

Consumer Law Section 2002-2003 Annual Report

The 2002-2003 term of the Consumer Law Section is the section's eighth year. Membership continues to increase, with current membership at over 500. Throughout this term, the section has continued efforts to advance the interests of consumers, promote the effective practice of consumer law and to provide assistance to consumer law practitioners.

Annual Meeting

At the annual meeting in Grand Rapids, an informative program on predatory lending was presented, featuring Kathleen Keest, a nationally known specialist and author on consumer credit. The program included a productive question and answer session between Attorney Keest and attendees. Frank J. Kelley presented the annual Frank J. Kelley Consumer Advocacy Award acknowledging outstanding contribution to the cause of consumer protection to Stanley (Skip) Pruss, former Assistant Attorney General In Charge of the Consumer Protection Division of the Department of Attorney General.

Planning for this fall's annual meeting is complete, and will feature speaker Tom Dominoske, an expert on auto fraud issues and litigation strategies.

Publication, Information Outreach and Legislative Efforts

The section publishes the Consumer Law Newsletter, containing articles on new developments in consumer law, legal issues facing consumer law attorneys, section activities, and others. Copies of the newsletters are archived on the section website.

The section also continues to maintain a listserv, permitting member access to the expertise of the section when novel issues or questions arise, and rapid exchange of information regarding matters of concern to consumer law advocates. Increased participation has been promoted and achieved this year, through the efforts of council member Josh Ard, list manager.

A consumer education seminar by the section will be presented at the fall conference of the District Court Judges Association in Frankenmuth, by council initiation and under the direction of council member Gary Victor.

The section has been exploring the possibility of implementing a website reference listing for consumer law attorneys, to facilitate consumer access and referrals. Further action on this initiative will continue next term.

The section has continued to aggressively monitor, publicize and provide position statements new legislation affecting consumer rights, including legislative testimony.

Conclusion

I would like to thank all section and council members for their commitment and service to the cause of consumer protection. In September, Steven Goren, of Goren, Goren &

Harris, PC, will be the new section chair. We have had a productive and interesting year, and look forward to expanding our activities next year.

Submitted by: Kathy Fitzgerald, Chair