

22 in area make list of top lawyers

By Katie Byard
Beacon Journal business writer

All right, all you snobs who thought you had to go to Cleveland to find a good lawyer. A soon-to-be-published survey says that the Akron area has 22 of the "best lawyers in America."

The list of local legal beagles who made the 1989 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* includes such well-known attorneys as James L. Burdon, who defended convicted child-murderer Robert Buell; Edward C. Kaminski, who has represented Goodyear in labor disputes; and Timothy F. Scanlon, who won a \$2.5 million settlement from Honda for a client paralyzed in an all-terrain vehicle accident.

The biennial book, whose first edition was published in 1983, ignores some esteemed local law practitioners, and lists none from Canton. Furthermore, the book includes few women — only one Akron area female attorney is mentioned — or minorities.

Co-creator of the book, Steven W. Naifeh, a Harvard Law School graduate, acknowledged the survey is not "scientific" and some excellent lawyers fall through the cracks.

Naifeh said he and co-creator Gregory W. Smith, who run a small New York City publishing house, initially had attempted to do a scientific poll. But, Naifeh said, they discovered that the

"very best lawyers in each community are not going to take the time to fill out a (lengthy) form."

So the team decided to take an easier route. Naifeh said the yearlong polling process involved confidential telephone interviews with 7,500 lawyers who essentially were asked: "Who would you send a friend or relative to if you couldn't handle a matter in your own field and in your own jurisdiction?"

Consequently, Naifeh said, the book tends to favor older, established lawyers over minorities and women, many of whom are relatively new to the field. Naifeh said the omissions of such groups concern him and that with each new edition, efforts are made to find the less-obvious superior attorneys.

In a tactic that sometimes eliminates the more controversial attorneys, lawyers are asked their opinions of previously nominated peers in their area.

While Naifeh said the book has been praised by leaders of the American Bar Association, two local lawyers had not heard of the publication.

Duane L. Isham, a corporate attorney with Roetzel & Andress, made the list but said he has never seen the book. Nonetheless, Isham said he was flattered.

"It never hurts" to show up in

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such lists, he said.

Akron Bar Association president Bradford "Buck" Gearinger, of Scanlon & Gearinger, didn't make the list, but his partner, Timothy Scanlon, did.

Gearinger said the survey appeared to be a "rather subjective thing." But then he joked, "If they rank Scanlon in there, they (the pollsters) are very objective. . . . I've often said if I need a lawyer, and I could afford Scanlon, I'd hire him."

The \$89 book is available only by mail from Woodward, White Inc., 300 Central Park W., New York, N.Y. 10024.

Here is the list of area lawyers in the book:

• **Bankruptcy law:** John J. Guy and Ronald N. Towne of Guy Lammert & Towne; and David M. Hunter and John A. Schwemler of Brouse & McDowell.

• **Business litigation:** Norman S. Carr of Roetzel & Andress.

• **Corporate law:** Richard A. Chenoweth of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs; Duane L. Isham of Roetzel & Andress; and Robert P. Refner of Brouse & McDowell.

• **Criminal defense:** James L. Burdon of Burdon & Merlitti.

• **Labor and employment law:** William B. Gore (labor) and Edward C. Kaminski (management) of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs; and Kenneth R. Millisor (management) of Millisor & Nobil.

• **Natural resources and environmental law:** William I. Caplan of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs.

• **Personal injury litigation:** K. Richard Aughenbaugh (defendants) of Roetzel & Andress; Orville L. Reed III (defendants) of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs; and Timothy F. Scanlon (plaintiffs) of Scanlon & Gearinger.

• **Real estate law:** John N. Teeple of Geiger, Teeple, Smith & Hahn (Alliance).

• **Tax and employee benefits law:** Frank A. Lettieri of Amer Cunningham Brennan; and Robert W. Malone and David H. Wilson of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs.

• **Trusts and estates:** Patricia A. Parents of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs; and Michael L. Stark of Stark & Knoll.