

# Honoring the Heroes Among Us - Robert Kapusta, Jr.

By Marilyn M. Polson



At Fisher & Sauls, P.A., we have had the pleasure of working with Rob Kapusta, Jr. for more than 27 years. That in itself says much about the dedication and perseverance of this year's "Heroes Among Us" selection. In an era where many lawyers do not spend a career at one firm, Rob demonstrates his commitment and loyalty to his firm, his practice, and his clients on a daily basis. In addition to his devotion to the practice of law and being a source of support to his clients on a professional level, Rob incorporates his love for his adopted hometown of St. Petersburg in the multitude of hours he spends on community, charitable, civic, and legal service projects.

non-profit organization to promote business growth and redevelopment in the downtown area. One of the accomplishments of this organization, under Rob's leadership, was the recruitment of Cousteau Divers, an international project headed by Pierre Yves Cousteau, son of Jacques Cousteau, who is known worldwide for his ocean explorations. Cousteau Divers has its North American home in USF St Petersburg's College of Marine Science. In addition, the Downtown Partnership brought the BLUE Ocean Film Festival, a global ocean film and conservation event to St. Petersburg, under Rob's leadership. As a result of those efforts, Rob now sits on the BLUE Ocean Advisory Board.

Rob moved to St. Petersburg to attend law school at Stetson and has remained here since. It appears there is a great tradition of lawyering in the Kapusta family. Rob is married to Kathy Kapusta, also a lawyer, and they have three children, Brett, Julia, and Kara. Julia, his older daughter, just started law school at UF. Robert Kapusta, Sr., Rob's dad, is a lawyer in Connecticut. After Rob graduated from law school, his three siblings followed in his footsteps, each attending Stetson and becoming a member of The Florida Bar. I would not want to start a debate at the Kapusta house on Thanksgiving!

As Chair of the Downtown Partnership, Rob was instrumental in establishing the "Warehouse Arts District" which covers a large area southwest of Tropicana Field. Hopefully, you have been able to visit some of the many artists' studios and galleries now located in what was previously an industrial area.

Just to mention a few of Rob's various activities outside the office, Rob was a graduate of the class of 1992 of Leadership St. Pete and served as the chair of its Alumni Association from 1999-2000. Since January 2010, he has served as Chairman of the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, a business-supported

Rob also serves as Committee Chair for the St. Petersburg branch of the Tampa Bay Innovation Center, is a non-voting member of the Board of Governors for the St. Petersburg Chamber, and serves on the steering committee for Community and Economic Development Strategy for St. Pete. If you have not yet heard of the Innovation Center, please check out its website at [www.tbinnovates.com](http://www.tbinnovates.com) to see the latest developments in this incubator program for entrepreneurs. The TEC ("Technology and Entrepreneurship") Garage opened in

"... heroes are the dreamers, those men and women who tried to make the world a better place than when they found it."

~ George R. R. Martin



October in downtown St. Petersburg to support existing and aspiring entrepreneurs with everything from access to networks and international markets to experienced mentors.

In addition to his many hours spent supporting business growth in St. Pete, Rob has been very active in his roles supporting the arts and arts education, as evidenced in part by the establishment of the “Warehouse Arts District”. Additionally, Rob served for more than six years as the President of the Mahaffey Theater Foundation and he currently chairs the Bill Edwards Foundation for the Performing Arts. One of the many projects of the Bill Edwards Foundation for the Performing Arts is its “Class Acts” series. A program that is vital for exposing young residents to the arts, and to the education that extends from that opportunity.

Rob is active in his church, Lutheran Church of the Cross, and serves on the Board of Directors for LCC Day School. Rob has served on this board for over 15 years. During six of those years, he was Chair of the Board. Rob was instrumental in the growth of the school, including securing bond financing for a portion of the school’s expansion- something unique for a private school. For his activities with the church and day school, Rob received the St. Petersburg Layperson of the Year award from the Kiwanis Club. To add to Rob’s interest in quality education, Rob has served on the Presidents’ Associates at Eckerd College and is chair of Pinellas Educational Facilities Authority, which approves and authorizes

bond financing for Pinellas County educational facilities.

With all of Rob’s other civic, community, and charitable work it seems impossible that he would have time to volunteer with the St. Petersburg Bar Association too. But he makes time. Rob has served as Treasurer of the SPBA and as President of the St. Petersburg Bar Foundation.

Sometimes we wonder whether or not Rob has the time to actually practice law, but his many loyal and satisfied clients prove that he practices with professionalism and quality. For that and many other reasons we are proud to be associated with this year’s Hero, and humbly salute him.

