal community. Time and

time again this legal community has answered the call to help the Foundation fulfill its mission and achieve its goal of lifting up those in need in our area. I am grateful to the wonderful staff at the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and all of our volunteer lawyers. Your hard work every day makes our mission a reality. Lastly, I am grateful to my friend and mentor Steve O’Bryan for that initial “call” to serve. We all need a push in the right direction from time to time. Thanks for thinking of me Steve!

*Patrick Krebs is a partner in the Cleveland office of Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP and is a member of the Litigation, Public Law, and Sports Law practice groups. He is the 2019-2020 President of the CMBF, a Fellow of the Foundation, and a CMBA member. He can be reached at (216) 706-3867 or [pkrebs@taftlaw.com](mailto:pkrebs@taftlaw.com).*



**Kevin Barnes, Patrick Krebs, and Stephen O’Bryan accepting the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation’s “Founding Fellow Award” on behalf of Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP**