

# 2023 TAKE THE HELM HONOREE

## ROBERT A. LUBERA



This year's Take The Helm Gala honoree, Robert R. Lubera, has a long-standing history with The Helm. As an Estate and Elder Law attorney, his involvement with the organization was natural. During visits to his clients' homes, Lubera often noticed communications from The Helm, then SOC, on their counters or tables. "When asked, I would be told how important SOC was in their lives," Lubera shared. This feedback prompted him to become actively involved with The Helm in 2006.

"The mission statement at the time — 'helping older citizens maintain their lives with independence and dignity' — resonated with me. What my clients needed most is what SOC, The Helm, provides," he explained. "I was introduced to the SOC board by Marita Grobbel who was on the board at the time. Once I discovered the staff and volunteers of SOC and saw firsthand what they achieved in the community, I knew the organization was for me."

Lubera served on the board for seven years, including three years as president, during a critical period when the organization needed to find a new home. "We operated out of the Neighborhood Club, and they were always very good to us. But they were working to build a new facility and that was the catalyst for us to look for a new home too," he recounted.

The old Cottage Hospital nurses' residence was suggested as a potential location. "Henry Ford Health was great to work with and provided a 30+ year lease, but the building had been unoccupied for a number of years. We launched a capital campaign, John and Marlene Boll were lead donors, and while it took 2.5 years, we finally had literally, a one-stop shop."

Though no longer on the board, Lubera remains a major supporter of The Helm. He has contributed countless hours through presentations and counsel, serves on the advisory council and development committee, and chairs the planned giving committee.

Raised in Grosse Pointe by an artist mother and doctor father, Lubera graduated from University Liggett School, earned his Juris Doctor from Michigan State University College of Law, and obtained a Master of Laws in Taxation from Wayne State University Law School. While law is his profession, art is his passion. Lubera lives with his wife, Mary, and son, John, in an architecturally significant home in Grosse Pointe Farms designed by Alexander Girard. They have meticulously restored their home and shared it with numerous visitors, including museum heads, designers, and architects.

Lubera has combined his love for art with his legal career. "Many of my clients are artists or collectors. Their art is an asset," he said. "I help them decide what to do with their art after they pass — whether to donate it, auction it, or leave it to a museum or university."

An artist himself, Lubera creates artwork that is printed on fabric and used to design dresses. "I always start with the artwork, which then dictates the dress," he said. He collaborates with a fashion industry expert to create custom-made dresses. One of these dresses was a silent auction item at a previous Take The Helm gala, showcasing yet another way Lubera has supported the organization over the years.



John, Mary and Rob Lubera

Giving back to the community is essential to Lubera. In addition to his work with The Helm, he has served on various boards, including Ascension St. John, the Detroit Historical Society, and the Grosse Pointe Chamber of Commerce. He is currently chair-elect of the arts section of the State Bar of Michigan.

Lubera continues to educate the community about the need for senior services. "When I first started practicing estate law, elder law hadn't really been invented," he said. "Life expectancy has increased dramatically in the last 40 years. Planning for assisted living and ensuring your assets last 30 years beyond retirement has become essential because people live longer. The need for The Helm's mission to provide comprehensive support to seniors, ensuring they live with dignity, respect, and the highest quality of life, has only expanded."

For those interested in art and art law, follow Lubera on Instagram at @artlawtoday.

## GIFTS IN HONOR OF ROBERT LUBERA

Kathy Donigan  
Deborah and Paul Kawsky  
Ann and Tim Kay  
Elizabeth and Dr. Richard Lubera  
Katie and Dave Lubera  
Mary Lubera and John Lubera  
Kim and Brendan Ringlever  
Mary M. and Charles L. Roby  
Nancy and Richard Solak



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