

THE DAILY RECORD

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2001

Snyder's \$2.5M CP donation done with a click of the mouse

ERIC STOCKLIN



Baltimore County attorney Stephen L. Snyder enjoys being a philanthropist.

BY EARL KELLY

Daily Record Legal Affairs Writer

Baltimore County attorney Stephen L. Snyder enjoys helping the less fortunate, as evidenced by his \$2.5 million contribution yesterday to the United Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

At ceremonies in Washington and Baltimore, Snyder pledged the contribution over the Internet by using his American Express card.

"I wanted to come up with a way of donating the money that would inspire others," Snyder said in an interview. "I said, 'Wouldn't it be something if I could go to my computer, go on the Internet and click on \$2.5 million on my American Express.' A convenient, easy safe way of giving.

"What we're really talking about is creating a mechanism for charity as easy as clicking a mouse," said Snyder, 54, who is known for supporting charitable causes.

"And I'm getting 2.5 million [bonus] miles for this," he quipped.

Last year, on the 30th anniversary of his graduation from the University of Baltimore Law School, Snyder donated \$1 million to create the Stephen L. Snyder Center for Litigation Advocacy. Numerous appreciation plaques from Jewish and Catholic groups and the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation adorn the walls of his office in Pikesville.

Those walls at his firm of Snyder, Jacobs, Slutkin & Lodowski also remind you that Snyder is foremost a litigator.

His first big victory was a \$2 million medical malpractice verdict in 1983, referenced in a 1989 Sun Magazine cover that also hangs on in the conference room. It reads, "The Lawyer Other Lawyers Love to Hate."

On another wall hangs a facsimile of a check payable to Snyder's firm for \$70 million. It represents legal fees Snyder and his colleagues earned while representing clothier Merry-Go-Round in its fraud and malpractice suit against accounting giant Ernst & Young LLP. (Ernst & Young later hired

Snyder's firm to represent it in subsequent litigation.)

A two-tier merry-go-round with colorful ceramic horses sits by the spiral staircase in Snyder's office.

"I created a charitable trust out of the Ernst & Young fees, and it is being run by my wife and children," Snyder said. "The money for United Cerebral Palsy comes from that."

Snyder developed an interest in cerebral palsy after representing plaintiffs in cases where fetuses suffer oxygen shortages, and medical providers either fail to recognize the symptoms of distress or to act quickly enough to prevent the baby from suffering permanent brain damage.

"I've been blessed with five healthy kids," Snyder said. "But these families are ready for a blessed event and unfortunately are faced with devastation."

Snyder estimated he has handled as many as 100 of these complex civil cases.

Snyder said he plans to transfer the \$2.5 million to

United Cerebral Palsy over four years — \$2 million will go to UCP of Central Maryland and \$500,000 to the national organization.

UCP of Central Maryland is attempting to raise a total of \$10 million to construct a 57,000-square-foot educational facility in Baltimore City that will have classrooms, offices and a library. Publicists said the location for the center hasn't been selected yet, but it will be named after Snyder.

"This new facility will allow UCP of Central Maryland to expand its programs to disabled individuals and will permit even greater access to UCP services," Patricia Sandusky, president and CEO of UCP of Central Maryland said in a prepared statement.

Snyder and his wife, Julie, live in Baltimore County.

"I'm at a stage of my life where I have no desire to retire but unfortunately don't know how to take it easy," Snyder said. "And I enjoy philanthropy."

Reprinted with permission of The Daily Record Co. ©2001