

Thank You, Tom Black.

By Glen McMurry



Glen McMurry is a litigation partner in the Dayton, Ohio office of the law firm of Taft, Stetinius & Hollister. He has nearly 20 years of experience serving diverse corporations and individuals resolving a wide variety of issues, including complex commercial disputes and compliance with local, state, and federal laws. McMurry also focuses his practice on employment issues, construction claims, insurance claims/defense, and litigation stemming from mergers and acquisitions.

Dear Members:

By the time you read this, I will be concluding my term as President of the Federal Bar Association. In fact, by the time you are reading this, I hope that we are all celebrating (or, will soon be celebrating) in the wonderful city of Minneapolis for the FBA's 2025 Annual Meeting!

Perspective is an interesting concept. In the throws of a journey, it is often difficult to appreciate where we have been and where we are going. However, as I conclude my journey as president of the FBA, I can see just how challenging and rewarding this year was. Like many of you, I was taught to leave things better than when I found them. I am delighted to report that **WE** have done so. Our membership continues to increase. The efficacy of our advocacy is incredible. Our camaraderie and fellowship are at their zenith and are certainly a testament to each of you. It is humbling to look back on this year and to realize what we have accomplished. Truly, the credit for all of our accomplishments is yours (the members) and that of our incredible staff.

When we condense our mission to its simplest form, it is clear that we seek to provide service; service to our members, service to our judiciary, and service to our clients. So, it is particularly fitting that I end my term as FBA president with the theme of *pro bono* representation. The difficulty with *pro bono* practice is that it is easy to talk about, but hard to perform. In fact, just this year the American Bar Association reported nearly 20% of attorneys have NEVER undertaken *pro bono* service.¹

Humbly, I hope this message encourages each of you to continue to give of yourselves in the pursuit of this noble mission. Why? Because *pro bono* representation increases access to justice. Equal access to the law is a pillar of our democracy and your service helps ensure that this equal access is maintained. *Pro bono* representation helps the least of us. But for your sacrifice, victims of domestic violence, immigrants seeking asylum, children, and the elderly (just to name a few) would have no recourse and, frankly, no hope to navigate the crushing challenges they face. *Pro bono* service also materially assists the courts before which we practice and aids in the orderly administration of justice. It also improves the communities in which we

live. Most importantly, it is good for you and provides the much-needed perspective that drives fairness in the law. This has certainly been true for me.

I learned about the importance of our *pro bono* obligation as attorneys in many places during my career, but none more so than when I represented Tom Black². I first met Tom in a jail cell in southwest Ohio. I was appointed to represent Tom in relation to the handwritten *habeas corpus* petition he wrote from his prison cell, where he had resided for 8 years before we met. I was Tom's fifth appointed attorney and I think Tom would agree that when I first met him, he did not like me and he did not trust me. I needed to earn his trust. Facing an additional 14 years on his sentence, I met with Tom nearly every month for three years.

Tom's case was challenging. As a commercial litigator, *habeas corpus* representation was not one of my specialties. Admittedly, I was uncomfortable. I was uncomfortable because I had competing commitments to my firm and my family. But I owed Tom a duty to provide the very best representation I could muster. His case was filled with highs and lows. We experienced nearly every emotion together. And, when we secured Tom's freedom at the end of my representation, affording him the ability to have a meaningful relationship with his family and to become a contributing member of society, tears were shed (mostly mine) and hugs were exchanged.

I will remember Tom and his case for the rest of my life. When my last day of practice finally comes, his case will be the one I remember most. Everyone who worked on Tom's case made sacrifices, sacrifices (generally) of time, sacrifices of time with family, and sacrifices of the ability to work for other clients not on a *pro bono* basis. But with sacrifice (again), comes perspective.

I wrote earlier that the pursuit of our *pro bono* mission can be, at times, uncomfortable. But, we need you to be uncomfortable. Indeed, we need you start being comfortable with being uncomfortable. You, as attorneys, will be better for it and so will our communities. So I ask all of you to start getting uncomfortable. Make your work count. Our communities need it. You need it. I need it.

It has been my honor to serve as your president, and I am beyond excited to see all of the incredible

contributions that will be made by Hon. Karoline Mehalchick when she assumes the role as president later this year. ☺

Thank you and be well,
Glen McMurry

Endnotes

¹https://www.americanbar.org/groups/probono_public_service/research_pro_bono0/

²Tom Black is not his real name.

Editorial Policy

The Federal Lawyer is the magazine of the Federal Bar Association. It serves the needs of the association and its members, as well as those of the legal profession as a whole and the public.

The Federal Lawyer is edited by members of its Editorial Board, who are all members of the Federal Bar Association. Editorial and publication decisions are based on the board's judgment.

The views expressed in The Federal Lawyer are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the association or of the Editorial Board. Articles and letters to the editor in response are welcome.

FBA Judicial Profile Index

A Valuable Benefit of Your Membership

THE
FEDERAL LAWYER
The Magazine of the Federal Bar Association

JUDICIAL
PROFILE INDEX



This index contains profiles as they were published in The Federal Lawyer magazine. The index is organized by circuit and district, which can be accessed via the tabs at right.
Users would like to search for a specific judge. It is recommended that you use the search function above and type in the judge's last name. This index will be updated with both new profiles and historical profiles on a regular basis.
If the judge you are looking for does not appear, this either means that they have not yet been added to this index or have not been profiled. The Federal Lawyer encourages submissions of judicial profiles. Contact the Managing Editor Sarah Pedersen at spedersen@fedbar.org for more information.

**Access the index today
at www.fedbar.org/JPI**

This digital publication contains profiles as they were published in *The Federal Lawyer*. Organized by circuit and district, the index currently contains profiles published from January 2001 to the current issue and is expanded often.