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# Rock The Foundation V



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# CMBA's Diversity Action Committee:

## Promoting Opportunities for Students through Pipeline Programs

The CMBA's Diversity Action Committee ("DAC") advocates diversity and inclusion in the regional legal community through educational programs, diversity pipeline initiatives and networking opportunities. The DAC organizes the annual Diversity Networking Conference and other seminars, oversees the CMBA's award-winning pipeline diversity initiatives outlined below and provides networking opportunities. The DAC also assists the CMBA in addressing timely issues and concerns relating to diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. The Diversity Action Committee is comprised of the chairs of the CMBA diversity programs as well as member attorneys.

### Minority Clerkship Program

This program provides an invaluable "foot in the door" for talented minority law students at the conclusion of their first year of law school. Through the program, these students are afforded real-world work experience as law clerks or summer associates in a firm, law department or government agency. Thus, the student is exposed to the inner working of the legal arena and the law firm, law department or governmental agency is exposed to a talented and motivated minority law student. Moreover, the program provides an excellent opportunity for first-year law students to make indispensable contacts and networking connections for their future legal career.

### Minority Judicial Externship Program

This program provides the opportunity for minority law students to serve as paid judicial externs during the summer following their second year of law school. Externs develop their analytical and writing skills and benefit from mentoring relationships with judges and court staff. In 2009, externs were placed in the U.S. District Court, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Supreme Court of Ohio and Eighth District Court of Appeals.

### High School Internship Program

The purpose of the High School Internship Program is to provide students in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, who have an expressed interest in the profession of law, with an opportunity to work in a law firm, corporate legal department, or government agency as part of an eight-week paid internship to further enable them to decide whether they would like to pursue a career in the legal profession.

Students who have (1) completed their sophomore year of high school in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District; (2) maintained a minimum 3.5 grade point average; (3) attained 90% attendance; and (4) participated in either the 3Rs Program or their high school's respective mock trial program are eligible to participate in the High School Internship Program.

### Stephanie Tubbs Jones Summer Legal Academy

This program is a collaboration of the CMBA, Norman S. Minor Bar Association, Case Western Reserve University School of Law, and Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. Following a competitive application process, up to 24 minority high school students from schools throughout Cuyahoga County who are entering the 12th grade participate in this summer program that includes both academic and work components. After the two-week Academy which culminates in a mock trial, students complete part-time internships with area legal employers. The program enjoyed its fifth successful year in 2009 with participants from 13 Greater Cleveland schools.

### Support our Pipeline Programs

We encourage you to support these diversity initiatives by volunteering to mentor, providing clerkship and internship opportunities at your law firm or office and/or by making monetary contributions to support the Minority Judicial Externship Program. For more information about how to get involved, please contact Mary Groth, Director of Development & Community Programs at (216) 696-3525 x5004 or by e-mail at [mgroth@clemetrobar.org](mailto:mgroth@clemetrobar.org).

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### **Michael Watkins on the High School Internship Program**

My Internship at Tucker Ellis & West LLP was one of the best summer experiences I have ever had. To work in the business environment was very educating, and I would not trade this for anything. I never knew that attorneys and paralegals were so generous and kind. When I applied for this internship I thought T.E.W. would be just another job. I would have never thought this internship would be a major step to becoming an attorney.

My best moment at T.E.W. was when I had the opportunity to observe a trial. Seeing litigation up close was educational and interesting, and I wish I could do this more often. This case was a very serious subject, and I am proud I had the opportunity to see what can happen when young people make difficult adult decisions. I learned a lot from this trial, and I will take what I learned and make sure I inform young people about what can happen when they share information on personal public web spaces.

The T.E.W. family is a major part of why I had such a strong learning experience. Karen Ross, Ayesha Hardaway, Michael Brink, Carter Strang and many more, taught me an enormous amount of information I can use for the rest of my life. They taught me to remain professional at all times in the business environment. Staying professional is very important if I want to become successful, and I want to thank the T.E.W. family for teaching me so much. Interning at Tucker Ellis & West LLP was one of the best things I have ever participated in, and I want to thank T.E.W. for giving young students the opportunity to change their lives.

Michael Watkins