

FOR **FRANK SULLIVAN**, BRINGING AN AFTER-SCHOOL CHESS PROGRAM TO CLEVELAND'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS WAS A MOVE THAT HAS PAID OFF FOR KIDS



board games

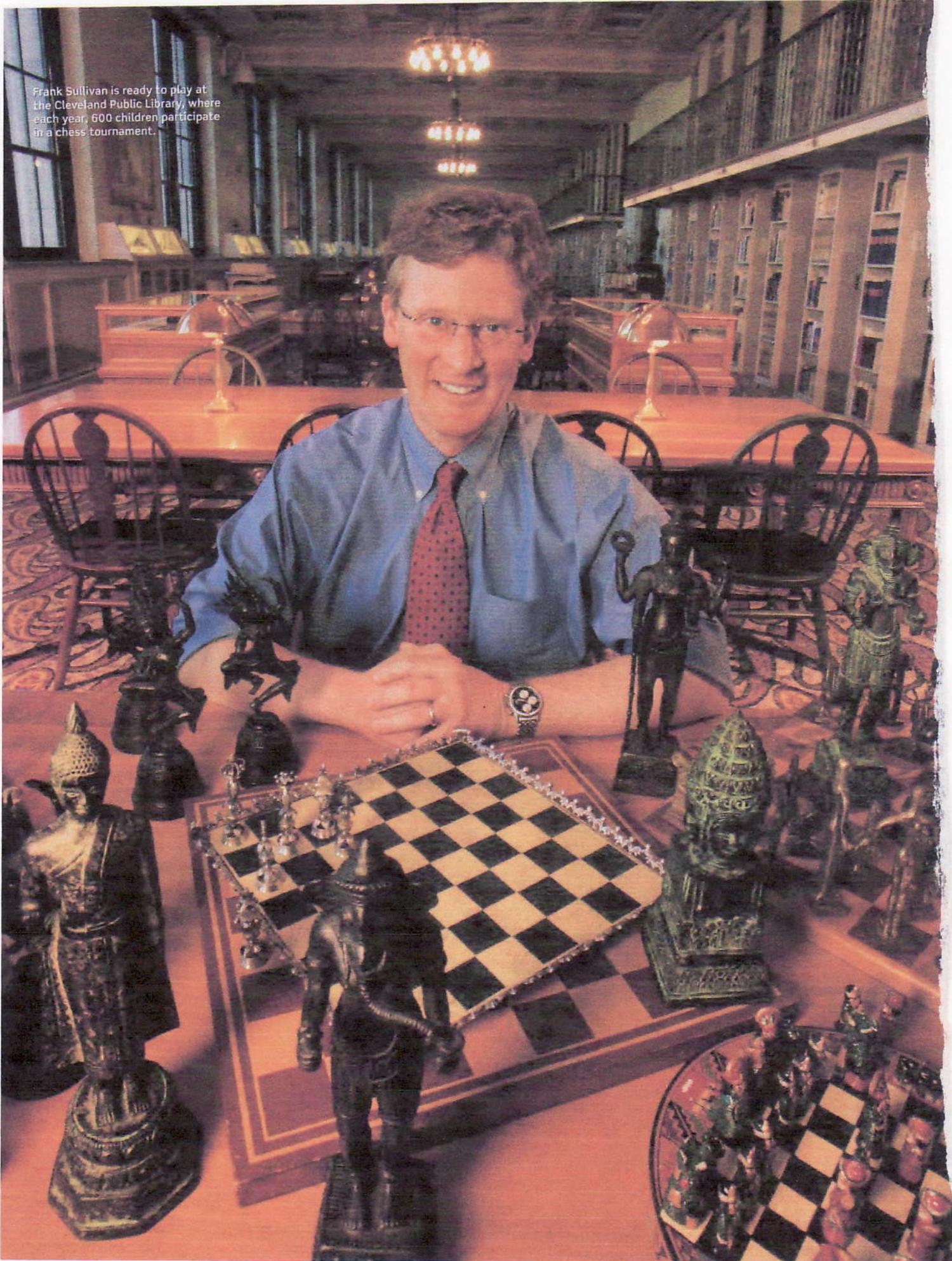
FRANK SULLIVAN KNOWS ALL ABOUT MAKING STRATEGIC MOVES. As chairman and CEO of RPM International, a \$3.6 billion company based in Medina, Ohio, that produces high-performance coatings, specialty chemicals, and sealants (including the brands Rust-Oleum, DAP, and Mohawk), he's constantly looking for ways to beat the competition. But these days, one of Sullivan's greatest passions extends beyond the boardroom, to the chessboard. He seeks to expose young minds to the venerable game. "Chess offers a great way to develop critical thinking, math skills, and thoughtful patience," he observes.

Sullivan has played a key role in funding and building Progress with Chess, a Cleveland-based nonprofit organization that brings chess instruction to public schools. Third- through eighth-graders who sign up for the program receive instruction after school and play in an annual tournament at the Cleveland Public Library. Approximately 600 children participate each year, and more than 4,000 kids have signed up for the program since its inception in 2002. Teachers and recognized chess masters instruct the children at nine different schools.

"The kids love it," Sullivan says. "When you visit a school, you see a bunch of bright-eyed young kids who are excited as all get-out. It's accomplishing what the schools want, which is developing young people's minds so they're able to engage in deep thinking and problem solving." The Chess Challenge, held each April, invites the students to put their knowledge and expertise to the task. The event brings in celebrities as well as renowned chess masters who demonstrate their skills and interact with the children.

One thing that makes the tournament special, Sullivan notes, is the fact that the John G. White Collection of Chess and Checkers resides in the Cleveland Public Library's main building. The collection is the world's largest trove of boards and pieces, literature about the game, and other chess- and checkers-related items

Frank Sullivan is ready to play at the Cleveland Public Library, where each year, 600 children participate in a chess tournament.



from across the globe. "It was just great feng shui that the world's premier chess museum happened to be here, and we could hold the annual Chess Challenge in the rooms and halls where the kids can see and experience the environment," he explains.

The origin of the program was equally fortuitous. Sullivan, who serves on the board of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, found himself chatting with Carl Bowers, a Cleveland police detective and former national chess champion, before a Hal Ketchum

concert at the hall in 2001. By happenstance, the two began talking chess and suddenly tripped across the idea of developing a program for the Cleveland public school system. Sullivan provided seed funding, the group received permission from the local teachers union and schools to use their facilities, and the program, initially named Chess 4 Success, was forged.

Today, several organizations, including the Cleveland Foundation, the George Gund Foundation, the Cleveland Police and Patrolman's Associa-

tion, and RPM International, provide funding and support. For Sullivan, who has four children of his own and enjoys playing chess recreationally, Progress with Chess is part of an ongoing effort to improve the community and advance educational causes. He also oversees the Sullivan Scholars Foundation, a program he developed to provide scholarships to private and parochial schools for economically disadvantaged students with outstanding grades. Together with RPM, he has donated more than \$3 million to the program.