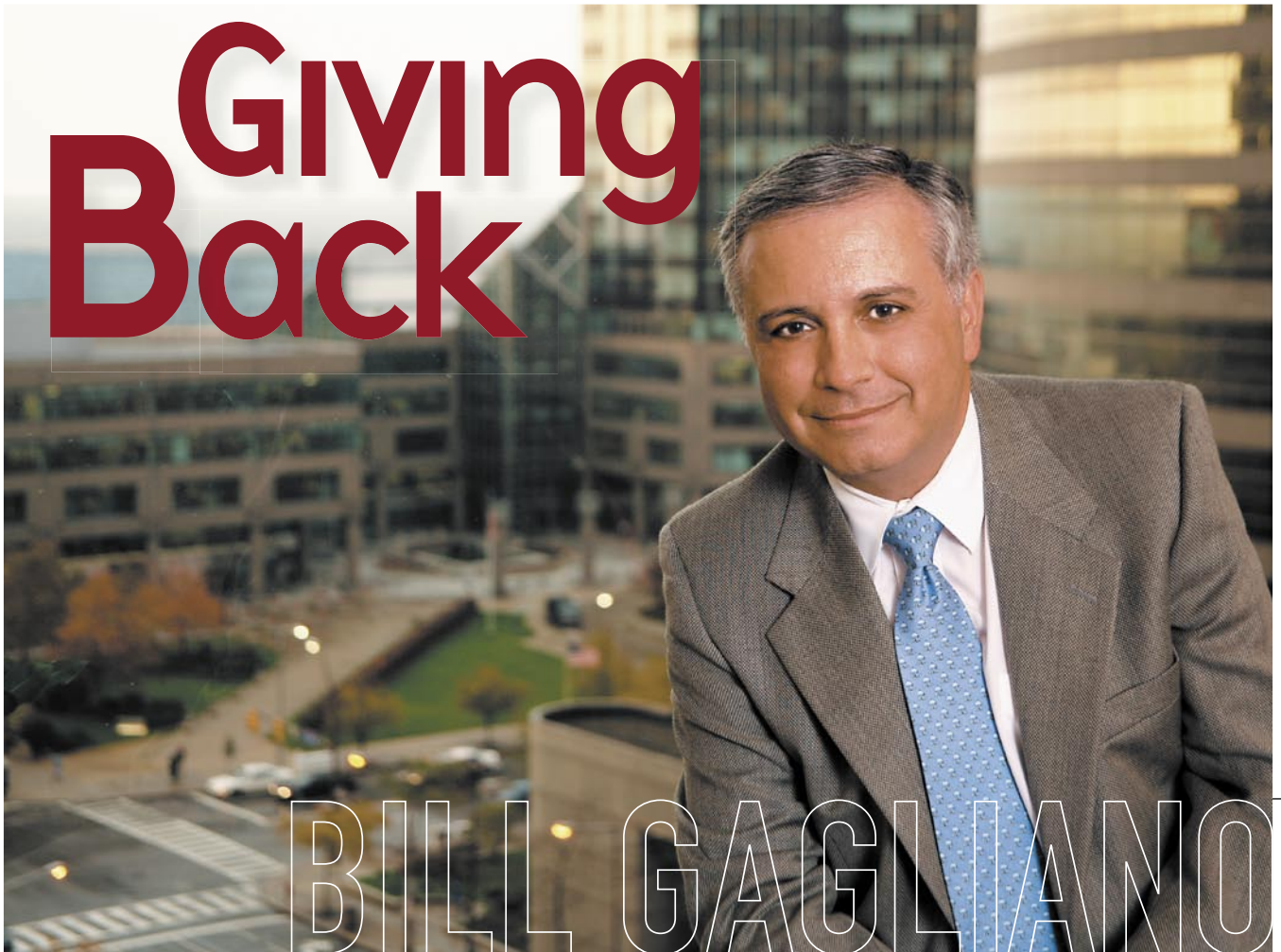


# GIVING Back



## BILL GAGLIANO

**BILL GAGLIANO** holds influence at his firm and on the American Red Cross national Board of Governors.

by Robert Szorady  
photography by Izabela Viktoria

**B**ill Gagliano is making the rest of us look bad.

A consummate attorney whose professional interests span the gamut of real estate law, the chair of the real estate group at Ulmer & Berne LLP is also on the national Board of Governors of the American Red Cross, a position he has held since 2001.

"I'm not quite sure what spare time is anymore," the 50-year-old Maple Heights native says. "On the other hand, I've been given a very wonderful opportunity."

With 25 years of experience in his trade since graduating from Case Western Reserve University's law

school, Gagliano has been working at Ulmer for almost 10 of those years.

"I've always been attracted to real estate law," he says. "When I was younger, I really thought litigation was where it was at — most people who go off to law school have the idea to be a litigator. But it turned out that I really enjoyed the different facets of the law."

As chair of the real estate group, Gagliano's expertise falls across the spectrum of real estate law, such as construction; acquisitions and sales; property taxation; and low-income housing issues. He has also been involved with cases concerning pub-

licly traded companies and fast-food establishments.

One would think that his life is busy enough professionally and personally. Like most lawyers, he often works long hours, and leisure time is frequently forgone for work.

"With my family, they've been incredibly understanding," says Gagliano, who lives with his wife, Lorrie (also a lawyer), and three children in Westlake. "You have to do what you can, and when you know you're going to be away, they know you may be burning the midnight oil."

With the Red Cross, Gagliano spends much of his time attending

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international relief organization meetings, including one just in November in Seoul, Korea.

"I've been involved with them for 21 years. It's really most of my spare time, and I'm in my sixth and final year on the national board," he says. "I'm part of the American delegation, and we primarily handle the election of senior officers and the setting of international policy."

In contrast to his now lofty position, his start with the organization was rather simple.

"A relative was the chairman of the Rocky River branch board of advisors and was looking for someone to step in after he retired. Of course, if you show an interest, they don't let you go," he laughs.

He found himself being promoted through the organization, from being a member of the state board, to ser-

vice at the regional level, to finally being nominated for the vice chairman position in 2000.

"One of the most powerful parts of the position is going to places in need and seeing firsthand the extent of the damage and what we can do to help," he says.

A recent visit took him to Gulfport, Miss., to see the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, and he also attended to the aftermath of the August 2004 hurricanes in Florida.

"I've seen a lot in these few years," he says. "You get to personally see the impact of these events on the public, and the role of the Red Cross."

He notes that Ulmer has been very supportive of his philanthropic endeavors.

"With 190 lawyers in four offices, we have a great group of people. When I leave, I know that I'm leaving

things in good hands. The confidence you have in other people is tremendous," he says.

Gagliano also keeps busy with an interest in architecture and historical buildings, not just in Cleveland, but in the Chicago area as well.

"In the mid- to late-'80s, there were some significant architectural things going on in Chicago that a few cases of mine converged on," he says. "It really solidified that a focal point of mine was going to be real-estate practices."

"I attended the Commercial Real Estate DealMaker Forum [in October] and sat at the same table with [Chicago Mayor] Daley. About a week after the event, I got a wonderful book of Chicago architecture signed by the mayor. Everything really came together." ✍

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Bill is the Chair of Ulmer & Berne's Real Estate Group. In 25 years of practice, he has represented private and publicly held property owners, contractors and developers, as well as governmental entities. Bill's expertise includes construction law, affordable housing, real estate development, property taxation and abatement, and leasing. In the corporate area, he concentrates on corporate governance issues and general business counseling. Bill's litigation practice focuses on property ownership disputes, title insurance litigation, construction claims and leasing matters.

Ulmer & Berne's Real Estate Group was ranked in 2005 by Midwest Real Estate News magazine as one of the Top 25 in the Midwest. Ulmer & Berne boasts a real estate practice consisting of lawyers with a broad scope of talent and expertise. The firm's real estate lawyers are listed in national publications such as Chambers USA and Best Lawyers in America, as well as in state and local publications as being among the tops in their profession.

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