

Heroes Profile- Rising Stars



By Carin M. Constantine

Rarely has the Heroes Among Us committee been faced with such a conundrum: too many well qualified heroes to count. This year, however, there was something new. A stack of nomination forms arrived with names of rising attorneys who had accomplished so much, in such a short period of time, and but were still so new in their careers. It was phenomenal, and it took the committee by surprise. It did not take long for the committee to realize that due to the extraordinary talent evidenced by these young attorneys, we had to make a drastic and exciting move. We created the first ever Rising Stars Awards to complement the Heroes Among Us Awards and recognize the extraordinary talents of two gentlemen who show us that excellence is demonstrated at any age. This year, the St. Petersburg Bar Foundation recognizes the outstanding work and dedication to the community of Mr. Cary Cash and Mr. Paul Gross.

Cary Cash, who is a partner with Brasfield, Fuller, Freeman, Goldis & Cash, practices in the area of mobile home and cooperative law, real estate, business/corporate counseling, and litigation (commercial, banking, environmental, construction, landlord/tenant, and personal injury).

According to an interview Mr. Cash gave to Stetson University School of Law, he was diagnosed in 1998 with stage-four Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a battle he conquered with courage and a positive attitude. After his cancer went into remission, Cash spent eight months hiking the entire Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine. "Having cancer at 22 years old made me realize that I've got the tools and the desire to become a great, if not the best, advocate for people who are dealing with illnesses," said Cash, who



Cary A. Cash

won the American Cancer Society's Life Inspiration Award in 1999. Even before he finished his own nine-month treatment of chemotherapy, Cash began helping others in their fight against cancer as a volunteer counselor for Camp Smile-A-Mile, an Alabama camp for children diagnosed with cancer. These camps now extend into Florida, and Cash still volunteers his time to the cause.



Paul N. Gross

As Cash stated to the Stetson interviewer at that time, "I always keep the perspective that I'm in school, of all the great places to be," said Cash, who enjoys playing tournament Frisbee golf and riding his Harley Davidson with wife Deb in his spare time. Mr. Cash received the Judge Alexander Paskay Bankruptcy Award, William F. Blews Award for pro bono service, and the Raphael Steinhardt Award for character, leadership, and service to the community. Mr. Cash received "The Rock" award from the Barney Masterson Inns of Court for exceptional community service.

Paul Gross, who is an associate at The Law Office of J. Emory Wood, P.A. was born and raised in the Tampa Bay area and began his career at the public defender's office in the Sixth Judicial Circuit. Mr. Gross states that when the opportunity came along to work with Mr. Wood, he could not pass it up. He states "For nearly four years, I have been fortunate to work alongside one of the finest civil trial attorneys in the state. I am very lucky to be mentored not merely by a great attorney but also someone who is such a quality person. Both Emory and his wife Margaret, our office manager, have fostered my growth not only as an attorney but also as a person. Further, I truly believe that I work alongside the finest staff that can be found anywhere."

Mr. Gross currently volunteers his time doing pro bono work for the "Unite for Change" campaign. "Unite for Change" provides innovative educational resources that promote sexual assault awareness and prevention, sexual health and healthy sexuality. "Unite for Change" works in partnership with activists, leaders, artists, campuses and communities to link individuals together to help build communities that are part of the solution to end sexual violence. Mr. Gross first became involved in the organization through his

sister, Rebecca Gross Tieder, who is a co-founder. "Unite for Change" started as a result of an act of sexual violence against a close friend of hers, Kelly Addington, during their time together in college. For nearly a decade, Rebecca and Kelly have traveled the country speaking to hundreds of college campuses, military personnel, business organizations, and other groups in an effort to curb sexual violence.

Mr. Gross has also served for the past three years as a member of the Board of Trustees for Temple B'Nai Israel in Clearwater, Florida and presently serves as the secretary of the Barney Masterson Inns of Court. Mr. Gross is single and credits his success and happiness to the love and support of his family: Judge Raymond and Paulette Gross; his sister and brother-

in-law and their son: Rebecca and Chip Tieder and nephew Liam, and extended family Mattie and Macarthur Williams, Eric, Linda and Jasmine Williams and Cheryl Williams.

When asked why he close to become a lawyer, Mr. Gross could not remember the exact moment, but upon reflection stated, "Most certainly, my initial inspiration to be a lawyer comes from my parents, Judge Raymond and Paulette Gross. Certainly, having a father who had a long career practicing law in Clearwater before entering the judiciary played a significant role. On top of that, I have a mother who has supported and pushed me to achieve whatever goals I set for myself. Very simply stated, the foundation of any success I have had or will have in the future has been built

through the love, wisdom and support that my parents have provided me."

The St. Petersburg Bar Foundation salutes these Rising Stars and applauds their community service. These two extraordinary men show us the way to becoming leaders in the community, both legal and local. Mr. Cash, and Mr. Gross; you inspire each and every one of us; young and old; experienced and inexperienced; of all religions and backgrounds. You, sirs, are our Rising Stars.

Carin Constantine is a member of the Board of Trustees of the St. Petersburg Bar Foundation. She is the sole shareholder of The Law Office of Carin M. Constantine, P.A. and practices family law in the Tampa Bay area.



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