

# MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

*WAJ members provide wonderful examples of contributions trial lawyers make across the state of Wisconsin. Below are some examples to illustrate the ways trial lawyers contribute to their communities.*

## **Education and Schools:**

One of the top areas for trial lawyer volunteers was schools. **Chris Bremer Muggli** of Wausau and **Paul Gagliardi** of Salem have served on their local school boards. Paul served as president on the Brighton School Board for 18 years, while Chris was on the Wausau School Board from 1998-2005, serving as President two of those years. Chris continues her work with the Wausau Education Foundation raising funds to support programming for the Wausau School District.

**Eric Farnsworth** serves on the board of trustees at Edgewood High School in Madison and Ann Jacobs serves on the School Governance Council Climate Committee for the Maryland Avenue Montessori in Milwaukee.

**Jay Urban** of Shorewood donates money each year so that every child who attends Atwater Elementary School in the village of Shorewood can take field trips to the Urban Ecology Center. Given the budget cuts, this financial contribution makes it easier for urban children to get education on nature, ecology and preservation.

**Keith Stachowiak** of Milwaukee has been very active in establishing a scholarship fund, the St. Gerard Fund, for scholarships for area grade school families. The Fund was established when the Milwaukee Diocese closed the church and school Keith attended as a child and sold the property to a Daycare Center. The scholarship fund was started with the proceeds of the sale of the property. The Fund provides about 120-140 scholarships a year. There were 12 schools that participated in 2007, and that will expand by two next year. Keith is an application reviewer and does all the paperwork in reviewing the applications, about 50-60 hours a week for six weeks.

**Jonathan Safran's** law firm in Milwaukee is a sponsor and contributor to the Willie D. Davis Scholarship Fund, in association with WMCS, providing for scholarships to Milwaukee High School students for post secondary education.

**Sally Hestad** of Madison is the current co-chair of the Women in Focus "I Have a Dream" Scholarship

Banquet and Ball which is held in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The dinner is held annually and all the proceeds will go to college scholarships for minority youth.

**David Sparr's** law office in Oshkosh accepts one "intern" per semester from UW-Oshkosh. These are junior or senior level students who have an interest in law, and want to spend time in a law office, seeing what lawyers really do, participating in client conferences, depositions, and court appearances. Over the 12 years they have been running this program, approximately 70% of these students end up in law schools. David and his staff spend many hours explaining, showing, and teaching these students so they have a rewarding experience.

**Paul Gagliardi**, Salem, and Kevin Lonergan, Appleton, serve as Mock Trial Coaches in their local schools.

## **Youth Programs:**

**Jonathan Safran** served for the past two years on the Board of YMCA Camp Matawa, in the Campbellsport, WI area, and also chairs the Strong Kids Campaign for the Camp Matawa Branch, raising money for scholarships for disadvantaged kids to attend this YMCA camp.

**Sally Hestad** of Madison is a director of GIRLS'BIZ, a program for 6, 7 and 8th grade girls that teaches them to be entrepreneurs and philanthropists.

**Nick Padway** of Milwaukee serves on the Board of Directors for the Milwaukee Foundation for Fire Safety, a non-profit organization that helps fund and operate the City of Milwaukee's Survive Alive House, which is operated by the Milwaukee Fire Department in conjunction with the Milwaukee Public School system. The Milwaukee Survive Alive House provides fire safety education to all second and fifth grade students in the Milwaukee Public School system and is available to private and choice schools as well. Nick has been involved in the Foundation since its inception in 1992 and donated all the legal work to get it up and running.

**Anne Workman**, Hudson, is on the board of a nonprofit called “Dads Make a Difference,” which works at training high school kids on the importance of not becoming a parent until you are financially and emotionally ready. For those already with children, it explains their rights and responsibilities, both financially and staying involved with their child. The high schoolers then go and teach middle school and junior high school kids. Anne also coordinated in kind and monetary donations made by Minnesota Association for Justice (formerly MTLA) to Avenues for Homeless Youth. Avenues is a 15 bed shelter that allows homeless teens to stay as long as they are actively working on a plan for their future (ie, school, GED, job training).

**Paul Hoefle** serves as the Cubmaster of Cub Scout Pack 359 at Divine Redeemer Church and School in Hartland. He is also the Assistant Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 67 in Menomonee Falls.

**David Wilk** is a Board Member of the Boys and Girls Club of Kenosha and Chris Bremer Muggli is a volunteer for the Boys & Girls Club in Wausau.

Sports are a big part of youth programs and several volunteer coaching teams. **Nick Padway** has served on the Milwaukee Winter Club Board of Directors since 1996, which is the youth hockey association governing the northern half of Milwaukee County. He is presently the vice president and coordinator of the coaches committee and also served as a volunteer parent-coach over the past 12 years and winning one state championship title.

**Paul Gagliardi** has spent many years as a manager, fundraiser and director of a very successful youth baseball organization, the Kenosha Indians.

**Jeff Zirgibel** coaches young children at his local YMCA. The sports include soccer, tee-ball/baseball and basketball. He is also on the board of directors of Merton Athletic Association, which sets up activities - baseball, soccer, basketball and volleyball - all year long for the residents of all ages in Merton, WI.

**Thomas Houck** is a volunteer with Pewaukee Youth Football and Pewaukee Youth Baseball.

## **Community & Church Organizations:**

By far, the largest numbers of volunteers are in this category because it comprises the largest range of organizations – national, state or local.

**David Weber** of Green Bay is a member of his local Kiwanis Club.

**Mike Siddall** of Appleton is director and vice-president of legal for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Wisconsin and he is an active volunteer and the member of the Advisory Council of the local Make-a-Wish field office. Mike is also a director and vice-president of legal for Habitat for Humanity of the Fox Valley and a volunteer with the group.

**Jay Urban** is on the Steering Committee for the Drive To Distinction, which is a citizen group in partnership with the Shorewood village and school board to raise awareness and funding for new outdoor athletic facilities. Jay is also a founder of Friends of Atwater Beach, which is a group of residents organized to clean up Lake Michigan and make it a safe and sustainable family destination.

**Nick Padway** is a member of the Milwaukee Fire Bell Club. The club is a non-profit organization that operates a mobile canteen. The canteen unit responds to greater alarm fires and other prolonged emergencies in Milwaukee County. It provides food and hot or cold liquids to firefighters, police officers and other rescue workers at these emergencies. He has been an active member since 1994, donating his legal expertise to help the organization operate properly and obtain its 501(c) (3) status.

**David Sparr** is a member of Oshkosh Arts, a City of Oshkosh entity, which coordinates arts activities in the area.

**Chris Bremer Muggli** is President of the Performing Arts Foundation, and the Chairman of the Arts Block project which developed a performing arts center in Wausau. She also is a speaker for the American Association of University Women.

**Paul Gagliardi** has been on the board of the Kenosha Visiting Nurses for over 25 years. He is also the past president of Neighborhood Housing Association.

**Ryan Hetzel** of West Bend is on the board and vice-president of a non-profit agency called Citizen Advocacy of Washington County. The group provides opportunities for supportive relationships between community members and those who have developmental disabilities.

**John Schomisch**, Appleton, serves on the facilities committee of St. Mary Parish in Appleton. He uses his legal and real estate knowledge with other members to keep the physical plant of the 148-year old parish and cemetery in good shape.

Prior to this committee he was on the parish counsel for three years during an expansion of the church facilities.

**Paul Hoefle**, Sullivan, is an active member of Divine Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hartland. He also is an active member of the Waukesha Rotary Club, which raises money through community service projects, which is then distributed by the Waukesha Rotary Charitable Fund. The group recently organized and staffed the Blues Festival in Delafield.

**Robert Blondis** of Milwaukee serves on the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America.

**Eric Farnsworth** of Middleton has been a volunteer working to build Habitat for Humanity houses. He has also taken a mission trip to Bolivia to rebuild a school/orphanage. He also sponsors several kids via childrens' International relief program for poor children overseas. In the past he has helped answer children's Letters to Santa that the Post office gave him with gifts.

**David Wilk** is a Board Member for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life in Kenosha. He is also on the Board of the Kenosha Library Foundation.

**Jonathan Safran** just finished a stint of five years on the National Board of the American Juvenile Arthritis Organization, now known as the Juvenile Arthritis Alliance, a part of the Arthritis Foundation. He and his law firm has also been a partner with a local Urban Radio Station, WMCS AM in Milwaukee, helping to sponsor its Christmas Family Feast, feeding 5000-7000 homeless and disadvantaged in the Milwaukee area a Christmas meal.

**Steve Toney** of New London is on the Board of Directors for the Military Veterans Museum Foundation in the Fox Cities, which is raising money to build the 3rd largest veterans museum in the country just down the road from the EAA in Oshkosh. Steve helped organize the Appleton-based Fox Valley Vietnam Veterans Association. He is also the founder of the Waupaca County Crime Stoppers organization and has served as

President of a local alcohol and drug abuse organization.

**David Lowe** of Shorewood has done the legal work for the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Showhouse for the past 11 years.

**Michael Davis** of Madison helps prepare and serve evening meals at the men's homeless shelter at a local church once a month. He also volunteers at Hospice Center in Fitchburg, assisting the nursing staff caring and providing hands on care for patients who are in the end stages of life.

## Civic

**Nick Padway** is the current Chairman of the North Shore Fire Commission. The Commission is responsible for hiring, promoting and disciplinary appeal hearings for the North Shore Fire Department, the Department that serves 7 Milwaukee suburban communities (Fox Point, Glendale, Brown Deer, Bayside, River Hills, Shorewood and Whitefish Bay).

**Thomas Houck** serves as the chairperson of the Village of Pewaukee Zoning Board of Appeals.

**John Schomisch** serves on a City of Appleton and Appleton Yacht Club committee regarding the highest and best use for the marina facility between the 150-year old city and the 75-year old club.

## Business

**Dave Sparr** is the chair of the Downtown Oshkosh Business Improvement District, which promotes all types of activities in the downtown. Since 1998 it has sponsored a monthly gallery walk in which 39 local galleries participate.

**Jeff Zirgibel** is on the board of directors for the Menomonee Falls Chamber of Commerce.

## Justice

**Michael Davis** is a Past President of the Dane County Bar Association and remains on the DCBA Board as the chair of the Law For The Public Committee. The committee's work this year is focused on getting DCBA member attorneys into

all of the Dane County public schools as speakers, giving presentations to students on law related topics of interest, such as the Constitution, legal rights and responsibilities, the role of law and lawyers in our society. He also serves regularly as a volunteer mediator for the DCBA Case Mediation Committee.

**David Weber**, Green Bay, is a board member of the Wisconsin Equal Justice Fund as is Ann Jacobs, Milwaukee, who also serves as Chair of the dinner committee.

**Ann Jacobs** is also part of Election Protection in Milwaukee and serves as member of the Legal Committee. She also is a committee member of the Milwaukee Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Information Service.

Since 1987, **Kevin Lonergan** of Appleton has co-hosted Time Warner Cable's "You and The Law" television program where he has interviewed numerous guests regarding various aspects of the law and he has moderated numerous debates involving candidates for District Attorney, Wisconsin Court of Appeals, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

## Conclusion

As trial consultant **David Ball** has written, trial lawyers need to break through the stereotypes attributed our profession by redefining themselves and showing how they help people. The above examples are inspirations and show the entire world that trial lawyers care. We salute everyone's efforts. Keep up the great work!

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