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One of the most basic aspects of providing pro bono services is giving something of oneself to another. Giving of oneself is something that I learned from a man who many called Sergeant Harry. Orphaned at an early age, he lived in foster homes until he graduated from high school in 1941. He enlisted in the Army and served as an infantry soldier in World War II. On the last day of the war in Europe, Sgt. Harry was hit by thirteen sniper's bullets. Miraculously, the doctors were able to save Sgt. Harry's life, but he was rendered a paraplegic.

Sgt. Harry then had to learn to live a new life, from his activities of daily living to how to drive a car. He had learn to survive in a pre-Americans with Disabilities Act world; there were no handicapped parking places or ramps. Every day brought obstacles that most would never notice.

The most memorable thing about Sgt. Harry is that everyone who knew him said the same thing about him: that he was the most positive person that they had ever met. After his passing, those who knew Sgt. Harry asked themselves, with all that he had suffered in his life, why was he so positive? Why didn't he curse his fate? The answer was this: Sgt. Harry had learned that each day is a gift to be treasured and each day is an opportunity to make a positive difference in someone else's life.

I knew Sgt. Harry. But I did not call him by that name. I called him "Dad." And the lesson of trying to make a positive difference is one I saw everyday by the example of how my Dad lived his life.

When I was elected to the leadership of the Cleveland Bar Association, I thought about what our association could do to promote pro bono to invoke the spirit of Sgt. Harry. There was (and still is) an obvious and huge unmet need for legal services in Cleveland. Ranked as one of the poorest cities in America, one-third of the city's families – one-half of the city's children – live below the poverty level.

What's more, there was (and is) a vast array of talented lawyers in Cleveland who wanted to help, but didn't know how. To attract lawyers to pro bono programs, we had to find a way to get lawyers to commit to pro bono service and then make sure that there were pro bono programs they could participate in easily. Our solution was "Our Commitment to Our Community," a program which asked lawyers and law firms to commit a specific number of hours annually to pro bono and public service. At the same time, working with the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, we reinvigorated Legal Aid's one-on-one match Volunteer Lawyer Program ("VLP") and established a series of clinics. In 2004, the first year of the program, we were more successful than we could have imagined: over 70,000 pro bono or public service hours were incurred; over 800 lawyers became part of the VLP; and we held over 30 clinics.

Missing from our Cleveland program was the involvement of the judiciary, a hallmark of successful and sustained pro bono programs across the country. After discussions with Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Moyer and the leadership of the Ohio Bar State Association, we established the OSBA Pro Bono Task Force in 2007. Modeled after programs elsewhere, the

Task Force has established twelve judicially-led pro bono committees to develop local programs in each of Ohio's twelve appellate districts.

The ABA's Pro Bono Publico Award is one of the highest recognitions that any lawyer could ever achieve. And for that, I am honored beyond words. But truth be told, any recognition that I may receive is a reflection – and needs to be shared with – two groups of people: the dedicated professionals at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and other legal services organizations and bar associations in Ohio (who run the pro bono programs); and the thousands of Ohio lawyers and judges who have answered the call for pro bono. Their work should inspire us. Many lawyers working with a single purpose can someday make a reality of the dream of providing legal services to all who need them, regardless of financial circumstances. In the spirit of Sgt. Harry, we can make life better for those who most need our help.