

BAR FOUNDATION UPDATE

In early 2001, several lawyers proposed the formation of a foundation for Howard County lawyers in an effort to further and promote: excellence in legal education; the continuing legal education of the legal profession; and foster a better understanding of the law and legal system among members of the public; and institute programs and systems to improve the legal and court systems in order to better serve the public; and, to improve relations between the Bench, the Bar and the public in general. John Z. May and Robert D. Earle, attorneys at Whiteford Taylor's Columbia office were instrumental in preparation of the documents necessary to form the Foundation and to qualify its approval with the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable entity. Nine additional attorneys, as well as Messrs. Earle and May each donated significant sums of both time and dollars to initially establish an endowed fund. These individuals became charter fellows and included: Jeff Krew; Chief Judge Diane O. Leasure, Alan Fishbein; David A. Carney; Gerald M. Richman; Judge Pamela J. Brown; Ronald M. Cherry; Sang W. Oh; and, Robert W. Guth. Additional charter fellows, each of whom made a significant monetary contribution, included: James K. Eagan (deceased); Honorable Lenore R. Gelfman; Honorable Raymond J. Kane, Jr.; Honorable James N. Vaughan; Honorable Robert Fisher; Honorable Thomas Nissel; Honorable R. Russel Sadler; Kerry D. and Donna Hill Staton; M. Albert Figinski; Tobey Brehm and Michael Davis. Since inception, 37 associate fellows and eight life fellows have been added to the roster of fellows of the Foundation.

In October 2006, the Bar Foundation sponsored its initial fund raising event – “Shoot the Bull” – at the Other Barn. The event raised a sum of money that permitted the Foundation to donate \$25,000.00 to Grassroots. This donation materially assisted in the construction and dedication of their new facility. In 2008 the Foundation granted \$10,000.00 to the Legal Aid Bureau of Baltimore City, Inc. and its Foreclosure Project. During the recent economic crisis these funds

permitted individuals unable to afford counsel to have the ability to have representation in this important and critical area.

Each year the Foundation seeks nominations of potential fellows from its fellow membership. The trustees now seek nominations of fellows from bar members and others engaged in law practice in Howard County. You are invited to send your nomination(s) to Kim Wharton, in writing, with documentation outlining the nominee's demonstrated civic commitments; demonstrated commitment to the legal profession and the rule of law; demonstrated bar and pro bono activities; and demonstrated ability to improve the public image of lawyers. Other factors to include are the number of years of legal experience; the nature of the legal experience; membership in an Inn of Court; bar membership and offices; civic activities and offices on boards and commissions; nature and type of pro bono activities; and recommendations of current fellows, if any.

In addition to nominations for fellows the Foundation sponsors an annual luncheon in June of each calendar year at which time an award is made to a member of the Bar or law firm that has made significant contributions to the Foundation's goals & objectives for a significant period of time. In prior years this award was based upon nominations from the Foundation's trustees. Richard Talkin was the first recipient of the annual award followed by former county solicitor Barbara Cook & the law firm of Carney, Kelehan, Bresler, Bennett & Scherr, then known as Reese & Carney. In the most recent year the Honorable Neil Edward Axel and Michael W. Davis were recipients. The trustees open the nomination process to all legal practitioners to ensure that all worthy applicants of this award are considered. If you believe an individual and/or law firm merits consideration please send the name of that person or firm, in writing, as well as his/her/its contributions and accomplishments in writing to the Executive Director of the Bar, Kim Wharton. Ms. Wharton will ensure that the trustees of the Foundation receive all nominations for fellows and the annual award.

If you have suggestions for projects that the Bar Foundation should consider, please convey them to Ms. Wharton. The Foundation trustees look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

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