

NEGLIGENCE SECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2004

This year, the Negligence Council, for the first time in many years, was forced to keep a very watchful eye on expenditures. Although our lobbying activity has been our most costly venture, we are convinced that the lobbying activity should be continued. This year we have begun to make substantial headway with our lobbying efforts. In order to continue, it became apparent that we must increase dues for Section members. We feel that the Section members are being served very well by our lobbying activity, and therefore, it was unanimously voted to increase dues from \$25.00 to \$35.00 per member.

We also, this year, renegotiated our lobbying contract. We are committed to continuing with our lobbying activity and, during the past year, we have been very successful in providing input and assisting legislators in drafting important legislation that will benefit our members. Because we are a group consisting of both plaintiff and defense lawyers, we are recognized as an organization with a balanced viewpoint, and therefore we have a better chance of effectuating positive change.

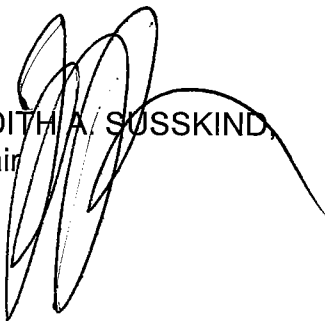
Unfortunately, due to our financial concerns over the past year, we did place a moratorium on awarding scholarships to the law schools. We do hope to reinstitute the scholarship program in the near future. Our dues increase should help us in this regard.

Our Management Consultant, Madelyne Lawry, has taken over the task of editing the Quarterly newsletter, which keeps our members informed and up-to-date on Section activities. The Quarterly has a new look this year, incorporating more photographs of our events and featuring councilmember profiles as well as profiles of our lobbyists.

At the annual meeting this year, the Negligence Section will be unveiling a new and up-to-date Trial Handbook authored by David Parker. We plan to offer this comprehensive Trial Handbook for a reduced rate to our members, and hope that this might generate some income to the Section. We have also discussed the possibility of presenting evening forum seminars to our Section members, and a committee has been formed with the hope of planning an evening seminar before the year is out.

This year's Spring Seminar was held on a cruise ship, something that hasn't been tried in a long time. We had an excellent turn out and a fabulous seminar featuring our honored guests, Senator Mark Schauer and Representative Jim Howell. We also had one of our lobbyists, Todd Tennis, on board to assist with the program. The seminar this year was superb. It provided us an opportunity to hear from Michigan legislators in an informal setting and to talk with them extensively about issues that concern our Section members. The seminar was a great adjunct to our successful lobbying efforts.

We have certainly attempted to improve the level of service to our members so that membership will not continue to decline. The practice of negligence law has been rather precarious in recent years, and we continue with our mission to provide access to the courts and our jury system to resolve grievances. Hopefully our members are aware of the fact that the Council has their interests at heart, and we have been working very hard to protect the interests of negligence lawyers throughout the state.



JUDITH A. SUSSKIND
Chair