

# B Business

The News-Herald ■ www.News-Herald.com

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Susan E. Petersen, lawyer from Chardon-based Petersen & Ibold and president of the Ohio Women's Bar Association



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Susan Petersen, an attorney at Chardon-based Petersen & Ibold, was recently named president of the Ohio Women's Bar Association.

## Lawyer turned leader

■ Chardon-based attorney named president of Ohio Women's Bar Association

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In less than a decade, Susan E. Petersen has already made an indisputable impact as a premier attorney in Ohio.

In the last three years, the lawyer from Chardon-based Petersen & Ibold has obtained several six- and seven-figure settlements for clients in her areas of expertise of medical malpractice, wrongful death, personal injury, product liability and employment discrimination.

Now, aside from injured client cases spanning from Geauga County to Columbus, Petersen will also devote attention to her new duties as president of the Ohio Women's Bar Association.

"Did I envision that I would be leading this organization? Not necessarily," said Petersen, who has been an OWBA member since 2000. "But I've always been someone

who works hard to be at the top of my game, so it's definitely an honor."

Petersen, a Youngstown native, came to Chardon by way of her marriage to Todd Petersen, whose father, Jerry, started the law firm 26 years ago. She graduated from Cleveland State University's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1997 as one of the more distinguished class members — she also worked as a reporter on WEWS Channel 5 at the time.

Years after the difficult decision to shift from news to law, Petersen found herself being sworn in as OWBA president in April before a banquet crowd that included Ohio Supreme Court Justice Maureen O'Connor.

However, she knew long before that night about the importance of female legal practitioners banding together through an organization like OWBA.

"Half of the graduates of law schools now are females, but that percentage is not reflected in the management of law firms," she said. "We still need to support one another and teach our male partners to support and bring up women."

"That's why the OWBA has been really important to me."

Other OWBA officials found importance in Petersen's involvement in various activities and subcommittees. She is also a member of the Geauga County Bar Association.

"She is very much a go-getter," said Violet Imre, executive director of OWBA. "She was active even when she was president-elect. ... It was obvious she was a good choice."

Imre credits Petersen with rejuvenating enthusiasm among OWBA members for the "100 Women" research project. That project aims to find the first 100 female attorneys in the state. "She's been able to bring new life into that project," Imre said. "She's a joy to work with, she's very energetic, and we're just trying to keep up with her."

Petersen, a mother of three, also hopes to use her position to be a mentor and role model to upcoming female attorneys. She also wants male partners to become more mindful of family issues affecting women, such as the need of flexible schedules during and following pregnancy.

"I can honestly say she's the hardest worker I know," Todd E. Petersen said. "I witness it when she's at work, and I witness

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it when she's at home with the kids. She makes me a better lawyer."

Through all of the projects, though, Petersen wants area residents to know that she remains dedicated to her practice and the community.

"This is my home town now, and I'm here to stay," she said.

"Oftentimes, I think people in Geauga County think they have to go downtown to Cleveland to find a big-town lawyer.

"I'm very selective in the cases I take, so if you get me to take your case, you can be sure that I believe in your case, that I'm going to work hard on your case, and that I'm work to work up your case like no other."

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