

From the President: Emulate The Reading Man

By Jim Webb
OCBA President

We are already smack dab in the middle of the 2014 holidays. Wow. Regardless of your background and experience, most would agree this is a time of reflection, a time of renewal, a time of giving. As OCBA members, we are, in part, “dedicated to serving... [our] community in order to foster the highest ideals of the legal profession [and] to better the quality of life in Oklahoma County.” The best gifts are ones of service, and we need not look very far to see an example of a fabulous giver.

Carver Mark Twain Head Start Program is on Main Street, just east of Villa. The program is designed for 3-4 year old kids who live below the poverty level. As you might expect, the 30 to 40 kids come from all kinds of backgrounds and have all kinds of needs, both academic and social. The goal, according to the program’s Site Director, Carla Price, is to give these kids everything they need to be prepared for kindergarten.



Bob Sheets

Enter “The Reading Man,” as he is very affectionately called by these precious preschoolers. Every month, our very own Bob Sheets leaves his high-rise downtown office and successful law practice at Phillips Murrah and enters the world of Carver Mark Twain Head Start. Bob leads the charge for the “Reading Buddies” program, in which he and others (including OCBA staffer Pam Bennett) read books aloud to the kids.

Bob gets down on the floor and sits “crisscrossapplesauce” with the kids, refusing to sit in what they call the “big people chair.” Bob shares a healthy snack (typically baby carrots and fruit) with the kids and invariably tells them the story behind whatever colorful tie he is wearing that particular day. They love his ties. But they love the interaction with Bob so much more. According to many studies, that type of interaction with adults is pivotally important to literacy success as these kids grow.

Last but not least, Bob and his colleagues provide every single one of the kids with two books.

Every visit. Every month. Year after year. For many of these kids, the books they receive from “The Reading Man” are the only physical items that are “theirs.” For this group of children, that is extremely important.

What Bob does is the very definition of servant leadership. It’s the very definition of giving. It’s the very definition of what we should be about as the OCBA. Carla Price summed it up by saying, “Bob is quite the winner in our book.” Bob’s work should inspire us all, not just in this holiday season, but year-round. On behalf of the hundreds of kids who have been positively impacted over the years, I say, “Thank you, thank you, Reading Man.”

Switching gears a bit, the Honorable Geary Walke took me up on

my request to share ideas for expanding the membership and reach of the OCBA. As a result, we have the perfect gift for you to give another lawyer in Oklahoma County for the holidays. The price is right – completely free.

Between now and January 15, every member of the OCBA can nominate a single (as in 1 – not necessarily unmarried) attorney to become a new member of the OCBA, and the new member's dues will be completely waived for the first year. As you think of whom to nominate, I would encourage you to think of lawyers from all different types of practice, including government, in-house, and the like. All you need to do is call the OCBA office (236-8421) and leave the name and address of your nominee. Our staff will take it from there by mailing him or her a new membership packet. Thanks to Judge Walke for this great idea. Keep the new ideas flowing, folks. My door is always open. Please email me at jim.webb@chk.com or call me at 935-9594. Happy Holidays and let's look forward to a productive, fun 2015 together!

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