

NORTHEAST OHIO



NOTABLE WOMEN

in Law



CAROLYN M. CAPPEL
Managing Partner
Weston Hurd



MICHELE L. CONNELL
Managing Partner,
Cleveland office
Squire Patton Boggs



KAREN GIFFEN
Co-Founder and Partner
Giffen & Kaminski LLC



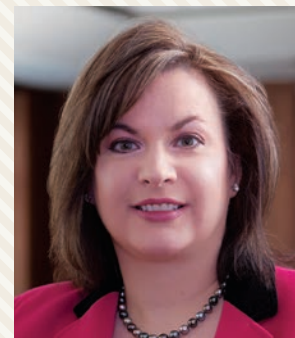
JILL FRIEDMAN HELFMAN
Partner-in-Charge,
Cleveland office
Taft



KERIN LYN KAMINSKI
Co-Founder and Partner
Giffen & Kaminski LLC



BONNIE L. KRISTAN
Office Managing
Shareholder
Littler



HEATHER LENNOX
Partner-in-Charge,
Cleveland office
Jones Day



DEBORAH Z. READ
Managing Partner
Thompson Hine



PATRICIA A. SHLONSKY
Partner-in-Charge,
Cleveland office
Ulmer



ROBYN MINTER SMYERS
Partner-in-Charge,
Cleveland office
Thompson Hine

RISING TO THE TOP

Key female legal executives reflect on challenges, opportunities within the profession

By KATHY AMES CARR

Some of the most influential leaders at Northeast Ohio's law firms — and in the legal community in general — are women. Among the *Crain's Cleveland Business* 2017 list of the largest law firms in Northeast Ohio, nine of those firms identify a female as its top executive (current executives shown at left and right). While gender should not necessarily have to be a distinguishing characteristic of a strong leader in legal circles and beyond, the reality is the distinction still is necessary to underscore the importance of diversity and inclusion at the highest levels of an organization, law firm leaders say.

"One of our core beliefs is that an inclusive environment enhances the quality of services to our clients and our relationships with our colleagues and the community," said Karen L. Giffen, partner and co-founder of Giffen & Kaminski, a Cleveland-based women-owned law firm. "We believe the true strength of our firm lies in the unique backgrounds, experiences and talents of our attorneys and staff."

For over a decade, women have represented about one-half of law school graduates, and while law firms have recruited a proportionate number of women for entry-level associate positions among graduate hires, women are not reflected in the numbers of equity partners in those same law firms, according to the National Association of Women Lawyers. A 2017 survey of promotion and retention in law firms showed a slight increase in the percentage of women equity partners, which hovered at 15% in both 2007 and 2012, and nudged up

"Women are really committed to seeing each other be successful."

LISA KATHUMBI, President,
Ohio Women's Bar Association

to 19% in 2017.

Locally, many law firms throughout Northeast Ohio have established diversity and inclusion initiatives to help promote culture and gender representation. BakerHostetler's goal, for example, has been "to bring into the legal profession as many people from diverse backgrounds as possible and make sure they have every opportunity to succeed. The more perspectives brought to a situation, the greater the outcome," the firm notes on its web site.

The Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association is set to roll out a plan this month that aims to advance the state of diversity and inclusion in the

FOR MORE FACES OF NOTABLE WOMEN IN NORTHEAST OHIO'S LEGAL COMMUNITY, SEE PAGES S2-S13.

Profiles included in Northeast Ohio's Notable Women in Law represent women nominated by companies and organizations within Northeast Ohio. To be considered, completion of an extensive survey, including a letter of endorsement, was required; additionally, firms were limited in the number of submissions permitted. Additional women were submitted for inclusion by an internal selection committee for purposes of a diverse and a more comprehensive list.



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Cleveland legal community through a more collaborative industry effort, said executive director Rebecca McMahon.

"This is a top priority for the organization," said McMahon, noting a planned women's summit for March 8, 2019, on International Women's Day, is part of that effort. "Our vision is to create a high-profile summit that provides resources for both men and women that can be used to raise the profile and presence of women in leadership positions in Cleveland," she said.

Lisa Kathumbi, president of the Ohio Women's Bar Association, says mentoring programs and sponsorship are key. The Ohio Women's Bar Association is composed of 900 members throughout Ohio who offer a statewide network of support. "Women are really committed to seeing each other be successful," Kathumbi said.

Bonnie Kristan, office managing shareholder for Littler's Cleveland office, agrees, speaking from personal experience of supporting local law school students as they develop their career pathways.

As Cleveland partner-in-charge at Jones Day, Northeast Ohio's largest law firm, Heather Lennox considers the value of her role as an experience she shares with hundreds of "exceedingly talented and wonderful female partners."

Her advice for younger women entering the profession?

"Don't be afraid to speak up. Your informed views are just as valuable," Lennox said. "Law careers can take on many forms, whether at a law firm, nonprofit or within government. You'll spend a lot of time and energy on your career, so you want to make sure you're in the right place."



LISA KATHUMBI, President,
Ohio Women's Bar Association



MCMAHON



NOTABLE WOMEN *in Law*

JENNIFER ADAMS

Partner, Health Care Practice Group Chair
Ulmer

Ulmer



One of Jennifer Adams' biggest professional highlights over the past five years involved assisting a longtime client — one of the largest physician-owned emergency medicine practices in the U.S. — with the sale of a significant stake of their equity to a large private equity fund while still retaining the current CEO in that role. Finding creative legal solutions is one of Adams' professional strengths, according to the nomination letter of Patricia A. Shlonsky, partner-in-charge of the Cleveland office. "She puts the focus squarely on her clients," Shlonsky wrote, "relying on years of experience and an innate ability to understand the strategic goals of the individuals and businesses she serves." In addition to managing Ulmer's health care practice, Adams is co-chair of its women's professional development committee, board member of Family Connection of Northeast Ohio and longtime volunteer to the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association's 3Rs (Rights, Responsibilities, Realities) program.

ANN-MARIE AHERN

Principal
McCarthy, Lebit, Crystal & Liffman

McCarthy, Lebit,
Crystal & Liffman



Ann-Marie Ahern's career is dedicated to representing people in employment disputes, with a primary focus on women subjected to unlawful discriminatory conduct or sexual harassment in the workplace. "Ann-Marie represents employees through every stage of the employment relationship, from employment and non-compete agreements to severance agreements, and if necessary, litigation," said Robert T. Glickman, managing principal, according to the nomination. Ahern created the firm's Women's Professional Committee to advocate for and advance women's issues, and to assist other female lawyers with building their practices. In 2015, she was the first female to be named a strategic partner and board member in the firm's nearly 60-year history. Ahern also is an executive coach to female leaders who struggle in male-dominated cultures. She is at the forefront of the #MeToo movement, lecturing on the topic at the local and state levels.

JENNIFER DOWDELL ARMSTRONG

Member, Litigation, Women's Council Co-Chair
McDonald Hopkins

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A business advisory and advocacy law firm®



As a member of McDonald Hopkins' Litigation Department, Jennifer Dowdell Armstrong has handled a variety of business and commercial disputes, civil and criminal proceedings, and class actions in federal and state trial and appellate courts. "Jennifer's clients appreciate her broad range of litigation experience — from internal investigations and white collar criminal defense to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and complex commercial litigation," said James. J. Giszczak, chair of the Litigation Department, according to her nomination. As co-chair of the firm's Women's Council, Armstrong is cultivating female leadership within the firm and the community. She has created new initiatives and networking programs and promotes the experience and accomplishments of the firm's female attorneys. Her community involvement includes serving as co-chair for the Ohio Chapter of the Women's White Collar Criminal Defense Association; a board member of the Federal Bar Association, Northern District of Ohio Chapter; Great Lakes Theater Company, and a member of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland's Partners in Justice.

KATHRYN BELFANCE

Principal
Roderick Linton Belfance



Kathryn Belfance is no stranger to firsts. At the University of Akron School of Law, she was among the first female associate editors on the *Law Review*. After graduation in 1977, she was one of the first women in Northeast Ohio to specialize in complex bankruptcy laws. In 1978, Belfance became the first female bankruptcy trustee to administer cases in the Northern District of Ohio. Thirty years later, she joined Akron-based Roderick Linton — which then became Roderick Linton Belfance — and was the first woman to serve on the firm's executive committee and its first female managing partner. Today, a nationally recognized authority on bankruptcy and domestic relations law, Belfance makes a point to inspire a new generation. "From her mentoring young lawyers and being an advocate for women attorneys, Kay gives back to her profession and community with wisdom, understanding and compassion," Timothy J. Truby, a partner at Roderick Linton Belfance, wrote in the nomination.

JESSICA BERG

Co-Dean
Case Western Reserve University
School of Law



Jessica Berg is the first female dean of Case Western Reserve University School of Law in its 125-year history. Under Berg's tenure, the school improved its national rankings, graduate employment numbers, bar pass percentage and alumni relations. She is viewed as a national leader in legal education for her curricular innovations, including a First Year client experience, a three-semester skills curriculum in both litigation and transactions, and a Third Year capstone requirement. Her efforts brought positive national attention to the law school as a U.S. leader in experiential education. She also implemented financial and administrative restructuring measures and launched several successful revenue-producing programs. "Jessica Berg is an innovator, visionary and extraordinarily gifted problem solver," says Michael P. Scharf, co-dean of the CWRU School of Law, according to the nomination. Berg holds a joint appointment in the School of Medicine and Law. She has more than 50 scholarly publications to her name.

PATRICIA ANN BLACKMON

Judge
Eighth District Court of Appeals



Patricia Ann Blackmon has served as an appellate judge for 27 years and is a three-term incumbent at the Eighth District Court of Appeals, which is the largest and busiest appellate court in Ohio. She is the first of four generations in her family to attend college. She graduated magna cum laude from Tougaloo College in Mississippi, with a bachelor's degree in African-American studies, political science and history. "From her extremely humble roots in Jackson, Mississippi, she learned at her mother's knee the value of education, hard work and perseverance," said Judge Eileen A. Gallagher. "She has been our leader, our historian, our mentor and our friend." Blackmon was to receive on May 13 an honorary doctorate from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and will receive the Trailblazer Award from Cuyahoga Democratic Women's Caucus this Saturday, May 19. She also teaches a course on understanding the court system to retirees at Baldwin Wallace University. "It is one of my proudest achievements," said Blackmon of the course.

HEIDI A. BOEHLEFELD*Managing Partner*
Renner Otto

Heidi A. Boehlefeld began her career as a chemist for BP America and today puts those analytic skills to work at Renner Otto. Boehlefeld was named Renner Otto's managing partner in 2016. Under her leadership, the intellectual property firm has set out to reinvent itself, examining every aspect of its business to identify opportunities for improvement. The resulting changes include a new partnership and management structure that helps the firm better compete in the challenging business law environment and an improved brand identity that involves an enhanced online presence and more modern physical facilities. "Her energy and dedication to our firm motivate us all to aim higher," according to the nomination letter of Renner Otto Partner Luis A. Carrion. In addition to directing the 50-employee firm, Boehlefeld commits her time and expertise to Case Western Reserve University's Patent Pro Bono Clinic, which provides free legal services to inventors in Northeast Ohio. She also is a member of the Cleveland Intellectual Property Law Association.

YELENA BOXER*Partner, Litigation Practice Group*
Vice Chair
Benesch

Yelena Boxer is a partner in Benesch's Litigation Practice Group, the firm's largest practice group. She focuses on complex commercial litigation. Boxer is frequently lead counsel on critical matters for some of the firm's biggest clients and was recognized by *Benchmark Litigation* as a State Litigation Star for 2017. As co-chair of the firm's Women's Initiative Committee, Boxer plays an active role in hiring, promoting and facilitating relationships among female professionals. She plans to partner with other women's initiatives in the community to provide opportunities for women to grow professionally, personally and civically. "Yelena has a true passion for the development and advancement of our young talent at Benesch," said Benesch Vice Chair Joe Castrodale, according to the nomination. "She makes herself available to serve as a mentor to our associates, whether formally or informally. This is both valued by her peers and fosters an engaged and better-connected team."

ERICA L. CALDERAS*Partner*
Hahn Loeser

Erica L. Calderas focuses her practice on complex commercial litigation and class action defense. Calderas is a member of the firm's board of directors, serves on the diversity committee and is active in the firm's Women's Leadership Initiative. According to the nomination, she is a champion and mentor for other attorneys. "She has served as an extraordinary role model and advocates for gender parity within our industry, while empowering and supporting women at Hahn Loeser," said Partner-in-Charge Stanley R. Gorom III in the nomination. "She values input, has the mindset of an entrepreneur and leads with confidence, commitment and integrity." She is on the board for the Andrews Osborne Academy, a member of the Arthritis Foundation, and active with the Cornell Club of Northeastern Ohio and Summer on the Cuyahoga, which recruits college students from prestigious universities for summer internships in Cleveland with the goal of attracting them to settle in Northeast Ohio. She is also involved in the American Bar Association's Judicial Intern Opportunity Program.

CAROLYN M. CAPPEL*Managing Partner*
Weston Hurd

Jack Kluznik, partner at Weston Hurd, refers to Carolyn Cappel as "Managing Mom of the Weston Hurd family law firm." "Like many moms, Carolyn is the glue that holds the firm together and keeps it functioning effectively on a day-to-day basis," he wrote in the nomination form. Cappel began her legal career with Weston Hurd in 1975 as a docket clerk while attending law school. She was elected a partner in 1984 and assumed the managing partner role in 2007. As Weston Hurd's longest serving managing partner, Cappel directs more than 45 attorneys and 30 support staff in its Cleveland and Columbus offices. Her legal practice focuses on products liability, employment intentional tort law, construction litigation and personal injury. She is especially attentive to guiding and empowering young attorneys, crediting her own success to mentors at the firm during her early years.

**INAJO DAVIS CHAPPELL***Partner, Nonprofit Chair*
Ulmer

While Inajo Davis Chappell certainly is not alone in her passion for community involvement, she is unique when it comes to the degree to

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO
OUR COLLEAGUE****NANCY VALENTINE**

who is among *Crain's*
Cleveland Business' Notable
Women in Law

PRINCIPAL
valentinen@millercanfield.com



**MILLER
CANFIELD**
millercanfield.com

OHIO MICHIGAN ILLINOIS FLORIDA NEW YORK CANADA MEXICO POLAND CHINA



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which she has “woven her passion for volunteerism and community service into a sophisticated legal practice dedicated to serving more than 100 exempt organizations,” according to the nomination letter of Ulmer Managing Partner Scott P. Kadish. A partner at Ulmer, Chappell chairs the firm’s nonprofit practice area, which represents a wide range of community-centered initiatives, from social service agencies and art and health organizations to foundations, community development corporations and educational and governmental institutions. She also handles a variety of legal matters for for-profit businesses. Over the years, she also has served in leadership capacities on the boards of a long list of nonprofits, including her current roles as vice chair of the Cleveland Foundation board of directors and chair of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections.

CASSANDRA COLLIER-WILLIAMS

Judge
Cuyahoga County
Common Pleas Court



Cassandra Collier-Williams is one of four judges tasked with overseeing the commercial docket at the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court. The docket was reinstated in January, after a two-year hiatus, which means commercial litigation cases can be reviewed and resolved more efficiently. “Some of these cases can be quite complicated,” Collier-Williams said. “I have 15 cases on my docket, and more are coming in every day.” Collier-Williams’ early career involved working as a mediator for the Cleveland Prosecutor’s Office and owning her own firm. She also was a judge on the Mental Health Developmental Disabilities Court docket of Common Pleas Court. “I worked with Judge Collier-Williams in the mental health court, and she is passionate, caring and concerned about the people in front of her,” said Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Judge Deena Calabrese. “She is well-traveled, so she brings a global perspective to a situation. She also is an amazing mother.” Collier-Williams has numerous professional involvements, including serving as a member of the local and state bar associations, and the Black Women’s Political Action Committee.

MICHELE CONNELL

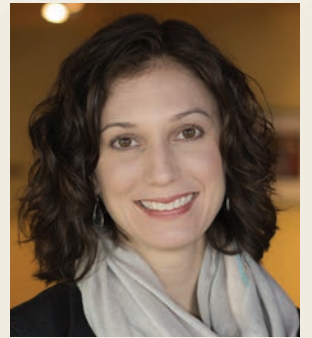
Managing Partner, Corporate Practice Partner
Squire Patton Boggs



When David Goodman announced he would step down as managing partner of Squire Patton Boggs’ Cleveland office in 2015, Chairman and Global CEO Mark Ruehlmann had to make an important decision about who would oversee one of its most important markets. Michele Connell “was an easy choice,” according to Ruehlmann’s nomination letter, adding that her “energy, commercial aptitude, team-first approach, focus on client service, civic engagement and global perspective made her a unique fit for the role.” Connell focuses her practice on international mergers and acquisitions, compliance and securities law matters and corporate governance practices. She has served as both a formal and informal mentor for dozens of associates and has been integral in inclusion and diversity initiatives. She has completed transactions in more than 20 countries and routinely leads teams of professionals across the globe. Even before law school, Connell excelled at global relations, earning a Meritorious Honor Award for her work with the U.S. State Department while serving as a foreign service officer at American embassies in Poland and Honduras.

CHRISTAL L. CONTINI

Member, Mergers and Acquisitions Practice Group Co-Chair
McDonald Hopkins



Christal L. Contini is a seasoned legal expert who has an active leadership role in many areas of McDonald Hopkins. As co-chair of the firm’s Mergers and Acquisitions Practice Group, Contini provides corporate counseling to business leaders and investors on corporate governance, commercial contracts, compliance and operations. Her practice also represents private equity funds, search funds, and buyers and sellers in various types of transactions. Contini participates in various firm leadership development initiatives, including a Women in Leadership program. As a mentor, she has an open-door policy with young attorneys, acting as a resource for day-to-day activities as well as providing trusted advice. “Christal has not only excelled in the legal profession, which led to her being named the co-chair of the firm’s Mergers and Acquisitions Practice Group, but she has taken time to ensure that young attorneys are given the proper guidance to succeed,” said James E. Stief, chair of the Business Law Department, according to the nomination. She is a member of the Dobama Theatre’s board of directors.

CONGRATULATIONS ERICA L. CALDERAS!

COMMITMENT. INTEGRITY. LEADERSHIP.

We are proud to honor Erica L. Calderas as an innovator within our firm, a leader in law, and an influencer in our community. She is a champion and mentor for other women and inspires those around her to be bold and rise to the challenge. Erica exemplifies what it means to be part of Cleveland’s Notable Women of Law.

ERICA L. CALDERAS
Partner and Member, Board of Directors,
Complex and Commercial Litigation Practice

HAHN LOESER
attorneys at law

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COLLEEN M. COTTER

Executive Director
Legal Aid Society of Cleveland



Colleen Cotter oversees an organization that annually serves more than 7,000 individuals who need legal assistance to overcome a significant barrier from shelter, safety, health care or financial stability. “The fact that I have been given the opportunity to do this work— it is such a privilege,” Cotter said. The Legal Aid Society under Cotter’s leadership has formed deep partnerships with local school districts, health care systems, bar associations, nonprofits and the regional judiciary. The Legal Aid Society is working to establish a right to counsel in Cleveland Housing Court, in collaboration with local nonprofits, the government and legal community leaders, to ensure tenants’ rights are enforced. The organization — composed mostly of women attorneys — also is launching a campaign to help grow its partnership and service efforts. “What makes Colleen special is her extraordinary leadership of the organization that is filled with similarly dedicated advocates,” said Karen Giffen, partner and co-founder of Giffen & Kaminski. Cotter is a board of directors member of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and was a recipient of its 2017 President’s Award.

DIANA M. FEITL

Associate
Roetzel



Joining Roetzel’s Cleveland office in 2015, Feitl is a newer member of the firm’s public law practice, but she is hardly new to the field. Before attending law school, Feitl studied the inner workings of government firsthand as legislative assistant for U.S. Rep. Betty

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Sutton in Washington, D.C., and as a staff member of a D.C.-based government relations firm. At Roetzel, Feitl is a "rising star," according to a nomination letter from Chairman Robert E. Blackham. He cites specifically Feitl's success advocating for local governmental agencies at the federal level regarding legislative issues "that were vital to their continued operation" and assisting a local public entity in navigation of "what became incredibly complex and divisive labor and employment issues that could have had catastrophic consequences if not handled competently." Outside the office, Feitl volunteers and lends her legal skills to the Legal Aid Society.



PATRICIA A. GAJDA

Partner, Shareholder,
Co-Chair, Corporate and
Securities Practice Group
Brouse
McDowell



Patricia A. Gajda has held a variety of leadership positions within the firm, including co-chairing the Corporate and Securities Practice Group, in which she advises clients on all types of transactions to further their financial and strategic goals. In 2013, Gajda was elected the first woman to serve on Brouse McDowell's Executive Committee. She instituted the firm's formal mentoring program and has served as a mentor under the State of Ohio Lawyer to Lawyer mentoring program. "As a result of realizing the benefit this has played in her career, Pat has worked hard to mentor firm associates, and, in particular, to help develop female associates with advice and work opportunities and the type of mentoring that she received as a young lawyer," said Partner-In-Charge Christopher J. Carney, according to the nomination. Serving on the board of Susan G. Komen Northeast Ohio, Gajda helped bring the first Race for the Cure to Cleveland 25 years ago. She serves on the board of Bar Examiners for the State of Ohio. She is former president of Ohio Women's Bar Foundation.

M. COLETTE GIBBONS

Of Counsel, Business Restructuring
McDonald Hopkins



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M. Colette Gibbons has an accomplished legal career of more than 40 years, earning recognition for her bankruptcy expertise. Gibbons recently joined McDonald Hopkins, previously serving as an office managing partner at Ice Miller LLP. "Colette's legal acumen and practical approach to problems make her a strong and passionate advocate for her clients. Her leadership, drive and desire to mentor young lawyers demonstrate her commitment to the practice of law," said Robert Stefancin, partner at Ice Miller LLP, according to the nomination. "And, with these gifts, it is her unending

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|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
|  Mary April |  Jennifer Armstrong |  Honor Banvard |  Isabelle Bibet-Kalinyak |  Maria Carr |  Erin Cicarella |  Christal Contini | |
|  Shara Cornell |  Christine Czuprynski |  Christine Dimitriou |  Joelle Dvir |  M. Colette Gibbons |  Beth Gillin |  Alexa Guevara |  Ashley Jericho |
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compassion for people who have nowhere else to turn that makes her one of the most extraordinary women with whom I have ever practiced law.” Gibbons’ accomplishments include being named a Fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy. She serves on the boards of Seeds of Literacy and the Foundation of the American College of Bankruptcy. She previously served as board president of the West Side Catholic Center and as a board member of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Foundation.

FRANCES FLORIANO GOINS

Partner, Financial Services & Securities Litigation Co-Chair, Cybersecurity & Privacy Co-Chair
Ulmer



It’s not often that a music major becomes a lawyer who tackles some of the most technical areas of practice. But, Frances Goins is not your typical music major. Goins, who holds undergraduate and master’s degrees from Cleveland Institute of Music, joined Ulmer in 2003 and became co-chair of its Financial Services and Securities Litigation Group, where she directs the firm’s handling of complex business disputes. In 2008, Goins also became co-chair of the firm’s Cybersecurity & Privacy Group. Among her many industry affiliations, she is a founding member of the Ohio Women’s Bar Association. Goins’ influence reaches beyond Ulmer, according to Partner Michael N. Ungar, who notes in a nomination letter that it is “no surprise that Fran was tapped by the Department of Homeland Security” to speak about cybersecurity for a recent webinar. Goins also combines her legal acumen and love of music to support arts causes like Art Song Festival.

JILL FRIEDMAN HELFMAN

Co-Partner-In-Charge, Domestic Relations Practice Group Chair
Taft

Fairness, diligence and integrity are hallmarks of Jill Friedman Helfman’s practice. A fellow of the prestigious American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Helfman specializes in family and divorce law, particularly in high-net worth cases. She counsels business owners, professional athletes, physicians, lawyers and other prominent professionals through complex and sometimes contentious divorces. “Emotions often run high in this practice area, and clients often struggle with financial and emotional challenges,” Taft Partner Carl A. Murway said in the nomination. “Jill’s conduct is not only consistent with the highest standards of our profession, but her effectiveness as an advocate is outstanding.”

Earlier this year, Helfman was selected as co-partner-in-charge of the Cleveland office after a firm-wide leadership vetting process. In this role, she oversees 54 multi-disciplinary attorneys and 40 staff members. She is actively involved in many philanthropic and charitable endeavors, including serving as chair of the University Hospitals Partnership For Families Leadership Board.



MAURA L. HUGHES

Partner, Litigation Group Co-Chair, Antitrust and Trade Regulation Counseling and Litigation Group Chair
Calfee, Halter & Griswold

Maura L. Hughes balances multiple roles at Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP, as well as nonprofit commitments. Among her leadership roles, Hughes also serves as general counsel and ethics partner. She is on the firm’s Practice Planning & Growth Committee, which is responsible for developing and vetting growth strategies and other innovations and initiatives at the firm. “Maura leads with intelligence, confidence, fairness and a quiet nature,” says Calfee Managing Partner Brent D. Ballard, in the nomination. “Her leadership style engenders the widespread respect of her peers.” Hughes has taught as an adjunct faculty member at Case Western Reserve University School of Law. While her practice focuses on complex business and antitrust issues, she also takes on meaningful leadership roles at nonprofit groups. She serves on the boards of the Art Therapy Studio and The Music Settlement.



LITIGATION

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JAIME U. KOLLIGIAN

Shareholder
Kastner Westman & Wilkins LLC

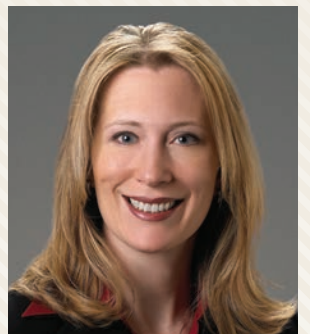
Jaime U. Kolligian has spent her entire legal career at Kastner Westman & Wilkins and is involved in all aspects of the firm’s employment law practice, including employment litigation and traditional labor. Kolligian sets a high standard of excellence in professionalism, preparedness, responsiveness and community service for her colleagues, and values the opportunities to mentor associates and paralegals. She is one of three attorneys at the firm with the Ohio State Bar Association’s Certified Specialist distinction. “From the very outset, Jaime brought to the practice of law a dynamic combination of a keen mind, a passion for employment law, and an emotional intelligence that allows her to connect with and serve clients extremely well,” said K|W|W President James P. Wilkins. Last year, Kolligian and her husband, Scott, were awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award by the Akron Area YMCA. The couple is dedicated to supporting local entrepreneurs and serving nonprofits. Each year, they organize a fundraising cornhole tournament to benefit children with special needs.



AMANDA M. LEFFLER

Partner, Co-Chair, Insurance Recovery Practice Group
Brouse McDowell

Amanda M. Leffler supervises Brouse McDowell’s insurance recovery work, which historically has comprised about 20% to 25% of the firm’s revenue. Leffler served as a member



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of the Akron Bar Association Board of Trustees and developed its Leadership Academy program. She is one of only 24 attorneys to serve on the Board of Governors for the Ohio State Bar Association. At the national level, Leffler co-chairs an Insurance Coverage Litigation subcommittee. She is an active member of the Tort, Trial and Insurance Practice Section of the American Bar. "Intelligent, thoughtful, committed and engaged, Amanda is precisely who you want to serve with on a board, work with as a colleague, or refer a valued client to for specialized guidance," said OSBA Board of Governors President Randall Comer, in the nomination. Leffler is active in her community. Involvements include serving as chair of the board of directors for United Disability Services and as a board member for Akron Children's Museum.



KELLY LIPINSKI
Partner
McGlinchey Stafford

Kelly Lipinski is making her mark in Northeast Ohio and beyond. Lipinski is a member (partner) at McGlinchey Stafford's Cleveland office, where she mentors junior associates and is active in several of the firm's committees, including its Women's Initiative Network. She is a leader in the firm's Consumer Financial Services Compliance Practice, supervising its work with banks and other institutions across the country that operate under high-stakes compliance scenarios. Recently, Lipinski was one of five attorneys — the youngest and only woman — appointed as outside counsel to the Law Committee of the American Financial Services Association. She is a frequent speaker on financial services matters, particularly student lending. Lipinski "is well-respected within our firm and by a national client base that trusts her as a legal voice for their industries," according to a nomination letter written by McGlinchey Stafford Managing Member Rodolfo Aguilar Jr.

JULIA A. LOVE

Partner
Thompson Hine

Julia Ann Love focuses her work in the firm's Employee Benefits & Executive Compensation Practice. In addition to serving clients in the public, private and nonprofit sectors, she was vital in developing the firm's growing pension de-risking practice. "She is a remarkable person of the utmost integrity, character and accomplishment, and a highly respected leader in the legal profession, in the community and at Thompson Hine," said Robyn Minter Smyers, Cleveland Office partner-in-charge, in the nomination. In 2016, Love was one of only 13 employee benefits lawyers nationwide inducted as a fellow of the American College of Employee Benefits Counsel. Love serves as program chair on the national board of Worldwide Employee Benefits Network. She also serves on the boards of the Center for Community Solutions and Saint Joseph Academy. She previously served as the Cleveland Office chair of Spotlight on Women, the firm's women's program.

**MARY FORBES LOVETT**

Partner, Real Estate
Group Chair
Ulmer

Mary Forbes Lovett has a front seat to Cleveland's rebirth, representing organizations involved in the redevelopment of some of the city's most iconic buildings. Specializing in the development and financing of urban properties, Lovett represented the developers of the Halle Building, Terminal Tower, the East Ohio Gas Building and the Leader Building, just to name a few. Her expertise has been especially helpful to nonprofit organizations embarking on large capital projects, including Ronald McDonald House of Cleveland, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, Care Alliance and Capitol Theatre. In 2017, Lovett was a key player in a national coalition of professionals that kept federal historic tax credits from being eliminated as part of tax reform legislation. According to Patricia A. Shlonsky, partner-in-charge of Ulmer's Cleveland office, Lovett's "passion is for urban development projects where she can utilize all available public and private financing tools to make the deals happen and to make a difference in the city and its neighborhoods."

**RITA MAIMBOURG**

Partner, Trial Department Chair
Tucker Ellis

Rita Maimbourg is a warrior for clients, "called upon to go to court and defend their most sticky of situations," according to Tucker Ellis Managing Partner Joe Morford's nomination letter. For more than 35 years, Maimbourg has represented hospital systems and physicians in professional liability actions in Northeast Ohio. In the last five years, she has managed hundreds of cases on behalf of a medical device manufacturer. Maimbourg oversees 159 trial lawyers and 53 paralegals in seven offices across four practice groups. A consummate mentor, Maimbourg initiated the WOW client service award, which she gives to lawyers or staff members who greatly exceed expectations. She guided the transition of leadership in two of the Trial Department practice groups and also helped integrate a new director of professional development. She also created the "learn by doing" format of the Tucker Ellis Litigation Institute, which teaches deposition and trial skills to the firm's associates.

**AMANDA MARTINSEK**

Partner
Ulmer

Business
litigator

Amanda Martinsek doesn't shy away from new opportunities, particularly those that offer the chance to increase diversity and inclusion in the legal community. In 2007, Martinsek left an equity partnership at a large law firm to open the Cleveland office of a Toledo practice on the cusp of becoming the largest majority women-owned law firm in the country. In 2010, she became the founding president of Thacker Martinsek, another majority women-owned firm. She has been an active member of the National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms. Martinsek recently joined Ulmer and immediately jumped aboard Ulmer's UB Will — Women in Law & Leadership. Active in the Ohio Women's Bar Association, she also is a current board member of the Federal Bar Association where, according to the nomination of Ulmer Partner Michael N. Ungar, "she extends her passion for mentoring others and often speaks on career development for female attorneys."



Ulmer

ALLISON MCMEECHAN

Shareholder, Chair of Elder Law
and Special Needs Practice Group,
Chair of Probate Administration,
Trust Administration and
Guardianships Practice Group
Reminger Co.

Although she
joined Reminger

Co. only three years ago, Allison McMeechan has "made a considerable impact" on the organization, according to Managing Partner Stephen E. Walters' nomination letter. McMeechan came to the firm in 2015 and has spearheaded the growth of its Elder Law and Special Needs practice. In 2017, Reminger named her chair of that practice area as well as chair of its Probate Administration, Trust Administration and Guardianships Practice Group and a shareholder (partner). Away from the office, McMeechan gives her time to several community organizations, but is most proud of her work with Milestones Autism Resources, a Warrensville Heights-based nonprofit that coaches families and educators on how to interact with autistic individuals. "As an attorney whose field of law necessitates empathy and compassion, Allison possesses innate qualities that truly align with her chosen area of expertise," Walters wrote.

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MEGAN L. MEHALKO

Partner, Corporate & Securities
Practice Group Chair
Benesch



Megan L. Mehalko chairs Benesch's Corporate & Securities Practice Group, serving as the only female member of the firm's Executive Committee. "Megan Mehalko is an excellent female leader and role model in the firm," said Mike Marhofer, chair of the Private Equity Group, according to the nomination. "Megan has attained a level of respect that others should strive for in their own careers." She is actively involved in the firm's Public Company Practice, Private Equity Group and Professional Development Committee. She also founded and leads the Polymer Industry Group and founded the Finance Committee, where she serves as a member. During the past two years, Benesch experienced strategic growth, with nearly 20 new attorneys joining the Corporate & Securities Practice Group. Managing Partner Gregg A. Eisenberg praised Mehalko for being a strong leader of the group. "She continually fosters group camaraderie through hosting team-bonding activities and retreats for all corporate and securities attorneys in all offices," said Eisenberg, according to the nomination. Mehalko is involved with College Now Greater Cleveland and Seeds of Literacy.

AMANDA M. MILLER

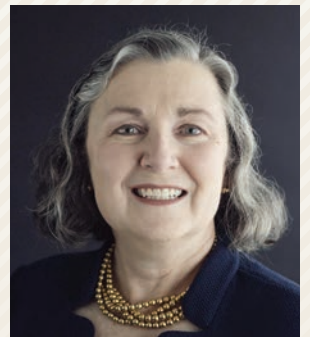
Partner, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Co-Chair,
3iP Group Lead — Patent Prosecution
Benesch



Amanda M. Miller serves in a variety of leadership roles at Benesch, including Patent Prosecution Group lead for the Innovations, Information Technology & Intellectual Property (3iP) Practice Group, and serving as co-chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. Miller was instrumental in revamping the firm's diversity program, improving recruitment and retention numbers nationally through a diversity and inclusion strategic plan. Managing Partner Gregg A. Eisenberg says hiring and retaining a diverse workforce is critical to Benesch, and Miller plays an important role in supporting the firm's commitment to its core value of being a valued and model member of the community. "She worked to develop and implement a program that incorporates incentives and accountability, which are necessary components that help make the program as successful as it is today," said Eisenberg, according to the nomination. Miller is an alumna of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Fellows program. She mentors new fellows, undertakes regional community service projects and participates in the program's diversity outreach efforts to universities and law schools.

M. ELIZABETH MONIHAN

Partner
Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell



The growing volume of genetic material banked for future fertility treatments has fueled mounting legal questions, not the least of which is regarding inheritance rights of children born through assistive reproductive technologies (ART). Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell Partner Elizabeth Monihan — who specializes in wealth transfer planning — is a pioneer in helping individuals and families maneuver the legal landscape around ART. Serving on the Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law Section Council of the Ohio State Bar Association since 2006, Monihan was recently part of a committee that researched the rights of ART children and drafted legislation that was passed in Ohio in 2016. Since that time, she has made numerous presentations and has written two detailed articles on the new law. She also was the first woman to serve as president of the Estate Planning Council of Cleveland. In the nomination form, SSSB colleague and Partner Kim Stein said Monihan is as personable as she is professional. "She has built close and longstanding personal relationships with her clients, which is invaluable in our practice area," she said.

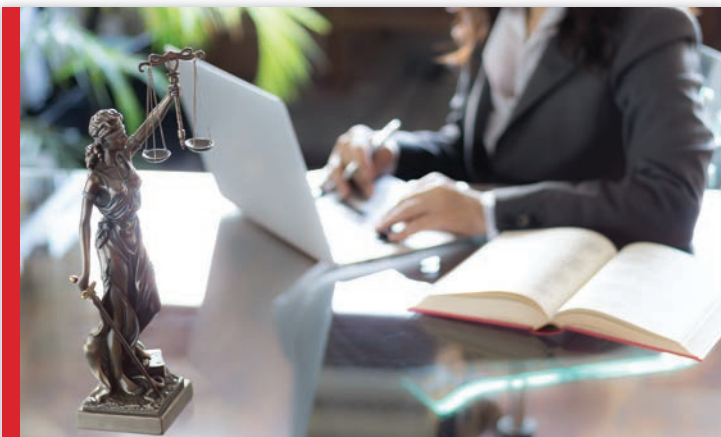
JEANNE M. MULLIN

Medical Malpractice Co-Chair
Reminger Co.



Reminger Co. Managing Partner Stephen E. Walters said "determination" and "grit" are qualities that have propelled Jeanne M. Mullin forward in her legal career. "She has always operated at a level that is remarkable by any standard," according to his nomination letter. As co-chair of the firm's Medical Malpractice Defense Practice, Mullin helps set the course for nearly 60 attorneys. As a trial lawyer, the board of directors member actively defends area professionals, including appeals at both the state and federal levels, and was instrumental in forming the firm's Women's Leadership Council. Recently, her legal acumen

caught the eye of a *Fortune* 500 company that named her its National Coordinating Counsel. Mullin is a mother of five, including twins and a child with Down syndrome. She also shares her time and talents outside of the office as board member of GiGi's Playhouse Cleveland, an achievement center for individuals with Down syndrome.



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Patricia A. Gajda
Corporate & Securities Practice Group



Amanda M. Leffler
Insurance Recovery Practice Group



Elizabeth G. Yeargin
Corporate & Securities Practice Group



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JOHANNA FABRIZIO PARKER

Partner, Vice Chair,
Labor & Employment
Practice Group
Benesch

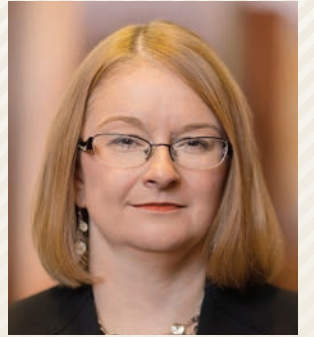


Johanna Fabrizio Parker is one of three women in the core practice areas at Benesch, serving as vice chair of one of its core practice groups: Labor & Employment. "With Johanna, we are one of very few firms in our market with the capability to handle comprehensive labor and employment issues," said Partner W. Eric Baisden, according to the nomination. Managing Partner Gregg A. Eisenberg says since Parker joined the firm, Benesch's services to clients have expanded. "Johanna's practice involves a deep representation and counseling of management clients in a wide range of complex employment matters," Eisenberg said, according to the nomination. "Our Labor & Employment Practice Group grew strategically in 2017. She is a female role model at the firm and currently mentors associates at the firm through providing guidance in goal setting and achievement." Among her professional involvements, she is a member of the exclusive Judge John M. Manos Inn of Court, which aims to improve the professionalism and ethics within the Cleveland bench and bar.

CHRISTINA PEER

Partner, Education Practice Group Chair
Walter | Haverfield

A growing number of school administrators who need help decoding special education regulations or guidance on student discipline or social media issues seek the counsel of Christina Peer. For the past five years, Peer has led Walter | Haverfield's education law practice, which today represents nearly 15% of school districts in Ohio. In his nomination letter, Managing Partner Ralph E. Cascarilla credits Peer's "strong management skills" and "exceptional legal talents" for expanding the firm's educational client base, which he calls a "striking achievement given the highly competitive nature of the legal profession." In addition to counseling her own clients and managing a team of 10 attorneys, Peer shares her time and expertise as a frequent presenter for educational associations, such as the Ohio School Boards Association. She also conducts professional development seminars for the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County and provides legal updates for school districts at their request and at no charge.



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Congratulations to all of the **NEO Notable Women in Law** and to the high performing, talented women everywhere who continue to do extraordinary things and shape the world: Thank you.

Ulmer is committed to its women lawyers' success through UB Women in Law & Leadership, a firm-wide women's affinity group dedicated to recruiting, mentoring, community service and promoting career achievements. We believe that a diverse and inclusive team enriches the work environment for everyone and is the catalyst for the creative solutions we deliver to our clients.



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SUSAN PETERSEN*Founder, Partner, President*
Petersen & Petersen

A former on-air reporter for a local news station, personal injury attorney Susan Petersen has what her business partner and husband Todd Petersen calls “a near obsession for getting to the truth.” Petersen founded Susan E. Petersen, Esq., Inc. in 2005. In 2010, her husband joined the firm, which then became Petersen & Petersen. She remains president of the four-attorney firm and involved in all aspects of daily operations, from case selection to finances to personnel in addition to a full caseload. As lead trial counsel, Petersen has recovered more than \$35 million for clients in the last three years alone. One of the qualities that sets Petersen apart, according to McCarthy, Lebit, Crystal & Liffman Co. Principal Christian Patno’s nomination letter, is her “view of the law as just.” “She is appalled by injustice,” he wrote. “Her number one priority is being a good officer of the court and seeing that justice is served.”

**MARQUETTES ROBINSON***Shareholder*
Thacker Robinson Zinz

Marquettes Robinson is a civil litigator who has prosecuted and defended complex cases. She has litigated in both federal and state courts at the trial and appellate levels and has extensive arbitration and mediation experience. In 2016, she became a partner at her firm. She also was selected by U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown to serve on the Judicial Selection Commission. “To identify the best possible candidates for Ohio’s federal bench, Sen. (Rob) Portman and I convene some of the best and brightest minds from around the state to aid us in the selection process for federal judicial vacancies. Marquettes brings a unique perspective and a wide range of experience to the selection process. I’m grateful for her service to Ohio,” Brown said. Robinson mentors younger attorneys at her firm and through the Norman S. Minor Bar Association’s Citywide Mentoring Program. “Over the years, I’ve helped women refine their résumés, consider career paths, start new businesses, navigate inter-office politics and harassment, and discussed work-life balance. Most importantly, I’ve made numerous friends who have mentored me, in turn,” she said.

**RENEE TRAMBLE RICHARD***Vice President and General Counsel*
Cuyahoga Community College

As vice president and general counsel for Cuyahoga Community College, Renee Tramble Richard provides legal counsel and advice to every department. She is a supporter of Tri-C student scholarships and shares her knowledge as an adjunct faculty member. “Because of her interaction with students, she is able to inform the leaders of the college of the student experience,” said Megan O’Byrne, Tri-C vice president of development and president of the Cuyahoga Community College Foundation, according to the nomination. “She uplifts and supports other employees of Cuyahoga Community College through mentorship.” Richard coaches her staff to excel in their careers, as evidenced by a high percentage of promotions earned by her employees. She also assists with professional development for individuals outside of her department. Richard is a member of the boards of AES Management (dba Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen) and Lee Road Baptist Church, and serves on the executive committee of the NAACP, Cleveland Branch.

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SUSAN C. RODGERS

*Partner, Employment and Labor Practice Group Chair, General Counsel
Buckingham*

Susan C. Rodgers is a role model to lawyers and support staff alike, while also helping the most vulnerable in society through her nonprofit work. She advises and educates clients regarding a variety of employment and labor issues, including age discrimination and disability. She also performs investigations for corporations and higher education institutions, including allegations of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. Rodgers' gift lies in her ability to see beyond the law and into the realities of the workplace. She helps her clients make decisions to run a positive, effective and productive work environment. She also serves as a sounding board, trusted resource and mentor for attorneys, staff and clients. "Susan is not only well regarded as an attorney in the legal community, but also has been instrumental in the success of our firm," wrote John P. Slagter, Buckingham managing partner, in the nomination. Rodgers also serves as vice president of the Stark County District Library Board of Trustees and a trustee for GentleBrook Inc.

**CHRISTINE SANTONI**

*Shareholder
Reminger Co.*



Christine Santoni has advanced from law clerk to associate and now shareholder during her 25 years of service with Reminger Co. And for good reason, according to the nomination letter of Managing Partner Stephen E. Walters. "Christine is reliable, whip-smart and respected, both within and outside the firm," Walters noted. "She does her job and does it well." Indeed, during her time at Reminger, Santoni has emerged as a formidable litigator, having tried more than 50 jury trials — many as first chair — including professional liability, medical malpractice and employment law cases. She also has been active in the community, tutoring and counseling inner-city high school students in Cleveland, co-chairing a judicial selection committee of the Ohio Women's Bar Association and, most recently, assisting the strategic planning efforts of the YWCA to help the organization meet its mission to eliminate racism and empower women.

**MARY MARGARET ROWLANDS**

*Judge
Summit County Court of Common Pleas*

Summit County Court of Common Pleas Judge Mary Margaret Rowlands is a leader in the courthouse and an advocate for many of the individuals appearing before her. Rowlands was first elected to the bench in 2008 and named presiding judge in the general, domestic relations, juvenile and probate divisions of the court in 2013. In addition to her assigned docket of approximately 400 civil and criminal cases, the judge supervises participants who have recently been released from prison in her Re-Entry Court Program. "She understands not only the issues but the people in every case before her," according to a nomination letter from Gorman, Malarcik, Pierce Managing Partner Donald J. Malarcik. Recently, the International Association of Women Judges selected Rowlands as a delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, an appointment for which she is especially proud as a champion of gender equality and social justice.



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JOHANNA FABRIZIO PARKER

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JENNIFER A. SAVAGE

Partner
Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell



A 20-year veteran of the trusts and estates field, Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell Partner Jennifer Savage counsels high-net worth families, utilizing an innate ability to plan and think across multiple generations. Savage joined the firm in 2016. According to the nomination letter from SSSB Managing Partner James D. Vail, she has been instrumental in enhancing processes and procedures within the firm and serves as a mentor to associates, including acting as team leader to the group of lawyers who work with her multi-generational clients. "In addition to providing excellent services to her clients, this approach enables her to supervise and coach younger lawyers as they develop their knowledge in sophisticated estate planning techniques," he said in the nomination form. Outside of the office, Savage has served in leadership positions at the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and the Estate Planning Council of Cleveland, and she currently coordinates an informal monthly discussion group of 50-plus estate planning professionals.

PATRICIA A. SHLONSKY

Cleveland Partner-in-Charge, Tax Group Chair,
Employee Benefits Chair
Ulmer



Patricia A. Shlonsky is the first woman to serve as partner-in-charge in Ulmer's century-plus history. She also is the first woman to serve on the firm's management committee and is one of seven people responsible for managing all aspects of the firm's operations in all five Ulmer offices. She sets the vision for Ulmer's 80-attorney Cleveland office. She chairs two practice groups and is a nationally recognized expert in employee benefits law. Shlonsky is a leader and mentor both inside and outside the firm, noted Managing Partner Scott P. Kadish in his nomination letter. "She has cleared a path and set an example for other women in law," he wrote. Outside of the office, Shlonsky, an avid reader, is likely buried in a book, blogging about books or championing public libraries as board president of the Cuyahoga County Public Library.

JENIFERE SINGLETON

Administrative Partner
Meyers, Roman, Friedberg & Lewis



Jenifere Singleton has worked for only one law firm, and Meyers, Roman, Friedberg & Lewis Managing Partner Seth Briskin intends to keep it that way. "Jen's enthusiastic personality, take-charge attitude and attention to detail not only makes her a great lawyer, it makes her a natural leader," Briskin said in his nomination letter. Aspiring to be an attorney since childhood, Singleton began her law career in 2003 with the firm's family law department, a practice area she continues today. In 2016, she became the youngest member of firm management in its history when Meyers, Roman, Friedberg & Lewis named Singleton administrative partner — tasked with overseeing the day-to-day workings of the firm — and concurrently appointed her to its three-person management committee. Singleton also serves the community in various ways, including as a board member of the nonprofit Domestic Violence & Child Advocacy Center.

KIMBERLY E. STEIN

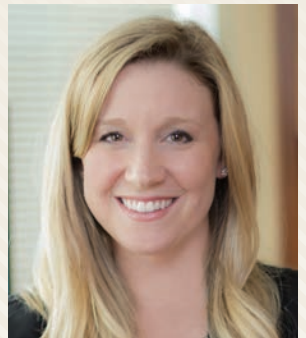
Partner
Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell



Kimberly Stein became Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell's newest partner in January. Stein joined the firm in 2008 fresh out of law school. While still an associate, she stepped up to a position of management by taking on responsibility for training, maintenance and operation of Schneider Smeltz's tax program. The assignment earned Stein "deep gratitude from all partners," Schneider Smeltz colleague and partner Lisa Monihan said in Stein's nomination, "particularly because our firm has such a significant tax practice, this was a major contribution of time and dedication." An avid writer and researcher, Stein is frequently called upon inside the firm to offer practical tax advice and counsel for clients' complex estates and trusts. Outside the firm, she is active in the Estate Planning Council of Cleveland, the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and the Tax Club of Cleveland. She is a recognized author on federal and state tax topics.

ELIZABETH SULLIVAN

Co-Chair, Healthcare Practice Group
McDonald Hopkins



As co-chair of McDonald Hopkins' National Healthcare Practice Group, Elizabeth Sullivan has worked to reinforce the existing engagement among practice group members, implement initiatives to increase awareness of the group's expertise, and support professional development, according to the nomination. She manages a practice focused on clinical laboratories and pathology practices and provides counsel to health care providers on regulatory, licensing, compliance, reimbursement, contractual and corporate matters. She served as associate counsel for the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, providing regulatory advice and transactional guidance to various service lines. "As the in-house counsel at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and here at McDonald Hopkins, Elizabeth has shown her wide array of health care expertise while counseling health care entities, particularly in the pathology sector," says James E. Stief, chair of the Business Law Department, according to the nomination. "Elizabeth is a perfect example of a notable woman in law who has honed her health care specialty in a way that is appreciated by the firm and her clients."



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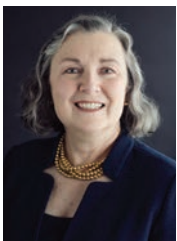
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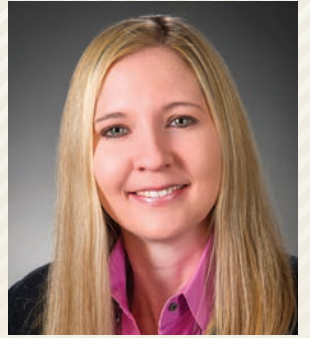
A board certified specialist in labor and employment law, Stephanie Dutchesse Trudeau is undoubtedly a valuable partner at Ulmer. The highly experienced trial lawyer has a winning record in jury trials and arbitrations. Yet, Rebecca McMahon, executive director of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and Bar Foundation, said Trudeau's reach extends well beyond her own firm. "Stephanie is, unquestionably, a tremendous asset to Cleveland's legal community," McMahon said in the nomination. In June, Trudeau will become president of the bar foundation — the fundraising arm of the Cleveland Bar — overseeing its mission to support a variety of programs in the Cleveland Metropolitan and East Cleveland schools. The appointment builds on years of leadership and service at the foundation, including as chair of its largest annual fundraiser, "Rock the Foundation." Trudeau was appointed to serve through 2020 as a member of the Ohio State Bar Association Labor & Employment Specialty Board.

NANCY VALENTINEPrincipal
Miller Canfield

For Detroit-based Miller Canfield, expanding the law firm's commercial real estate team meant luring Northeast Ohio attorney Nancy Valentine. And, that meant establishing a local presence. "We opened the Cleveland office in order to strategically grow and to acquire top talent, and specifically to attract Nancy," according to the nomination letter of CEO Michael McGee. A nationally recognized attorney with extensive transactional experience, Valentine has been involved in some of the region's biggest deals. Most recently, she represented the Lake County YMCA in a development project with the city of Willoughby and Willoughby schools, counseled a corporate client in purchasing a strategic target from complicated Chapter 11 proceedings and played a key role in keeping Medical Mutual in downtown Cleveland by assisting in the company's purchase of the historic Rose Building. She is the immediate past chair and the former chair of the International Women's Insolvency & Restructuring Confederation.

MARGARET W. WONGFounder, Managing Partner
Margaret W. Wong & Associates

Since Margaret Wong founded her firm in 1977, she and her staff have helped scores of immigrants and companies address complex immigration issues. Wong has won "precedent-setting cases that are extremely important for the foreign-born community," she says. "I've represented thousands and hundreds of thousands of foreign-born, and their children and grandchildren, rich and poor, become extremely successful in the U.S., beyond our wildest dreams. Through them, I continue my dream and journey." Her Cleveland-based full-service immigration firm has offices in metropolitan cities throughout the U.S., including New York, Los Angeles and Atlanta, with more than 200 years combined experience between the firm's staff. "She has tirelessly worked on behalf of our clients to help them obtain visas, asylum, green cards, citizenship and U.S. citizenship," said Partner Scott Bratton. The award-winning lawyer and Case Western Reserve University adjunct professor is author of "The Immigrant's Way." She has numerous professional affiliations, including serving as a lifelong member of the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court.

ELIZABETH G. YEARGINPartner, Corporate and Securities,
Business Restructuring, Bankruptcy,
and Commercial Law and Real Estate Practice Groups
Brouse McDowell

Elizabeth "Libby" Yeargin advises clients through their ongoing legal issues and counsels them in achieving their career and financial goals through buying and selling companies and developing succession plans for their businesses. She serves in a variety of leadership roles in the firm, including the pension plan administration and opinion letter review committees. She also runs the corporate group's associate training program. She is a mentor to first-year attorneys through the Ohio Supreme Court's Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring program, as well as the Akron Bar Association, where she served in multiple leadership roles. She is active in Commercial Real Estate Women Akron. Yeargin also became the firm's first part-time shareholder as a way to more effectively balance the challenges of practicing law and raising a family. "Not many attorneys measure up to Libby in terms of character, professionalism, creativity and thoughtfulness," said Partner Louise M. Mazur, in the nomination. "Libby is invaluable to Brouse McDowell because she creates effective solutions to a wide variety of legal issues that impact our clients."

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