

# 2004 PRESIDENTIAL AWARD

*Recognizing Outstanding Leadership  
in the Delivery of Pro Bono Legal  
Services in the State of Ohio*

**DIANA THIMMIG** is the 2004 recipient of the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation's Presidential Award. Ms. Thimmig merits this recognition for her leadership and hard work on the Bankruptcy Pro Bono Project operating in the Northern District of Ohio. "Diana said, 'I'll get 25 attorneys to volunteer to take pro bono bankruptcy cases, and I'll get the court to buy in by scheduling pro bono cases first on the docket.' She had us rolling in the aisles! We really didn't think it could be done. But what she's done – literally all by herself – is just astounding!" recalls Barbara Greenberg, Executive Director of the Cuyahoga County Bar Association, speaking about Ms. Thimmig, a partner with Roetzel & Andress LPA in Cleveland. The Bankruptcy Pro Bono Project has handled more than 200 cases during its first year. Client demand is so great that the Project's primary goal for the current year is to increase the number of volunteer attorneys. Central to the success and popularity of this Project is the direct involvement of the local bar, the judiciary, the Office of the U.S. Trustee, and the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, combined with the support of volunteer attorneys.

## Past OLAF Presidential Award Recipients

Richard Cordray (2003); Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Volunteer Lawyers for the Poor Foundation and Magistrate Stephanie Clark of the Licking County Court of Common Pleas, General Division (2002); Attorney General Betty Montgomery (2001); the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project (2000); Sternberg, Newman, Shifrin & Associates of Akron, Barkan & Neff of Columbus, and Gilliam & Ireland of Dayton (1999); Denis Murphy (1998); Bill Weisenberg, the Ohio State Bar Association's Government Affairs Director, Ohio State Bar Association (1997); the Columbus law firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease (1996).



Professionalism

Enthusiasm

Leadership

Service



OHIO LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

# DIANA MARIE THIMMIG

For more than 20 years, Diana Thimmig, a partner with Roetzel and Andress in Cleveland, has handled complex business and commercial litigation in both state and federal courts. During that time, she also served as counsel for the debtor, the debtor-in-possession, official committee of unsecured creditors, secured creditors, or served as the bankruptcy trustee in hundreds of Chapter 7, Chapter 11, and Chapter 13 bankruptcy cases and insolvency proceedings. In 1995, Ms. Thimmig received board certification in both Business and Consumer Bankruptcy from the American Board of Certification, which is sponsored by the American Bankruptcy Institute and the Commercial Law League of America.

Ms. Thimmig is an ardent supporter of continuing legal education for lawyers and the judiciary. She is widely published and frequently serves as a faculty member/speaker for educational programs sponsored throughout the year by the Ohio State Bar Association, Ohio Judicial College, National Institute of Trial Advocacy, and local bar associations on a wide range of topics including Bankruptcy, Receiverships, Commercial Law, and Trial Advocacy Skills.

Ms. Thimmig is also a strong advocate for providing legal services to the indigent. She is the current President of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland and founder and a volunteer attorney for the Bankruptcy Pro Bono Project currently operating out of the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division, Cleveland.

Ms. Thimmig earned her juris doctor from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law (1982) and a Bachelor of Arts from John Carroll University in 1980. Ms. Thimmig was born in Frankfurt, Germany.



the **legal aid** society of cleveland

G. LYONEL JONES, DIRECTOR

## BANKRUPTCY PRO BONO PROJECT

It was out of her keen appreciation for the value of a pro bono attorney's time that Diana Thimmig decided to create the Bankruptcy Pro Bono Project. By involving the Bankruptcy Court and the U.S. Trustee on the Project's oversight committee, Ms. Thimmig was successful in creating a system that includes the scheduling of pro bono creditor meetings and hearings first on the court and trustee docket, saving hours of volunteer time.

The Project is administered by the Cuyahoga County Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service, in partnership with the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. Legal Aid screens applicants according to the Project's income and debt eligibility guidelines. Those who qualify are given worksheets that need to be filled out. Through monthly clinics and support from the bar association, clients receive assistance in completing the worksheets and are then referred to participating volunteer attorneys.

In its first year of operation, which has just been completed, the Bankruptcy Pro Bono Project has handled more than 200 cases. Another key to the Project's success is that the bar association offers a free CLE programs to the Project's volunteer attorneys. The CLEs cover bankruptcy topics relevant to the cases that Project volunteers will handle.

# OHIO LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation is a private, non-profit organization created by the Ohio Legislature in 1994 as a response to the serious deficiencies in meeting the civil legal needs of all Ohioans. In partnership with the state and local bars, elected officials, and local legal service providers, the Foundation continues to coordinate statewide resource development, support the delivery of legal services by local legal aid providers, and promote innovative approaches to ensure justice for all.

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