

UNDERSTANDING OUR CHANGING COMMUNITY

with

JUDGE TIMOTHY S. BLACK

As explained by Bill Santen in the July issue of the CBA Report, the Senior Lawyers Division will be publishing a series of articles, each written by a veteran lawyer, seeking to reveal who the author really is, what s/he really wants in life, and how we are going to achieve an even better community.



A lawyer whom I respect enormously asked me to write an article for the Report reflecting upon: (1) who I am; (2) where and how I got started; (3) how my career progressed; (4) what's going on now; and (5) what I feel is important to our community.

Six years later I ran unopposed for re-election. Then, in 2000 and 2002, I ran unsuccessfully for the Supreme Court of Ohio. I hung out on the state-wide campaign trail with then-U.S. Congressman Sherrod Brown. In 2004, the U.S. District Judges for the Southern District of Ohio appointed me as a U.S. Magistrate Judge. Six years into my term, now-U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown recommended me to President Obama for lifetime appointment as a U.S. District Judge.

1. I am a husband, father, judge, sailor, teacher, and ex-smoker... in that order. My best decision ever was to marry Marnie 40 years ago, and our most important and satisfying work has been in raising two daughters, both of whom are strong, smart, loving women, who, no doubt, will care for us in our impending dotage, much as we cared for them in their youth. My greatest personal hope in life going forward is to become a grandfather.

2. I was adopted as an infant by a Harvard-educated heart surgeon and a mother with a Master's degree from Smith College. My parents sent me to the finest schools in the country, including Deerfield Academy and Harvard College. I knew from day one that to whom much is given, much is expected, and I wanted to be like my uncle and godfather, Judge Robert L. Black, when I grew up.

3. I taught high school English for six years after college and attended Chase law school at night. After law school, I worked as a civil litigator with Graydon Head and Ritchey for ten years. I carried bags for, among others, Susan Dlott, Mike Barrett, and Sandy Beckwith (now my federal court colleagues). In 1993, I ran for election as a municipal court judge and won.

4. I am delighting in my work as judge. Nevertheless, I am not eager for my legacy to be entirely consumed by *Obergefell v. Kasich*, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 102077, so I am continuing to work hard on additional matters. I am actually most proud of my work in *University of Cincinnati Chapter of Young Americans v. Williams*, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 147827, and *NECA-IBEW Pension Fund v. Cincinnati Bell*, 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 106161.

5. I believe most fundamentally in community service. As President Obama has written in *The Audacity of Hope*, community service is part of a grand American tradition rooted in the simple notions that we each have a stake in one another, and what binds us together is far greater than what drives us apart, and if more people subscribed to this elemental truth, we really could get something meaningful done. I am working on it. And the message I have shared with anyone who will listen is that when we study the biographies of our heroes, we find that most of their lives was spent in quiet preparation, doing tiny decent things, until one historic moment catapulted them to center stage and caused them to tilt empires. And so, in my own imperfect way, I am working on the doing of the tiny decent things.

Judge Black is a United States District Judge for the Southern District of Ohio.