

# 2021 ANNUAL RECOGNITION LUNCHEON

A Virtual Celebration | Thursday, May 27, 2021

## HONORING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR:



Tim L.

Collins '85

Principal, Thrasher, Dinsmore Dolan



Justice
Michael P. Donnelly '92
Supreme Court of Ohio



Chief Magistrate
Gregory F. Clifford '80
Cleveland Municipal Court







Congratulations to C\M\Law School Alumni of the Year.

Tim L. Collins and Justice Michael P. Donnelly
were recognized for 2020, and Gregory F. Clifford
and Michelle L. Paris for 2021.

**Tim**, we are proud to have you on our team and are humbled by your dedication to our community and the law.



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#### **CMLAA MISSION**

The Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association (CMLAA) supports, serves, and promotes Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, its alumni, students, faculty, and staff by offering quality educational and professional programs and opportunities designed to enhance the reputation and foster pride and involvement in the Cleveland-Marshall community.

#### **ABOUT THE CMLAA**

While every Cleveland-Marshall alum becomes a member of the Association for free, CMLAA plays an important part of your experience long before you become an alum. Among the most valuable initiatives the Association offers students, is its Mentor Program and Scholarship Awards. The Mentor Program pairs students with an alum, and/or member of the legal community, who provides guidance, advice, networking and social opportunities to assist students in navigating their law school experience. The Association also hosts a number of social and fundraising events, such as CLE programs and our flagship event, the Annual Recognition Luncheon (ARL) – where two distinguished alums are honored for their career accomplishments and commitment to CMLAA and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. These fundraising efforts allow the CMLAA to award scholarships to deserving students each year, who are recognized at the Association's Annual Meeting and/or the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Awards Ceremony.

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN:

I'm very grateful for the wonderful opportunity and honor to serve as Dean of Cleveland-Marshall College of Law at Cleveland State University.

Thanks to so many, our 124-year-old law school has seen a year of inspiring resilience and adaptive leadership in the midst of unprecedented disruption and uncertainty.

My thanks to our outstanding faculty, dedicated staff, inspiring students, and, of course...our loyal and supportive alumni!

The Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association is the best law alumni association in the nation.

My very special thanks to CMLAA President Darlene White who has been an outstanding leader and great partner!

LEARN LAW. LIVE JUSTICE.

WE ARE YOUR LAW SCHOOL FOR LIFE.

Lee Fisher

Dean and Joseph C. Hostetler-BakerHostetler Chair in Law Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Cleveland State University



## 2021 ANNUAL RECOGNITION LUNCHEON – A VIRTUAL CELEBRATION

Original Music by Ashley Nemeh

3L Cleveland-Marshall Law Student

Welcome Delante Spencer Thomas '16, Co-Chair

Brad Wolfe '16, Co-Chair

2021 Annual Recognition Luncheon Committee

#### **CLEVELAND-MARSHALL COLLEGE OF LAW VIDEO**

#### AWARDS CEREMONY

Remarks Darlene E. White '00

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President's Award *2020 President's Award Recipient* 

Ashley L. Jones '11 Treasurer, CMLAA

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Alicia M. Perozeni

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Remarks Dean Lee Fisher

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Dean Wilson G. Stapleton Award for Faculty Excellence 2020 Stapleton Award Recipient Professor Matthew W. Green, Jr., Associate Professor of Law

Cleveland-Marshall College of Law

2021 Stapleton Award Recipient Professor Carole O. Heyward Clinical Professor of Law

Cleveland-Marshall College of Law



#### AWARDS CEREMONY (CONT.)

Remarks and Elizabeth E. Collins '13

Presentation of 2020 Associate Attorney, Thrasher, Dinsmore & Dolan

Alumni of the Year Award

Remarks 2020 Alumni of the Year

Tim L. Collins '85

Principal, Thrasher, Dinsmore & Dolan

Remarks and Judge John J. Russo '92

Presentation of 2020 Alumni of the Year Award Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court

Remarks 2020 Alumni of the Year

Justice Michael P. Donnelly '92 Supreme Court of Ohio

Remarks and Ronald B. Adrine '73

Presentation of 2021 Alumni of the Year Award Retired Judge, Cleveland Municipal Court

Remarks 2021 Alumni of the Year

Chief Magistrate Gregory F. Clifford '80

Cleveland Municipal Court

Remarks and David M. Paris '77

Presentation of 2021
Alumni of the Year Award

Managing Partner, Nurenberg, Paris, Heller & McCarthy

Remarks 2021 Alumni of the Year

The Honorable Michelle L. Paris '84

**Bedford Municipal Court** 

Closing Delante Spencer Thomas '16, Co-Chair

Brad Wolfe '16, Co-Chair

Original Music by Ashley Nemeh

3L Cleveland-Marshall Law Student

### Congratulations to our 2020 & 2021 Alumni of the Year!

On behalf of the Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association and the 2021 ARL Committee, we THANK YOU for your support and for joining us for the virtual 2021 Annual Recognition Luncheon.

Many thanks to all of our sponsors, advertisers, donors, volunteers, and vendors who helped make the 2021 ARL a success.

Thank you to Dean Lee Fisher and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law for your continued support.

A special thanks to Goldfarb Weber Creative Media for producing the 2021 ARL video.



#### 2020 & 2021 ANNUAL RECOGNITION LUNCHEON COMMITTEE

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Many thanks to our 2020 & 2021 Annual Recognition Luncheon Committee members whom worked tirelessly to make this year's Luncheon a success!



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CMLAA 2020 ALUMNI OF THE YEAR RECIPIENT:

#### **TIM COLLINS '85**

Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association Alumni of the Year recipient Tim Collins '85 vividly remembers being called on in Professor David Goshien's contracts class during his first year at CSU Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. Professor Goshien had a policy of asking students to stand at their seat and be fully prepared when called on or they would be excused from class—permanently. The first time Tim was called on, he had read four of the five cases assigned for that day but only skimmed the fifth case. Called upon to discuss the fifth case, Tim struggled, only to be saved by the clock by the end class. After that day, Tim vowed to always be prepared and to complete whatever work is needed in any matter, and to be ready to respond to whatever the court asks. It is a credo that has served the Principal at Thrasher Dinsmore & Dolan well in more than 30 years of litigation practice.

Tim first became interested in litigation after a summer clerkship in the US Attorney's Office following his first year of law school. It motivated Tim to join the CSU C|M|LAW Moot Court team, at the time advised by Professor Stephen Weber. During those two years, he developed legal research, brief writing and oral advocacy skills, and earned the opportunity to compete at the F. Lee Bailey National Moot Court Competition in San Diego, CA. The now veteran litigator credits those experiences and his education at CSU Cleveland-Marshall with preparing him for a decorated practice.

"At Cleveland-Marshall, I learned about hard work, about having good relationships with my classmates, and the importance of aspiring to learn new things about the law," Collins said. "There could have been no better preparation for entering the practice of law in Northeast Ohio than the path through Cleveland-Marshall."

Tim's practice has focused on business litigation including complex commercial trials, appeals and arbitration, class action cases and receiverships. He has served as receiver and counsel to a receiver in more than 50 state court cases in recent years, where he managed and sold and/or acted as counsel for a national wholesale lumber business, a regional airport fixed base operation, downtown Cleveland office towers and store fronts, and dozens of commercial and residential structures. Tim was a longtime Partner at Collins & Scanlon, alongside fellow CSU C|M|LAW graduate Thomas Scanlon '63, before joining Thrasher Dinsmore Dolan in 2019.

Tim has maintained an active relationship with CSU C|M|LAW during his practice and considers his interactions with the CMLAA, fellow alumni, the law school, and its students to have been some of the most rewarding of his professional career. He is a member of the CSU CIMILAW Board of Visitors and previously served as CMLAA president. "I had role models in lawyers I worked with who remained involved with Cleveland-Marshall after graduation," Collins said, noting that Collins & Scanlon had three partners who served as president of the Cleveland Marshall Law Alumni Association, two partners who have been named CMLAA Alumni of the Year, and two partners who are in the CSU C|M|LAW Hall of Fame. "Hence, I am following in the steps of others who went before me by remaining involved. Additionally, being involved with the school and the association also is a great way to make my own law school diploma more valuable, by paying it forward in supporting the current law students."

This November, Tim will also be inducted into the CSU C|M|LAW Hall of Fame. His other professional leadership roles include having been a member of two Ohio Supreme Court task forces/committees and serving for the last six years on the Ohio Board of Professional Conduct. He is also a co-founder and officer of the Irish American Law Society of Cleveland, formed in 2015 to facilitate dialogue between lawyers of Irish backgrounds in Ohio, Ireland and beyond.

Tim was the first member of his family to enter the legal profession but not the last. His daughter Elizabeth (Liz) Collins Cochran '13 and son-in-law Jim Cochran '12 are both graduates of CSU C|M|LAW. Liz currently works alongside her father as an associate attorney at Thrasher Dinsmore & Dolan. His daughter-in-law Anastasiya Collins graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 2019, and his son Matt will be attending law school in the fall.

#### What does being named CMLAA Alumni of the Year mean to you?

"Cleveland-Marshall is a law school of opportunity; it was for me as well. Previous generations of my family included very few college graduates, and no lawyers. I was given the opportunity to practice law by the willingness of the law school to take on a new initiate with no legal background, help me learn from the ground up, and send me out to practice with all the tools a law school can provide. I am very proud to have received a Cleveland-Marshall legal education, in and out of class, which has well served my legal career. This award reflects well on that education."



## CMLAA 2020 ALUMNI OF THE YEAR RECIPIENT: JUSTICE MICHAEL P. DONNELLY '92

Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association Alumni of the Year recipient Justice Michael P. Donnelly '92 considers the opportunity to work on criminal and civil justice reform initiatives to be the highlight of his first 2 1/2 years on the bench as an Ohio Supreme Court Justice. Justice Donnelly works with the Task Force on Conviction Integrity and Postconviction Review, which seeks ways to prevent and remedy wrongful convictions in the criminal justice system. He is also passionate about the need to gather relevant data to create meaningful sentencing reform and advocates for the creation of a statewide sentencing database at the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission.

"We have so many talented and dedicated individuals working in our criminal justice system," explained Justice Donnelly. "Systemically, however, the criminal justice system can always be improved. The more processes we can implement to provide transparency in the system, the more people will have confidence that the system is performing as intended; always seeking truth and resolving disputes in ways that are consistent with the principles of fairness and justice."

The opportunity to work with all stakeholders in the Ohio criminal justice system on systemic criminal and civil justice reform was one of the chief reasons Justice Donnelly ran for his seat on the Ohio Supreme Court in 2018, now serving as one of three CSU Cleveland-Marshall College of Law graduates on the seven-justice Court along with Justice Melody Stewart '88 and Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor '80. He had served the previous 14 years as a Judge on the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court. Justice Donnelly began his legal career as an assistant Cuyahoga County Prosecutor and has also worked in civil ligation, where he represented plaintiffs and injured workers in asbestos litigation, personal injury lawsuits, and workers' compensation claims.

"When I graduated from law school there was no way I could have imagined my career unfolding as it has," said Justice Donnelly. "My career path has instilled in me a great appreciation for the invaluable place lawyers hold in our society in resolving disputes, achieving justice for the public and achieving justice for their clients."

Justice Donnelly's commitment to justice was passed down to him by his mother, Ellen Donnelly, and father, Judge John J. Donnelly. His father, a 1969 CSU C|M|LAW graduate, served as a Cuyahoga County Probate Court Judge for 26 years and was also a recipient of the CMLAA's Alumni of the Year award.

Like his father before him, Michael attended CSU C|M|LAW's evening program. While working full-time at the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office limited the number of extracurricular organizations he was able to participate in, Michael forged friendships with evening and day students that remain a meaningful part of his experience in the legal profession.

Justice Donnelly has stayed involved with Cleveland-Marshall through the years, including as a mentor to this generation of students. He has visited multiple C|M|LAW classes as a guest lecturer, including a Civil Procedure course for a talk on transparency and the plea bargaining process. He also spoke to a Law, Literature and Film course that focused on a passion of Donnelly's – connecting legal-based dramas to real-world legal proceedings. His favorite film is *A Few Good Men*, which he has viewed over 50 times and has even used as a theme in legal scholarship.

"I feel I owe a great debt of gratitude to Cleveland-Marshall because it laid the foundation for what has been, so far, an immensely satisfying career," said Justice Donnelly. "It is very important to me to help keep the law school strong, so it continues to produce the excellent attorneys it has over all these years."

Justice Donnelly is involved with his high school alma mater as Chair of Saint Ignatius High School's Bellarmine Award Committee. He also serves on the board of the Cleveland Baseball Federation, which helps inner-city boys and girls play baseball and softball in the summer at no charge, and has been involved with the Western Reserve Fire Museum.

Justice Donnelly is a resident of Cleveland Heights, where he and his wife Nancy raised their two children. He also plays guitar and sings with the local rock band, *Faith and Whiskey*. The band plays several benefits including the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland's annual event, *Jam for Justice*.

#### What does being named CMLAA Alumni of the Year mean to you?

"Words simply cannot express how honored and humbled I am to receive this recognition from an institution that has had such a profound impact on my life. Cleveland-Marshall formed the foundation of a legal career that has been more satisfying and rewarding than anything beyond my wildest dreams. I am extremely humbled to receive this award with my most deserving co-honorees, Tim Collins, Judge Michelle Paris and Chief Magistrate Greg Clifford. We have all been friends for many years and I look forward to celebrating this great honor with each of them."



CMLAA 2021 ALUMNI OF THE YEAR RECIPIENT:

# CHIEF MAGISTRATE GREGORY F. CLIFFORD '80

Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association Alumni of the Year recipient Gregory F. Clifford '80 has been drawn to leadership positions throughout his life. In his profession, he has spent the last 20 years as Chief Magistrate of the Cleveland Municipal Court. At the courthouse, Clifford manages a staff of magistrates and supportive staff persons who handle small claims, traffic, misdemeanor, and civil cases, and provide legal research and recommendations for the Court's 12 judges.

Recognizing his leadership capabilities, Clifford's colleagues have elected him to serve as President of three associations – the Norman S. Minor Bar Association, Ohio Association of Magistrates, and the Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association. He considers being elected to serve those presidencies to be the highlights of his career.

Greg has sought out leadership roles dating back to his time as a student at CSU Cleveland-Marshall. While in law school, he served as President of the Black Law Students Association and as a senator on the CSU Student Government Association.

"The camaraderie and leadership experiences that I had at C|M|LAW helped to give me a heightened sense of confidence in myself, and direction for the purpose of my life's work to be in service to others," said Clifford.

Four decades later, Greg is still involved at CSU C|M|LAW, serving on the school's Board of Visitors. As a longtime member of the CMLAA's Board of Trustees, he was instrumental in founding the Minority Outreach Committee to help new minority students at CSU Cleveland-Marshall acclimate to law school and the profession through mentoring, programming and social events.

Serving as a role model is a position Clifford takes seriously. He considers himself fortunate to have had a number of African American attorneys serve as his mentors and role models throughout his career and pays that forward both in the legal profession and the greater legal community. Clifford is a founding member and former president of the Greater Cleveland chapter of 100 Black Men, an organization that provides positive black male role models through sustained, direct involvement with youth in Cleveland's urban areas.

"The most rewarding part of mentoring is seeing that our efforts have not been in vain and that lessons we taught and the experiences we provided helped to develop well-rounded and respectful young men and women who value education and are successful in their endeavors," said Clifford.

"I was born and raised in the Glenville neighborhood of Cleveland, educated in the public school system, and recognize that there is considerable human need being unmet," Clifford continued. "Therefore, I need to do my share to help effectuate some degree of change for the betterment of my community."

Clifford has held numerous volunteer positions in civic and non-profit organizations throughout the Cleveland community. For his work, Clifford was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Award for Civic Involvement from Cleveland State University.

Clifford also embraces the role of mentor at the Cleveland Municipal Courthouse, where he has spent the past 35 years as a Magistrate after beginning his career as an Assistant Cuyahoga County Prosecutor and in private practice. Mentoring at the courthouse primarily takes place with the Court's law clerks, the vast majority of whom are C|M|LAW students. Clifford takes the time to work with the law clerks on their legal research, analysis and writing skills.

Clifford is being recognized alongside a former co-worker at the Cleveland Municipal Court, Bedford Municipal Court Judge Michelle L. Paris '84. Judge Paris preceded Clifford as Chief Magistrate at the Court and both have been inducted into the CSU C|M|LAW's Hall of Fame.

"I am thrilled to be presented with the honor of being an Alumni of the Year alongside my long-time colleague, friend, and fellow Ohio University Bobcat, Judge Michelle Paris," said Clifford.

#### What does being named CMLAA Alumni of the Year mean to you?

"Coming from my fellow CSU law School alumni, the honor bestowed upon me as a recipient of the 2021 Alumni of the Year is one of the most rewarding recognitions that I have been given for my stewardship and professional accomplishments."



CMLAA 2021 ALUMNI OF THE YEAR RECIPIENT:

# THE HONORABLE MICHELLE L. PARIS '84

Cleveland-Marshall Law Alumni Association Alumni of the Year recipient The Honorable Michelle L. Paris '84 tells prospective law students that law school will empower them and open up many different career paths. CSU Cleveland-Marshall College of Law did just that for Judge Paris, as the former Cleveland elementary school teacher has gone on to a distinguished legal career that includes having served as a Judge on the Bedford Municipal Court for the past seven years.

Judge Paris had the demanding experience of attending CSU C|M|LAW as an evening student while teaching, but even getting into that program presented a challenge. Her application was passed over the first time she applied, but committed to her dream, Michelle retook the LSAT and wrote several letters to the law school expressing her desire to attend.

"The moment my application went from the 'no' stack to the 'yes' stack changed my life forever," recalled Judge Paris.

In the early stages of her time in law school, Michelle recognized a career in public service would match her interests. She worked as a clerk with the City of Cleveland Law Department while attending law school and went on to spend the bulk of her professional career as a Magistrate and Chief Magistrate with the Cleveland Municipal Court. She enjoyed the challenge of handling a wide variety of civil and criminal cases at the Court and credits her work as a magistrate in setting the foundation for becoming a respected judge.

Judge Paris is not the only employee of the Cleveland Municipal Court being recognized by the CMLAA. Her long-time colleague Gregory Clifford '80, the current Chief Magistrate of the Cleveland Municipal Court, is also being recognized with the Alumni of the Year honor.

"Greg and I have been friends and colleagues for many years as we served as magistrates together in Cleveland Municipal Court for over 20 years," explained Judge Paris. "It feels fitting that we are sharing this very special recognition together."

Chief Magistrate Clifford and Judge Paris have more in common than their years spent working together at the Court – both are actively involved with CSU C|M|LAW and are members of the school's Hall of Fame. Michelle serves on the school's Board of Visitors, participate in the school's mentor program and previously taught Consumer Law at the school as an adjunct professor.

"My involvement with Cleveland-Marshall is a labor of love," said Judge Paris. "This school continues to add joy to my life as I build new friendships through the alumni network.

"As far as I am concerned this is the number one law school in Ohio," continued Judge Paris. "This school has lifted so many to learn law and live justice!"

Judge Paris' connections to her law school are also rooted at the personal level. Michelle met her husband, fellow CSU C|M|LAW Hall of Fame Member David Paris '78, during her time in law school. She recalls initially being impressed by his knowledge of estoppel by deed while taking a real estate property course and continues to be proud of his work as Managing Partner at Nurenberg, Paris, Heller & McCarthy.

The Paris' and their extended family's legacy at CSU C|M|LAW goes far beyond David and Michelle. The couple's daughter, Nurenberg, Paris, Heller & McCarthy Partner Dana Paris '12, is also a graduate of the law school. So too are Michelle's brother Joseph Corsaro '82, nephew Joseph Corsaro '10, nephew Chris Holecek '88, his wife Tanja Holecek '89, and nephew Mike Gardineer '21.

"Who could have imagined that when our grandparents left Italy and landed in Cleveland to start a new life that so many members of our family would be Cleveland-Marshall graduates," said Judge Paris. "This is the land of opportunities and C|M|LAW is a big part of that."

#### What does being named CMLAA Alumni of the Year mean to you?

"Receiving this honor is a culmination of a lot of emotions but mostly a deep sense of gratitude. From the first day I walked into law school filled with anxiety, Cleveland-Marshall has been a safe harbor for me; a place to grow and a place to learn. The same holds true today but luckily with a lot less anxiety!"

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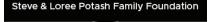


















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## Kathleen Valdez '16

I had the honor of receiving the Cleveland-Marshall Alumni Association scholarship award during my 2L and 3L years of law school. I had recently started a family and had a baby, so I greatly appreciated the opportunity to be able to worry less about using the scarce funds that I had to pay for completing law school. I spent a lot of my time during law school trying to find an adequate work-life balance as a new mother and someone who was just starting their legal career. Being a mother took more time and effort than I ever could imagine. Being a successful law student took more time and effort than I ever could imagine. Having the opportunity to be a recipient of the Alumni Association scholarship award allowed me to not have to become a part-time student and be able to focus on law school more. It allowed me to take a part-time job that was focused on gaining a unique legal experience. instead of financially lucrative. The additional time that I did not have to spend working to supplement my law school costs, I was able to spend studying on my courses and participating in groups that defined my law school career. These groups included the Student Bar Association, for which I served as a 1L Senator, Secretary and President. They also included BLSA, for which I was a member, and Recording Secretary and the Journal of Law and Health for which I served as a Managing Editor. I am forever grateful for the scholarship awards I received, and I know that I would not have found my success as a law student and my ability to balance that as a new mother without them.

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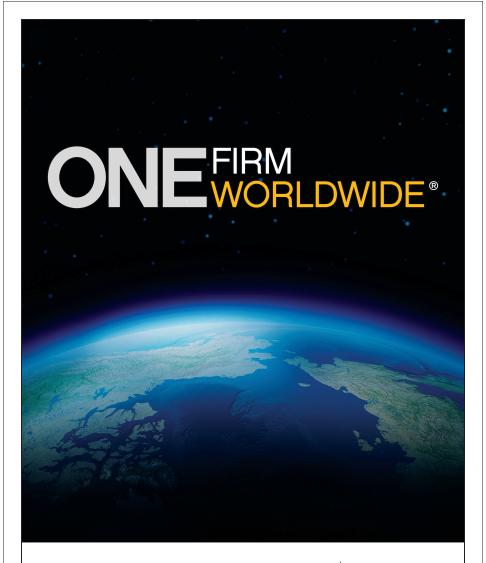
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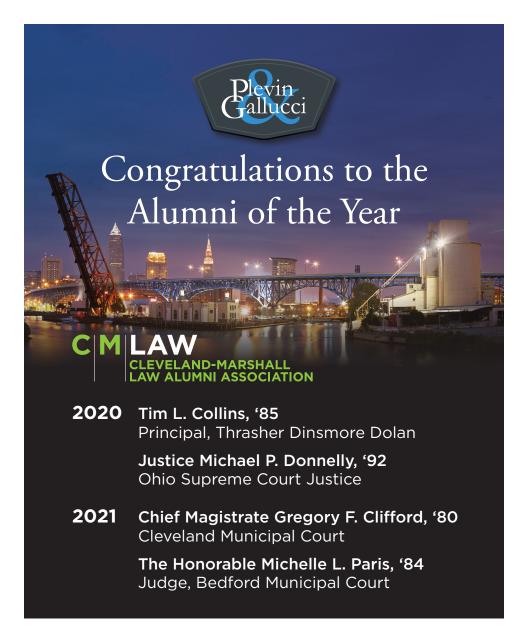
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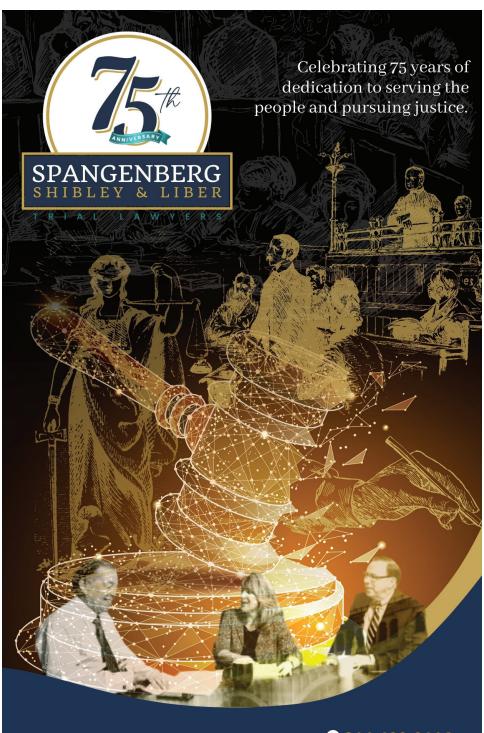
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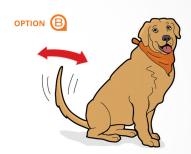
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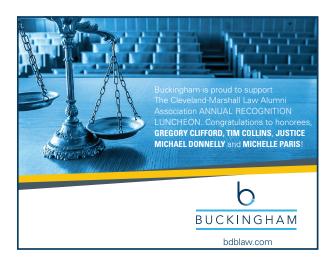
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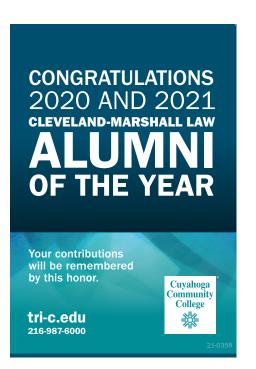
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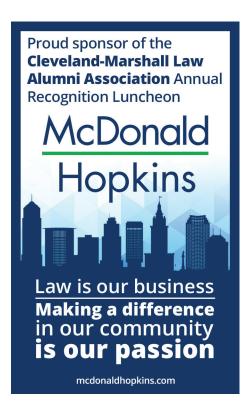
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