

Board Member Profile:

Richard Panza

Avon attorney Richard Panza began his career at Legal Aid. During his first two years at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Mr. Panza interned part-time with Legal Aid. He refers to this time affectionately, saying Legal Aid gave him a good start in his professional life: “Skills attorneys develop in their first five years are paramount to their legal career.”

Margaret Terry, Supervising Attorney for the Intake Unit, remembers working with Mr. Panza on juvenile cases: “He did anything and everything he needed to do. He cared – really cared about these kids and how the case came out, and worked hard to get a good resolution.” For his part, Mr. Panza admires those who have stayed at Legal Aid for the bulk of their legal career: “People who have been working there for a number of years have made a decision to give more than they take.”



Richard Panza, Esq.



Margaret Terry, Esq.

Mr. Panza attended evening classes his final year of law school, enabling a full-time commitment to Legal Aid. Then private practice drew him out to Lorain County, where he joined a firm that eventually became Wickens, Herzer, Panza, Cook and Batista, where he is a named partner. Still, Mr. Panza’s memories of Legal Aid remained vivid.

In 2006, Legal Aid was looking for a new Board member to represent Lorain County, and Mr. Panza was recommended by his former Legal Aid colleague Richard Gurbst, now at Squire, Sanders and Dempsey. Executive Director Colleen Cotter asked Ms. Terry to call and gauge his interest, which she was glad to do.

Currently, Mr. Panza is Vice President and a leader on the Board. He serves on four committees – Executive, Program, Finance and Development – which reinforce his interest in securing Legal Aid’s

mission and financial independence for many years to come. He notes, “Legal Aid’s is not a passive board; you have to do more than show up every three months. If you show up unprepared, you will be embarrassed. It’s an exciting, complex place with engaging personalities.” ●

