

Alone we can  
do so little.

Together  
We Can  
do so much.

– Helen Keller

**116<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING &  
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY**

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**Thursday, December 9, 2021**  
free livestream online @ 12:15 p.m.

**Keynote Remarks:**  
United States Attorney General Merrick Garland



Together  
We Can  
*create real change*

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The  
Legal Aid Society  
of Cleveland  
*Since 1905*



# THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND'S 116<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Thursday, December 9, 2021 • free livestream online @ 12:15 p.m.

<b>12:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Welcome Slides &amp; Sponsor Recognition</b>	watch at <a href="http://www.lasclev.org/2021Event">www.lasclev.org/2021Event</a> or on any of Legal Aid's social media channels
<b>12:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Welcome</b>	<b>Colleen M. Cotter, Esq.</b> <i>Executive Director, The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland</i>
	<b>Together We Can</b>	a film produced by Goldfarb Weber Creative Media
	<b>Recognition</b>	
	<i>page 7</i>	<b>C. Lyonel Jones Lifetime Leadership Award</b> Andrea Price, Esq.
	<i>pages 10-11</i>	<b>Claude E. Clarke Award</b> Tracy Ayers Erik Meinhardt Lisa Splawinski, Esq. Matt Vincel, Esq.
	<i>page 10</i>	<b>Leadership Award</b> Paige Nofel Kuri
	<i>page 12</i>	<b>Legacy of Justice Award</b> Julie Rabin, Esq. Rabin & Rabin Co., LPA
	<i>page 13</i>	<b>Access to Justice Award</b> Ashley Bailes, Esq. (Taft) James King, Esq. Art Smialek, Esq.
	<b>Legal Aid Update</b>	<b>Rita Maimbourg, Esq.</b> Tucker Ellis LLP <i>Board President, The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland</i>
	<b>Keynote Remarks</b>	<b>The Honorable Merrick Garland</b> <i>United States Attorney General</i>
	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Highlights of Legal Aid's Impact</b>
	<i>music selections</i>	<b>Opus 216</b>



@LegalAidCLE

#TogetherWeCan

#ExtendJustice

# Together We Can *create real change*

Legal Aid staff and volunteers continue to be COVID safe, and we are back in neighborhoods handling legal issues, providing community legal education, and advocating for community change.



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## United States Attorney General Merrick Garland



Attorney General Merrick B. Garland was sworn in as the 86th Attorney General of the United States on March 11, 2021. As the nation's chief law enforcement officer, Attorney General Garland leads the Justice Department's 115,000 employees, who work across the United States and in more than 50 countries worldwide. Under his leadership, the Department of Justice is dedicated to upholding the rule of law, keeping our country safe, and protecting the civil rights of all Americans.

Immediately preceding his confirmation as Attorney General, Attorney General Garland was a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. He was appointed to that position in 1997, served as Chief Judge of the Circuit from 2013-20, and served as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States from 2017-20. In 2016, President Obama nominated him for the position of Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Before becoming a federal judge, Attorney General Garland spent a substantial part of his professional life at the Department of Justice. Earlier in his career, Attorney General Garland was a partner in the law firm of Arnold & Porter, where his practice involved civil and criminal litigation, antitrust, and administrative law.

Attorney General Garland graduated summa cum laude from Harvard College and magna cum laude from Harvard Law School. Following law school, he clerked for Judge Henry J. Friendly of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and for Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., of the United States Supreme Court.



*Thank you*

### 2021 RETIRING BOARD MEMBER

*In appreciation of service to Legal Aid and work for justice*

**Barbara Roman**





The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland annually recognizes staff through this awards program funded by **Legal Aid’s Leadership Fund for Organizational Development**. The fund is supported by the **Allen Madorsky Memorial Fund, Alan Gressel Memorial Fund**, and numerous other individual gifts. If you would like to make a gift to support Legal Aid’s Leadership Fund, please call 216.861.5217.

### C. LYONEL JONES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

*...for a career dedicated to The Legal Aid Society and its clients, and named in honor of C. Lyonel Jones (1932 – 2006), who himself dedicated his entire legal career to Legal Aid.*



#### **Andrea Price, Esq.**

*Senior Attorney, Cleveland Office, Economic Justice Group*

Andrea Price has dedicated her career to Legal Aid, our mission, and our client community. Andrea joined The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland in 1985. From 1982 to 1984, she was a Reginald Heber Smith Community Lawyer Fellow in Louisville, Kentucky.

Andrea has worn many different hats in her long tenure at Legal Aid. For the last 10 plus years, she has been a Senior Attorney in the Consumer and then Economic Justice Groups. Andrea previously worked in the now dissolved Older Person’s Unit, and she continues to passionately serve the needs of seniors through both her casework and community involvement. Andrea has handled a wide variety of cases, including debt collection, foreclosure, bankruptcy, probate, and more. She exhibits a deep interest in her clients’ wellbeing and goes above and beyond to make sure they not only receive legal representation, but also any other services they need. Beyond her casework, Andrea is a valued member of Legal Aid’s African American Vulnerable Population and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees.

Over the years, Andrea has advocated on behalf of Legal Aid’s client community through her deep involvement in numerous community coalitions and organizations. For example, she is a long-standing member of the Council on Older Persons and was an integral member of the team that created the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Foreclosure Mediation program. Because of her leadership, thousands of homeowners were able to use the program to successfully secure loan modifications and avoid foreclosure during the economic crisis that began in 2008 and impacted the housing market for years.

Andrea’s work is clearly fueled by her commitment to justice and concern for her clients – and she inspires her colleagues every day. Her careerlong commitment to Legal Aid’s mission and community more than warrants her receiving the 2021 C. Lyonel Jones Lifetime Achievement Award.



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## THE CLAUDE E. CLARKE AWARD

... recognizes staff members for outstanding service through professional performance and commitment to Legal Aid and its clients, and is named for Claude Clarke (1890 – 1975), who directed Legal Aid’s work for nearly four decades.



### Tracy Ayers

*Intake Specialist, Jefferson Office, Volunteer Lawyers Program / Intake*

Tracy Ayers joined The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland in 1996 and recently celebrated her 25th anniversary. Tracy has held several roles with us and currently serves as an Intake Specialist. In this role, Tracy compassionately talks with people who are facing loss of their income, shelter, health care, or safety. She guides each applicant through the interview, gathering the information needed to assess the case and ensuring applicants know they have been heard. Tracy is a leader in the Intake Group, training new colleagues and working to improve the ways we serve clients. She exhibits her commitment to Legal Aid and our clients every day.



### Erik Meinhardt

*Development & Communications Associate*

Erik Meinhardt joined Legal Aid in 2018 and immediately had significant, positive impact on the organization. Erik’s role is operational; he works behind the scenes, managing Legal Aid’s Development and Communications Team calendar, database, and many of the daily tasks that are required to make the group successful. He is the glue that keeps our terrific philanthropy and public relations efforts moving and his attention to detail is unsurpassed. Because of Erik’s work, we have gained and retained supporters. And because of his creativity and drive, we have broadened our community partnerships and outreach to underserved communities – a particularly important feat during the pandemic. Erik’s work kept us in touch with supporters, partners, and client communities throughout the isolating pandemic. His work is outstanding and his commitment to Legal Aid’s clients always shines through.

## Leadership Award

... to acknowledge outstanding staff leadership, tireless efforts for Legal Aid clients and vision for Legal Aid’s work.



### Paige Nofel Kuri *Paralegal, Cleveland Office, Housing Group*

Paige Nofel joined Legal Aid in 2013. She is currently a Paralegal 2 in the Housing Practice Group. Over the past two years, Paige has been a leader in the group implementing Cleveland’s Right to Counsel (RTC) legislation. Paige has created, implemented, studied, and then improved numerous processes to ensure the smooth operation of this brand-new program. Paige provides support for both clients and attorneys at every step of a case. She helped develop and execute trainings for new attorneys, paralegals, and intake staff, and she mentors the new paralegals. Paige has such a deep knowledge of housing law and procedures that a common response to questions among her colleagues is, “Ask Paige.”



**Lisa Splawinski, Esq.**

*Senior Attorney, Cleveland Office, Health & Opportunity Group*

Lisa Splawinski came to Legal Aid in 2015 and worked in our Medical Legal Partnership with MetroHealth, serving Spanish-speaking and often immigrant clients. While she left in 2017 to serve immigrants near the Mexican border, she returned to work in our Immigration Group after two years away, and has used the expertise she gained in Texas to advocate for immigrant clients in Northeast Ohio. Lisa's clients include people in detention, survivors of human trafficking, and victims of domestic or gang-related violence who seek refuge and the opportunity to build a new life in the US. Lisa is a leader in Legal Aid's immigration practice. She has argued and won difficult asylum cases and ended removal proceedings. Lisa builds partnerships with other service providers, Immigration Court, and local detention facilities. A gifted advocate for northeast Ohio's immigrant community, Lisa continues to push both herself and her colleagues to grow the impact of Legal Aid's immigration practice.



**Matt Vincel, Esq.**

*Supervising Attorney, Cleveland Office, Housing Group*

Matt Vincel has spent his entire career bringing justice to the lives of people with low incomes. He started his career at Cleveland Legal Aid in 2008 as a Staff Attorney and then moved to Georgia, where he continued his work providing civil legal aid services. When he returned to Cleveland in 2018, he joined the Public Defender Office before returning to Legal Aid in 2019. Matt now serves as a Supervising Attorney, helping to lead Legal Aid's growth in eviction defense work. He is a leader in trial and appellate work, and serves as a mentor to a growing number of attorneys and paralegals. Matt's calm and professional demeanor, his well-reasoned arguments, and his persuasive presentation win over clients, colleagues, judges, and opposing parties alike.

*The Leadership Award is presented to an individual who makes Legal Aid a better organization, helps others around them achieve more for Legal Aid clients, and creates a team for social justice.*

Paige also exhibits leadership by building relationships with community partners who provide rent assistance. In this role, she shepherds our clients' rent assistance applications, ensuring attorneys have timely updates for court dates and applications are processed so clients can stay housed. Paige represents Legal Aid well and continues to build on these relationships.

Paige is laser-focused on Legal Aid's mission and clients. A natural leader, she ensures both that individual client needs are met and that her group operates in an efficient, effective manner.



The  
**Legal Aid Society**  
of Cleveland  
*Since 1905*

Volunteer Lawyers Program  
[vlp]

## 2021 LEGACY OF JUSTICE AWARD

*Recognizes an individual, group, or institution whose participation in pro bono or other volunteer efforts has been significant in terms of length and/or impact..*



### **Julie Rabin, Esq.**

Julie Rabin has been a successful bankruptcy attorney in Northeast Ohio for more than 30 years. She has also been a longtime supporter of Legal Aid and our Volunteer Lawyers Program. Julie's decades-long commitment to assisting people with bankruptcy filings has included no less than 70 *pro bono* cases since 2000, helping hundreds of people and families escape from debt and get back on their feet. More than 15 years ago, Julie was instrumental in creating a bankruptcy referral project at Legal Aid – and her support has never wavered. Julie is always available to take a case and she also frequently mentors and supports other attorneys as they help clients.



# #TakeACase

<https://tinyurl.com/TakeACaseToday>



The  
**Legal Aid Society**  
of Cleveland  
*Since 1905*

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland cannot assist its many clients without relying on the great work of its volunteers. Annually, up to 20% of Legal Aid’s matters are handled by *pro bono* attorneys

## 2021 ACCESS TO JUSTICE AWARD

*Recognizes significant contribution to advancing the mission of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland through pro bono commitment. This recognition is informed by number of hours volunteered, cases handled, and clinic participation.*

### **Ashley Bailes, Esq.**

Ashley Bailes is an associate at Taft/ and a relative newcomer to volunteering with Legal Aid. Ashley felt compelled to volunteer during the pandemic when she recognized that people with low incomes were losing their homes and struggling during the public health crisis. One woman Ashley helped, “Melissa,” (*name changed for privacy*) had been dealing with several crises in her personal life when she was misled by her landlord and suddenly faced eviction. While working on the case, Ashley discovered several factors that complicated the eviction and endangered any claim for money that Melissa may have had. Still, Ashley remained determined to help her client. She worked with Legal Aid mentors as well as social workers to provide Melissa with holistic and supportive services. Ashley has already logged over 100 volunteer hours in 2021 and made an enormous impact.

### **James King, Esq.**

During his forty plus years as an attorney, Jim King served as trial counsel and litigation manager for cases involving issues related to product liability, employment, and personal injury. Jim’s diligence and attention to detail has always served his clients well. Upon his retirement in 2019, Jim re-directed his knowledge, work ethic, and professionalism to assist Legal Aid and our clients. Drawing on his experience as a claims representative at the Social Security Administration while attending law school, Jim has worked on over 35 cases since he began volunteering in 2019. Working with clients who have been informed their disability benefits are being terminated, Jim has lent his expertise in varying degrees from reviewing requests for assistance to preparing a twenty-page memorandum for submission to the appeals council. He has proven to be a relentless advocate for people whose economic stability is at risk.

### **Arthur Smialek, Esq.**

Through his experience working the clerk’s desk at probate court and serving as underwriting counsel for various title companies, Art Smialek has accumulated a treasure trove of knowledge about property title issues and probate. Art began volunteering with Legal Aid to work on estate planning matters back in 2012. When he retired in 2017, he kicked his *pro bono* commitment into high gear. An invaluable resource to in-house Legal Aid attorneys, other volunteer attorneys, and clients, Art has to date assisted with over 70 cases. He has demonstrated a dedication to helping people claim what is rightfully theirs, and has exhibited empathy and understanding in all of his interactions with clients.



# The following volunteers

helped Legal Aid clients in 2020 and 2021,  
during the coronavirus pandemic.

Scott Abell	Kelly Callam	Kendra Davitt	Eric Foster	Paul Hergenroeder	Brenden Kelley
Stephanie Adams	Jessica Camargo	Jason Dawicke	Tracy Francis	Dustin Herman	Megan Kern
Erin Ahern	Charlotte Camp	C. Lynne Day	Ronald Frederick	John Hersch	Lisa Khoury- Leszynski
Hannah Albion	Heather Campbell	Antonio Dempsey	Barry Freeman	Jennifer Himmelein	Sarah Kilguss
Anthony Alto	Lisa Carey	Julia Denmeade	Katherine Friedell	Kevin Hinkel	William Killmeyer
Michael Arnold	Katherine Carpenter	Frank DeSantis	Octavia Gaitan	Stephen Hobt	Naomi Kim
Joan Arrington	Leonard Carr	Jeff Di Fiore	Timothy Gallagher	Alan Hochheiser	Kaori Kimura
Ashley Bailes	Maria Carr	Nathalie Dibo	Hanne Lore M. Gambrell	James Hofelich	James King
Hannah Baker	Harry Carroll	Maeve Dineen	M. Colleen Geib	Kayla Hofmeister	Abbey Kinson Brown
Robert Barr	Jason Carter	James Dixon	Leslie A. Gentile	John Hofstetter	Lucas Kirkland
Kelsey Baughman	Ryan Cash	Mark Dobbins	Mr. Jacob Gialamas	Lauren Holler	John Kirn, Jr.
Josephine Begin	Rebecca Castell	Samuel Dodoo	Athena Giavasis	Kelsey Holmberg	Darya Klammer
Andrea Beltran	Tiffany Catherman	Joyce Dodrill Krieger	Julian Gilbert	Whitney P. Horton	J. Randy Klammer
J. Timothy Bender	Robert Chaloupka	William Doyle, Jr.	Asha Gilmore	Robert Housel	Lisa Klammer
Peggy Bender	Michele S. Charbeneau	Erica Drufvva	Christopher Glass	Mariya Howykwowycz	Christopher Klasa
Scott Bennett	Michael Charlillo	Kelly Dunn	Richarda Glass	Marc Huff	John Kluznik
Beverly Berdys	Matthew Chiricosta	Kyle Dunnell	Annie Goldstein	Allen Hufford	Beth Knezevich
Ann Bergen	Victor Chukwudelunzu	Michael Durnwald	Alan Goodman	Kevin Hulick	Dena Kobasic
Robert Berk	Madeline Clabough	Morgan Dykstra	Andrew D. Gordon-Seifert	Zachary Humphrey	Kelsey Kochman
Michael Berler	Olivia Cobb	Justin Eddy	Terry Graham	Grace Hurley	Jeffrey Kocian
Paul Binder	Howard Coburn	Asako Ejima	Graham Grant	Nora Hurley	James Koerner
Hannah Black	John Cole	Alan Ellis	Ronald Greenspan	Bruce Hutton	Andrew Kohn
Suzanne Blum	Deborah Coleman	Rachel Emerson	Jazmine Greer	Lee Hutton	Lee Koosed
Bomi Boehnlein	Shelby Conklin	Katie E. Epperson	Jessie Griswold	Maria Ianiro	Arun Kottha
Alexander Bolden	Michele Connell	Thomas Erickson	Lydia Gross	Rachel Ippolito	Ellen Kramer
David Boldt	Meghan Connolly- Davidson	Emily Erossy	Danny Guan	Bradley Irwin	Suzana Krasnicki
Alisa Boles	Kristen Connors	Susan Evans	Nicholas Gulish	Peter Iskin	Kristen Kraus
Fredric Bolotin	Brian Cook	Robert Farinacci	Richard Gurbst	Isabella Jackson	Allison Kreiner
Nicole Bothwell	Jason Cook	Michael Farrell	Stacie Hackel Snow	Liz Jackson	Jared Kriwinsky
Mary Bradley	Christine Cooper	Ruth Fazio	Eleanor Hagan	Diane James	Timothy Krogh
Patricia Brandt	Merissa Cooper	Stephen Fazio	Nadia Haile	Diana Jancura	Jacob Kronenberg
Scott Bratton	Ashley Cope	Sara Feldenkris	Lillian Hall	James Jaworski	Sanjana Kulkarni
Kami Brauer	Jennifer Corso	Gregory Feldkamp	Victoria Hamilton	Leslie Johns	Brittany Kulwicki
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Daniel Bryan	Jason Csehi	Bryan Fisher	Makela Hayford	Carrie Jones	Tammi Lampkin
Lillie Burkons	Anghela Dalipi	Kenneth Fisher	Rachelle Hays	Justin Joseph	Meghan Lanter
Christina Bushnell	Danielle DalPorto	Nick Fleming	Reagan Joy	Reagan Joy	Christine LaSalvia
Kevin Butler	Stacy Dame	Micheala Mae Flibotte	Woo Jun	John Jurco	David Lash
Natalia Cabrera	Marc Dann	Sarah Fontana	John Kan	Karin Kan	Melissa Laubenthal
Charlene Cachat	Elesa Davis	Dylan Ford	Katherine Karkoska	Amy Keating	Kieran Layton
Kenneth Cahill		Elliot Forhan	Victoria Kekel	Victoria Kekel	Charles Lazzaro
Carly Caldron		Molly Forkins			Pearce Leary III

Legal Aid is grateful to these attorneys, law students, and other friends for their incredible commitment to Legal Aid's mission!



Maria Levanoff	Tom Monah	Jonathan Perry	Monica Ruiz Gallardo	Christine Sukel	Sandra Walker
James Levin	Brittany Morales	Jo Ann Pesuit	John Ruiz-Bueno	Jason Sullivan	Mark Wallach
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Cristina Lowder	Joseph Muska	Renee Pickel	Nicole Saoudi	Councilperson	Keith Weiner
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Edward Mamrack	James Nichols	Michael Platt	J. Gary Seewald	Latosha Tate	Claire Wiczorek
Peter Mapley	Anabelle Nietupski	R. Jeffrey Pollock	Joshua Selby	Hillary Taylor	Yubia Wilkinson
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Alvin Mathews	Mark Norris	Emily Port	Jathniel Shao	Michael Thal	Christopher Williams
Rachel Maver	Alireza Nourani-	John Powers	Marie Shapiro	Natalie Thomas	Stephanie Williams
Marcus McCrary	Dargiri	Stephen Proe	Katelyn Shoemaker	Adrian Thompson	Cheryl Williamson
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Ian Mills	Lavell Payne	Amy Rubenstein	Brittany Stipich	Thomas Wagner	
Anand Misra	Abby Perez	Karen Rubin	Tracy Stratford	Hanna Walker	

# Together We Can create real change



**Legal Aid helps families across Northeast Ohio access the power of the law so they can live safer, healthier, and more financially stable lives.**

## Legal Aid's Ripple Effect

With an investment in Legal Aid, you provide our team with the resources we need to reach more people and extend the impact of civil legal counsel across a five-county area.

### Your support:



**Impacts more families through partnerships**



**Removes barriers to opportunity**



**Elevates Legal Aid as a catalyst for community change**

**We're working together to grow and serve more families.**

**To learn more about how you can extend justice, visit [lasclev.org/TogetherWeCan](http://lasclev.org/TogetherWeCan).**





“Alone we can do so little;  
Together  
We Can  
do so much.” – Helen Keller

Together  
We Can impact more families  
through partnerships



Community partnerships bring Legal Aid to where families live, work, go to school, and seek other services. **Kira** (*alias used to protect client privacy*) shared her housing struggles with the Say Yes Cleveland representative at her daughter’s school: a stranger had shown up at her home, claiming to be the new landlord. Through a referral to Legal Aid, Kira was connected to an attorney who helped her avoid eviction, secure more affordable housing, and avoid any period of homelessness. “Words cannot express my sincere gratitude to my attorney,” says Kira. “I would 1,000 times over recommend calling Legal Aid.”

*Legal Aid is the official legal services hub for Cleveland Metropolitan School District students in participating Say Yes Cleveland schools.*

Together  
We Can remove barriers to opportunity

Legal Aid lawyers play an instrumental role in helping families overcome barriers to employment, education, security, and housing. **Martin** (*alias used to protect client privacy*) came to Legal Aid for help with a criminal record issue. He had been working for more than a year in a good and steady job as an exterminator. But, he was concerned that if potential clients knew about his criminal record, they would not hire him. Martin’s Legal Aid attorney represented him through a process to seal his record. Now, Martin’s past mistakes will not hinder him from moving forward in his career. He looks forward to starting his own business one day.



Legal Aid’s efforts create change at the macro level by fostering a stronger, more thriving democracy. For example, our advocacy led to the repeal of a discriminatory law in Bedford that incentivized punishing tenants for calling the police “too often.” Other cities took note and began revising similar laws. No one should be reluctant to call the police for help because they fear retribution from a landlord. We are making neighborhoods safer, stronger, and more equitable through our work.

Together  
We Can  
elevate Legal Aid  
as a catalyst for  
community change

Join us! Add your name to our list of supporters at [laslev.org/ExtendJustice](https://laslev.org/ExtendJustice).



#TogetherWeCan #ExtendJustice



# Our commitment to the legal community

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We are proud to support the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland – working for the right of all people to seek justice.

**BakerHostetler**

[bakerlaw.com](http://bakerlaw.com)

A nighttime photograph of a city skyline, featuring several prominent skyscrapers with their lights on. The sky is a deep blue, and the buildings are illuminated with warm yellow and white lights. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

JUSTICE FOR ALL  
DEPENDS ON  
ACCESS FOR ALL.

Our thanks to **The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland**  
for your service to our community.

We pledge to work together to ensure everyone has  
access to a skilled legal advocate.

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# CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN BAR ASSOCIATION



**EXTRAORDINARY**  
*partners*  
— IN —  
**EXTRAORDINARY**  
*times*

We have learned that in extraordinary times, we must come together more than ever. We make one another stronger as we face new challenges side-by-side. Congratulations to The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland for another year of vital service to our community. We appreciate our extraordinary partners and look forward to doing so much more together.



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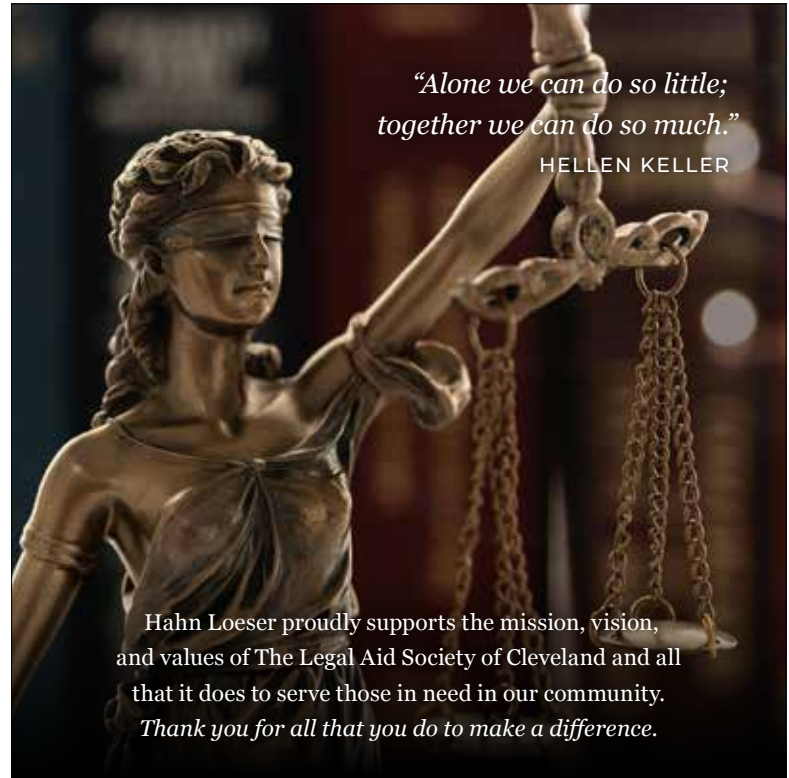
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