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February 27, 2019

Ms. Carrie Sharlow
Representative Assembly Awards
State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend St.
Lansing, MI 48933-2012

RE: Unsung Hero Award

Dear Ms. Sharlow:

It is my absolute honor and privilege to nominate attorney Clarence M. Dass for the Representative Assembly's Unsung Hero Award.

In April 2017, Clarence Dass was diagnosed with Stage 4 Colon Cancer. He was told by his doctor that he may not survive this diagnosis. He began chemotherapy in May 2017. During this time, he fought quietly and passionately for his clients who were among the 114 Iraqis facing deportation in 2017.

While enduring 12 rounds of chemotherapy, 5 weeks of radiation, and a surgery to remove what remained of the cancer, he ran his law firm, went to court, and advocated for his clients in the press. At times, he ran his law firm from his hospital bed. He kept his cancer a secret as he stated, "so as not to take attention away from his clients". However, as he will tell you, he believed that the act of working for all of his clients itself would keep him alive. The Detroit Free Press printed a story about his experience this past September: <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2018/09/22/lawyer-defended-iraqi-immigrants-cancer-secret/1382942002/>

I met Clarence at the OCBA's Diversity Dinner in October 2017 as we were both being recognized with an award. Clarence was being honored with the Oakland County Bar Association Leon Hubbard Community Service Award. The Leon Hubbard community service award is given to an attorney with more than 5 years of community service and for which the service was rendered to promote diversity in economic advancement opportunities and social equality and well as promoting the improvement in the quality of life of indigent individuals. Clarence was nominated by Judge Cynthia Walker of the 50th

District Court in Pontiac for his representation and advocacy of the Iraqi detainees, some of which was pro bono as he prepared emergency motions to stop their deportation. Clarence has also been active with other community initiatives including Leadership Oakland and human trafficking awareness.

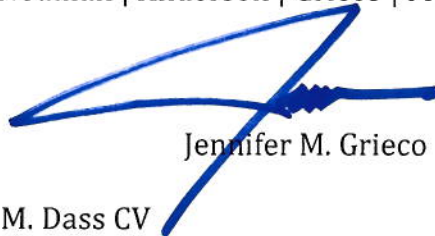
I did not know at the time of the OCBA Diversity Dinner that Clarence was suffering from cancer or undergoing treatment. I later worked with him as a member of the OCBA Judicial Candidate Forum committee and still had no idea. I was blown away when I later discovered that, in addition to all that he was doing for his clients and the community, he was undergoing cancer treatments. Many would have focused on themselves in this time of need and that would be understandable. Clarence however was focused on his clients and his public service. This, in my opinion, is the very definition of an unsung hero.

Luckily, for all of us, Clarence is now a cancer survivor. He is a kind and generous person and a dedicated attorney and volunteer. He represents the very best of our profession, willing to act as a legal "first-responder" when the need arose for the detainees regardless of his personal challenges. He is a deserving candidate for the Unsung Hero Award.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Neuman | Anderson | Grieco | McKenney, P.C.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer M. Grieco". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial letter and a horizontal line across the middle.

Jennifer M. Grieco

Enclosures – Clarence M. Dass CV
Free Press Story – September 22, 2018
Facebook Announcement – September 17, 2018
Deadline Detroit Commentary – June 19, 2017

Clarence M. Dass

10 W. Square Lake, Suite 307
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
248.864.0533 / cdass@thedasslawfirm.com

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Attorney and Founder (November 2016-Present)

The Dass Law Firm, PLLC, Southfield, Michigan

- Specializes in criminal, juvenile, family, and municipal law
- Represents clients across Michigan in both state and federal courts
- Serves as appellate counsel in cases throughout State of Michigan
- Speaks at local, state, and national community organizations regarding justice system

Adjunct Professor (September 2018-Present)

Rochester College, Rochester Hills, Michigan

- Teaches Business Law to Business and Pre-Law students

Assistant Prosecuting Attorney (June 2012-November 2016)

Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, Pontiac, Michigan

- Served as Special Prosecutor in Special Victims Section
- Tried over twenty felony and misdemeanor cases to verdict through bench and jury trials
- Conducted hundreds of motion hearings, preliminary examinations, and case preparations

Associate Attorney (August 2010-June 2012)

Gurewitz & Raben, PLC, Detroit, Michigan

- Represented clients in various matters, including corporate governance, health care fraud, professional liability, and labor and employment, primarily in federal court
- Litigated motions, conducted depositions, and researched various legal issues
- Drafted Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States and handled other appellate matters

EDUCATION

Juris Doctorate (May 2010)

The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, Columbus, Ohio

- Editor-in-Chief, *Ohio State Entrepreneurial Business Law Journal*
- Member, National Moot Court Team
- Top Ten Best Overall Competitor, Herman Moot Court Competition
- Executive Board Member, Middle Eastern Law Students Association

Bachelor of Arts, magna cum laude, (May 2007)

Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

- Major: History with Honors, University Honors (co-major)
 - Four-Year Talent Scholar, Wayne State University Speech Team
-

PUBLICATIONS

Clarence M. Dass, *Judicial Profile: Hon. Mark A. Goldsmith, U.S. District Judge, Eastern District of Michigan*, THE FED. LAWYER, July 2011, at 20.

Clarence M. Dass, *Adventure Capitalizing in Baghdad: An Entrepreneurial Approach to Reconstructing Iraq*, 4 ENTREPREN. BUS. L.J. 163 (2009).

LANGUAGES

- Arabic
- French

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

- Admitted to State Bar of Michigan, U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, and Supreme Court of the United States
- St. Mary's Preparatory Alumni Association-Detroit District (President)
- Leadership Oakland XXVII (President)
- Wayne State University Alumni Association (Board of Directors)
- Wayne State University Irvin D. Reid Honors College (Board of Visitors)
- Oakland County Bar Association
- Chaldean American Bar Association
- Chaldean American Chamber of Commerce

UNIQUE PROFESSIONAL INITIATIVES

Corporate Citizenship and White Collar Crime in the Age of Enron and Madoff

- Organized legal symposium highlighting common issues between corporate citizenship, corporate law, and criminal law
- Collaborated with Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association, Federal Bar Association, Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, and Center for the Study of Citizenship

"Taking on Bullying"

- Spoke at civic and school meetings across state on anti-bullying legislation in Michigan
- Appeared frequently on WXYZ-TV (Channel 7 Action News) to discuss legal matters involving bullying

Swift Justice with Attorney Clarence Dass

- Launched legal education radio initiative with *Blaine & Allyson in the Morning*, 96.3 FM WDVD

AWARDS AND HONORS

- Leadership Oakland "Leader of Leaders" Award for Exemplary Public Leadership (2018)
- Oakland County Bar Association Leon Hubbard Community Service Award (2017)
- Oakland County Executive's Elite 40 Under 40 (2016)
- "The One to Watch" Award, Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association Barristers (2011)
- Arthur James Seelye Award Small Business Law Award (2010)
- Certificate of Excellence, Department of the Attorney General of Michigan (2008)
- Howard A. Donnelly Award for Most Outstanding Graduate, Wayne State University (2007)
- "Spirit of Detroit" Award, Detroit City Council (2005)

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Lawyer defended Iraqi immigrants while keeping cancer secret

Omar Abdel Baqui, Detroit Free Press Published 5:16 p.m. ET Sept. 22, 2018 | Updated 1:04 p.m. ET Oct. 5, 2018



(Photo11: Renee Dass,)

Superheroes tend to live double lives. They often fight for justice while wearing masks, and when their work is done live a life unknown to the public.

Southfield-based attorney Clarence Dass knows that lifestyle. He worked around-the-clock on immigration cases that gained plenty of media attention while keeping a big secret — he had stage 4 colon cancer.

When Dass first learned he had cancer in April 2017, he had just started his own law firm and began dating a woman who is now his wife.

"There were major things happening in my life," Dass said. "It's never a good time to get sick, but it definitely was not a good time in my life (to be diagnosed with cancer)."

Dass said he was "shocked" and had trouble processing the life-changing news, as he was 31-years-old with no history of cancer in his family.

Despite his diagnosis, Dass continued his duties as an attorney. At the time, he was defending Iraqi immigrants living in Michigan who were detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in one of the [biggest such sweeps \(/story/news/local/michigan/oakland/2017/06/14/attorneys-iraqi-immigrants-detained-ice-file-emergency-motions-stop-deportation/394465001/\)](#) in memory. There were 114 Iraqis arrested and facing potential deportation in the state last summer, and the situation drew international press coverage.

"I would wake up and go to court from 8:30 a.m. to noon, go back to my office to take a nap and then go back to court," he said.

In addition to working on cases within 24 hours of receiving chemotherapy, Dass would do live media interviews while connected to an off-camera IV, he said.

"I was running my law firm from my hospital bed," said Dass.

Dass said withholding his diagnosis from the public and his colleagues became "awfully frustrating" at times, but he felt it was important because "people tend to view cancer as a weakness or a disability."

"I knew that if I shared it at the time, it would detract from what I was trying to achieve, which was helping people and running a law firm," he said. "I was always able to get the job done but instead of 100 percent of my effort, it took 200 percent."

Although Dass said there were days he could not move or get out of bed due to debilitating pain and fatigue, he never considered giving up.

"If I stopped working, my clients, many of whom had major issues, wouldn't get the help they needed," Dass said. "I knew that if I gave up, I would start to dwell on that and just get sicker. I had to keep pushing through and had to make sure I was helping other people because that's the only way I could help myself."

Read more:

<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2018/09/22/lawyer-defended-iraqi-immigrants-cancer...> 2/26/2019

ICE halts deportation of deaf Detroit immigrant

(<https://www.freep.com/story/news/2018/09/21/ice-halts-deportation-deaf-detroit-immigrant-30-days/1380688002/>)

Detroit judge slams ICE for pressuring Iraqis

(<https://www.freep.com/story/news/2018/08/22/judge-detroit-tells-ice-stop-coercing-iraqi-detainees/1068210002/>)

In January, after six months of chemotherapy, five weeks of radiation and one surgery, Dass officially beat stage 4 colon cancer — a disease with a 12 percent five-year relative survivor rate, according to the American Cancer Society.

"Knowing that this whole chapter is coming to an end and the next step is healing and getting things back to normal is the biggest sigh of relief I could ever experience," Dass said.

Saturday, Dass celebrated his 33rd birthday with his wife, Renee Dass.

Dass's wife provided "tons of support" throughout his battle with cancer, and he "couldn't have gotten through the process without her," he said.

"On our second date, I had just learned a couple days prior that I had cancer. I sat her down in the lobby of the restaurant we were at and I told her there was something I needed to share. She thought it could have been anything but what I told her," Dass said. "With no hesitation, she looked at me and said 'whatever needs to be done, let's get it done.'

"I knew from that moment that I was going to marry this woman."

Renee Dass said that because of her experience, she wasn't distraught from the news.

"My mother had cancer, and I was a med student at the time, so I knew of the variety of treatment options available," she said.

Renee Dass said her now-husband gave her "an out."

"He told me 'you don't have to do this,'" she said. "But we had a strong connection, and he was way too special for me to do that."

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Jessica Cash, 35, of New Hudson talks with a group of friends who ran to support her in the 2018 Detroit Undy RunWalk on the Detroit Riverwalk on Saturday, Sept. 22, 2018. Cash was diagnosed with rectal cancer in 2015. (Photo 11: Kimberly P. Mitchell, Detroit Free Press)

Perfect Timing

In an astonishing coincidence, as Dass observed an incredibly special birthday Saturday, the 2018 Detroit Undy RunWalk — which seeks to raise awareness about the disease Dass suffered from — graced the city's RiverWalk.

Survivors, patients and their families and caregivers congregated and ran together to raise awareness about colorectal cancer, the second leading cause of cancer death, according to Undy RunWalk's website.

Although the temperature dropped that morning as compared to the summer-like weather earlier this week, the warmth of loved ones and strangers coming together, running in underwear for a common cause overcame any cold air.

New Hudson resident Jessica Cash, 35, was running at the event decked out in superhero gear despite undergoing treatment for stage 4 rectal cancer.

"How do I do it? I'm superwoman," said Cash, who raised over \$2,000 for colorectal cancer. "Running makes me feel better. It's detoxifying."

Cash said she thought she "was going to die tomorrow" when she first heard of her diagnosis, as she had limited knowledge on the disease at the time.

She said she asked herself "How did this happen?" over and over again.

"I lived a healthy lifestyle," Cash said. "I ran all the time and did everything right. It goes to show that this cancer can affect anyone."

It's crucial to talk about the signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer, in addition to the importance of screening regardless of age, Cash said. Additionally, as a patient, surrounding yourself with people who understand what you're going through goes a long way, she said.

"I know it sounds crazy, but it's been an amazing journey and I've met so many people in the last few years," Cash said.

Dass, who celebrated his birthday with his wife on Mackinac Island, posted the story of his cancer battle [to Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10104132370772898&set=a.955677387948&type=3&theater) (<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10104132370772898&set=a.955677387948&type=3&theater>) on Sept. 17.

"I am not involved with the RunWalk this weekend, but my plan now that I have revealed this chapter of my life is to become involved with cancer organizations and hopefully help others find hope," he said in an email.

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Participants cross the starting line at the 2018 Detroit Undy RunWalk on the Detroit Riverwalk on Saturday, Sept. 22, 2018. (Photo 11: Kimberly P. Mitchell, Detroit Free Press)

'First run without her'

Since 2014, Woodhaven resident Mary Cassett, 44, has been running in support of her friend, April, who suffered from colorectal cancer.

April died in February, and this is Cassett's first run without her friend.

"I think I cried the last mile," Cassett said. "I will continue to come out to this event and support the cause. The money goes to research, awareness and screenings which is so important."

"I keep fighting," Cash said. "Each day is one day closer to a cure and that gives me hope."

Contact reporter Omar Abdel-Baqui: oabdel-baqui@freepress.com or 313-222-2251. Follow him on Twitter @omarabdelb

Read or Share this story: <https://on.freep.com/2MWzqEk>

Facebook Announcement—September 17, 2018

“At the end of this week, I will be turning 33. And while every birthday is important, this one is a little different.

At the outset, let me prepare you: this post is a long one.

In April, 2017, I learned the most significant news of my life. I learned that I had cancer. You may re-read that sentence.

I had the really bad stuff, too: Stage 4 Colon Cancer.

For those of you fortunate never to have met the big “C,” Stage 4 is considered the worst, with the possibility that one may not survive it. In fact, that was what my doctor told me on April 13, 2017 as I sat in a patient room at the University of Michigan Hospital with my parents, who were now forced to confront a situation where their son may not outlive them.

To put all of this in context, when I learned I had a cancer, I had just left the Oakland County Prosecutor’s Office. I was still a participant in Leadership Oakland. I had launched my law firm only a few months prior, and I was still single. It seems like forever ago, but in actuality it feels like yesterday.

Okay, back to to the C-word. When I learned the news, I had no idea what to expect. Because of how severe it was, I was told I would need the full course of treatment. The whole shabang. Chemotherapy, radiation, and—“if” those worked—surgery at the end.

A few questions immediately came to mind. Would I lose my hair? Would I lose my strength? Would I be able to work? Would I *make it*? I guess I had no choice but to find out.

So I did.

I began chemotherapy in May, 2017. I spent the whole summer doing it. 12 rounds over 6 months. Then I began radiation. Every day, for 5 weeks.

Then something happened. The week after my third round of chemo, the Iraqi deportation crisis began. That Sunday, I went down to ICE headquarters to help my clients, who I learned had just been detained. I stayed with their families all night, in fact doing an interview with Fox 2 News about the situation.

You all know what happened next, but maybe not the whole story.

I was running my law firm from my hospital bed, often doing live media interviews while connected to an IV. I remember one day doing a live interview on The Mildred Gaddis Show from inside the bathroom at the hospital, and speaking with the Detroit Free Press every few days to provide an update, all while watching the chemo drip.

Chemo lasted for 3 days at a time. After that, I went back to "normal" life. I met my clients. I went to court. I met new clients. I went to events. I graduated from Leadership Oakland. I went on Channel 7.

As time went by, it became clear I started looking different. I had lost hair. My face became swollen from the medicine. People began telling me I looked tired. That I looked like I had aged. I had, in fact. My hair had turned gray. I looked like I fast-forwarded about 20 years, and I felt it.

With each round of chemo, I became more and more tired. The side effects became worse and worse. There were days where I couldn't get out of bed. Where I couldn't muster up the energy to respond to a phone call. Where I couldn't leave my room. My life was becoming slower and slower as the world around me felt like it was getting faster and faster.

I threw a big birthday party last year for my 32nd because I didn't know whether it would be my last. Radiation would be beginning a few weeks later, and it would continue until Thanksgiving.

The picture I have attached is from my last day of radiation. I had lost 30 pounds and most of my hair. The lighting was pretty good, but in reality I had lost most of my eyebrows.

As I approached the end of 2017, I learned that it had all worked. With each heavy hit, the cancer became smaller and smaller. In January of this year, I had surgery to remove what remained of it. At the end of the surgery, I learned they had gotten all of it.

I made it.

I share this with you today because as I approach my 33rd year, I thank my God every day for letting me stay here. For giving me a family who stopped their lives to adjust to mine. For giving me a mother who drove me to and from chemo every single day, and stayed with me until I disconnected. For blessing me with a woman who stuck around after I told her I had cancer on our second date. As you can see, I had to keep her.

I share this with you because every person handles cancer differently. There is no right way or wrong way to handle it, and I am not saying I would recommend this one to others. This is just how I handled mine.

My passion for my work, my family, and my faith in God kept me alive.

I write you today a healthy, married man, whose blessings are beyond count. I know that I have been given a second chance at life. That my life's work is to help others and that I can assure everyone in their darkest hour, that the light is not yet out.

As I approach my 33rd birthday, I realize that I have been fortunate to have held many titles throughout my life. None, however, are as sweet as the one I now proudly hoist:

Cancer Survivor.”

x



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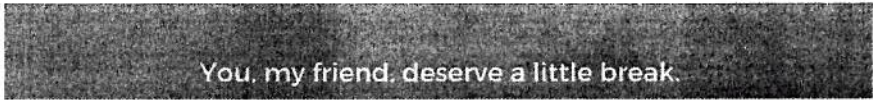


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Commentary: Why I Fight Mass Deportation of Metro Detroit Iraqis

Tweet

Contributors

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Allan Lengel | Alan Stamm |
| Nancy Derringer | Charlie LeDuff |
| Joe Lapointe | Chad Setweski |
| Violet Ikononova | Michael Lucido |

The writer, an attorney and first-generation Chaldean -merican, is founder of The Dass Law Firm in Southfield. He represents more than 20 Iraqis detained after a June 11 Immigration and Customs Enforcement sweep in Metro Detroit..

By Clarence M. Dass

Many people ask why I became so involved in the recent immigration sweep of mostly Chaldeans that took place here in metro Detroit. Now that the dust has settled and my schedule has returned to somewhat normal, I want to share why.

I'm a lawyer. My job -- actually, my life's passion-- is to advocate on behalf of those in need. Over the course of my career, I have advocated for victims of bullying, sought recognition of the unrecognized Armenian Genocide, called for tougher protections for people against terrorism, brought awareness to law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty, and fought for victims of child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, and sexual assault. I don't know what to tell you-- I have a soft spot for vulnerable people.



Clarence M. Dass: "We care about each other."

Long before this immigration sweep occurred, Chaldeans have faced near extermination in their homeland of Iraq. ISIS emptied Chaldean villages, ransacked Chaldean homes, murdered Chaldean priests, and attempted to destroy Chaldeans' faith.

America, as it was for my immigrant parents, was the only refuge for them. And it still is. Each and every single person detained in the recent sweep made a terrible mistake many years ago. They should be held accountable, and have been-- some for long periods of time. I don't know of anyone who thinks any of these people should be excused for their mistakes, let alone me, who spent five years as a prosecutor convicting people for the same crimes these individuals committed.

Even as a prosecutor, though, I was always cognizant of what a criminal defendant was going through, what their family would do without them, and what consequences awaited them when they were sentenced. I never prosecuted blindly. I sought justice.

The people I met last week have been punished for their crimes, have not re-offended, have lived here for more than thirty years, have started families, owned businesses, paid taxes, served in the military, and have no other desire than to move on from the mistake they made many years ago.

Sending them to a war zone that our country has already found to have genocide against them, to me, is not justice. It is a death sentence for crimes that in our own country do not merit one.

America, as Ronald Reagan once referred to it, is a shining city upon a hill. It is the standard-bearer for the world. It is the place where, despite its imperfections, boasts the fairest justice system in the world.

And it is that way because we are a just people -- we care about each other. We do not blindly impose rules and laws on each other. We follow the law, but not without understanding its intent. We think, we debate, and we decide. It's why I, whose parents fled the same land we now wish to send these people to, decided to become a lawyer.

Had America not given my parents that opportunity, neither would I have been given that privilege. It's why I will continue to fight for causes that I believe are just. For vulnerable people. For those who do not have a voice for themselves.