

From: <webmaster@mail.michbar.org>
To: <asmith@mail.michbar.org>, <webmaster@mail.michbar.org>, <dbkorteringlew...>
Date: 3/13/2015 1:23 PM
Subject: Nomination for Unsung Hero Award

A copy of this e-mail has been sent to the State Bar of Michigan and to the nominator of the award.

Name of nominee: Vernon D. Korting
Title: Attorney at Law - posthumously
Firm or Organization: Korting Law Firm
Address: 8 West Walton Ave., Suite C, Muskegon, MI 49440
Phone: 231-728-6411
Fax:
E-mail:

Name of nominator: David B. Korting
Title: Attorney at Law (son of Nominee)
Firm or Organization: David B. Korting Law Office
Address: 8 West Walton Ave., Suite C, Muskegon, MI 49440
Phone: 231-747-8022
Fax: 231-747-8032
E-mail: dbkorteringlew@gmail.com

Explain the merits of your nomination, submit any supporting materials for your nominee by email, fax, or mail. Give specific examples.

I would like to nominate my father, Vernon D. Korting (P16157), posthumously, who passed away at the age of 80 on January 17, 2015, while in Hospice care at the Poppen House through Harbor Hospice in Muskegon, Michigan. See faxed and email obituary. I previously nominated my father in 2007 when he was 73 years old. I will forward you that nomination letter via fax and email.

My father was considered a "Maverick" as well as an "attorney's-attorney" and even a "Judge's attorney". He built an illustrious career and reputation as a prominent civil rights advocate, trend setter, and pioneer who fought for the underprivileged and downtrodden.

Daniel F. Bonner (P35511), Managing attorney for Legal Aid of Western Michigan-Muskegon, and 2009 recipient of the Michael Franck Award, noted at his funeral that the "real legal aid attorney in Muskegon County was Vernon D. Korting" and struck up a lifelong friendship with my father, even practicing with him for a few years. I have requested that he write a letter in support of this nomination and will have it emailed and/or faxed.

I am also including a letter by Honorable Timothy G. Hicks (P35198), Circuit Court Judge from Muskegon County, written to my family noting that my father "was THE best person at using the law for perhaps its highest purposes--to help provide justice to those less fortunate, and to move our society to better places."

Please provide a complete resume that includes dates of:

- Service to and on behalf of the State Bar of Michigan
- Other service to the legal profession
- Service to the public
- Any awards the nominee may have received

Vern Kortering started his 50 plus years in the field of law as a law clerk for Michigan Supreme Court Justice Eugene F. Black, graduated from U. of M. Law School in 1962, and began his illustrious career at the largest firm in Muskegon-Marcus, McCroskey and Libner. He eventually formed his own solo practice at the Kortering Law Firm in the 1990's and was joined by his son, David B. Kortering, in 1997. He practiced until 2013 at the age of 78.

He was recognized by the Executive Committee, Officers and Members of the Muskegon Branch N.A.A.C.P. #3147 at his funeral with a "resolution" for "his zest for the rights of those underprivileged and downtrodden and commitment to the cause of law and civil rights." Resolution will be forwarded via email and fax.

Optional: List news, magazine, radio, and TV features about the nominee's accomplishments (do not submit actual articles or DVDs).
State date/page and media e.g. 12/12/07, p. 12, Lansing State Journal, "Lawyer Begins TLC Program in Schools"

1/23/2015, p.1. Muskegon County Legal News, "In Memorial: Attorney Vernon D. Kortering - Civil Rights Activist - working for the underprivileged and downtrodden"

Please provide a letter written by the nominator explaining why the nominee should be considered for the award. The letter should be signed by the nominator and any additional supporters. One dated and signed letter is required, it can be e-mailed to Anne Smith at asmith@mail.michbar.org, faxed to her attention at (517) 372-2410, or sent by mail. Please note in your communication the name of the award and the nominee's name.

Ms. Anne Smith
Representative Assembly Awards
State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend St.
Lansing, MI 48933-2012
Phone: (517) 346-6374

Email secured by Check Point

DAVID B. KORTERING LAW OFFICE

8 West Walton Ave., Suite C
Muskegon, Michigan 49440
(231) 747-8022; 747-8032 (fax)

March 13, 2015

Ms. Anne Smith
Representative Assembly Awards
State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend St.
Lansing, MI 48933-2012

Via Facsimile: 517-372-2410

Re: Unsung Hero Award Nomination

I would like to nominate my father, Vernon D. Kortering (P16157), posthumously, who passed away at the age of 80 on January 17, 2015, while in Hospice care at the Poppen House through Harbor Hospice in Muskegon, Michigan. I previously nominated my father in 2007 when he was 73 years old. See enclosed letter and Obituary dated Sunday, January 26, 2015.

My father was considered a "Maverick" as well as an "attorney's-attorney" and even a "Judge's attorney". He built an illustrious career and reputation as a prominent civil rights advocate, trend setter, and pioneer who fought for the underprivileged and downtrodden.

Vern Kortering started his 50 plus years in the field of law as a law clerk for Michigan Supreme Court Justice Eugene F. Black, graduated from U. of M. Law School in 1962, and began his illustrious career at the largest firm in Muskegon-Marcus, McCroskey and Libner. He eventually formed his own solo practice at the Kortering Law Firm in the 1990's and was joined by his son, David B. Kortering, in 1997. He practiced until 2013 at the age of 78.

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Sincerely,

/s/

David B. Kortering

Enclosures:

1. 2007 Nomination Letter from David B. Kortering.
2. Obituary from Muskegon Chronicle, Sunday January 26, 2015.
3. Resolution from the Muskegon Branch N.A.A.C.P. #3147, submitted 1/31/2015.
4. Letter to family from Hon. Timothy G. Hicks, dated February 6, 2105.
5. 1/23/2015, p.1. Muskegon County Legal News, "In Memorial: Attorney Vernon D. Kortering - Civil Rights Activist - working for the underprivileged and downtrodden."

KORTERING LAW FIRM

450 Morris Ave., Suite 303

P.O. Box 3311

Muskegon, MI 49443

(231) 728-6411

(231) 728-6502 Fax

February 16, 2007

Attention: Ms. Anne Smith
Representative Assembly Awards
State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend St.
Lansing, MI 48933-2012

Re: Unsung Hero Award

Upon graduating from Law School in 1996, I could think of nothing else than learning the practice of law from my father. Growing up in Muskegon, I had always been asked, "Oh, are you Vern's son?" The question was usually followed by, "Your father helped me out" or, "your father is a great man," or "your father is one tough attorney."

Often times I would hear a story as to how he won an un-winnable case, or helped someone who could not help them self or afford an attorney, or took on a cause that was a long shot for the principle of the matter. Attorneys that take cases on principle are too few and far between, but my father built a reputation on it that extends throughout West Michigan to this date.

Back in his hey-day, he was referred to as a self-proclaimed "maverick." He took on cases and causes that were highly political and usually publicized. Most attorneys would stay away from those types of cases in fear of burning too many bridges. Not my father, he thrived in taking on tough cases and causes. Very active in politics, he also became known as the liberal democrat attorney in Muskegon and West Michigan. Wherever there was a political battle to fight, my father was there, either on the front lines, or behind the scenes.

Back in the late 60's and throughout the 70's, he was known as "the" civil rights attorney in Western Michigan. To this date, people still bring up his reputation as a trend setter and pioneer in civil rights. Fighting for the underprivileged, the downtrodden, victims of prejudice, and the underdog became his niche. He wore it well into the 80's and 90's. Although he has slowed down a little bit now and is mainly practicing his bread and butter area of Social Security Law, he still has time to take on a few causes these days.

Today, at the age of 73, he still comes to the office 7 days a week. People always ask me how he is and when he is going to retire. I usually tell them the standard answer: "Never, he wouldn't know what to do with himself if he wasn't in the office or court everyday consulting and helping people." Some attorneys have referred to him as "an attorney's attorney," thousands of former clients would refer to him as their hero. I, of course, simply refer to him as dad. No matter what, he will always be my unsung hero.

David B. Kortering (P55834)

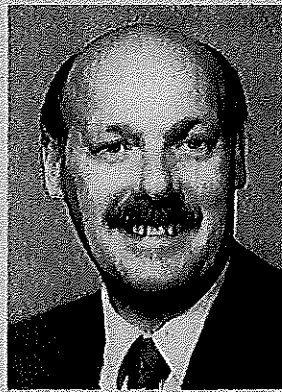
Obituary for Mr. Vernon D. Kortering

Mr. Vernon Dale Kortering, age 80, passed away Saturday, January 17, 2015. He was born March 27, 1934 in Holland, MI to Bert and Henrietta (Naber) Kortering. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1952-56 and graduated from Hope College in 1959. Vern married Lois E. Griffes of Muskegon Heights on June 6, 1959. He was a law clerk for Michigan Supreme Court Justice Eugene F. Black, graduated from U. of M. Law School in 1962, and began his illustrious career at the largest firm in Muskegon-Marcus, McCroskey and Libner. Vern represented those who felt that the Vietnam War and subsequent draft were against their philosophical and religious beliefs, supported the Black Panther movement, and the Teamsters Union. He was an active member of the NAACP, Planned Parenthood, and Every Woman's Place. Vern was referred to as a "Maverick" and built his reputation as a prominent civil rights advocate, trend setter, and pioneer who fought for the underprivileged and downtrodden. He focused on Workers Compensation, Labor Law, and Disability Law, all the while remaining very active in politics and the Democratic Party. Vern was called a "lawyer's lawyer" as well as a "judge's lawyer." He was joined by his son, David, into the Kortering Law Firm in 1997. He is survived by: his wife Lois; 3 children: Dr. Kathryn Kortering, Karyn Verge, and David (Katherine) Kortering; 5 grandchildren: Alison and Owen Verge; Kyla Kortering and Natalie Jeter; and Rachel Kortering; brother, Earl (Betty, deceased) Kortering, of Holland, MI; sister, Norma Brower of Spokane, WA; sister-in-law, Joan Kortering of Holland, MI; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; son, Vernon Dale II; and 2 brothers, Lloyd and Ronald Kortering. A

MEMORIAL SERVICE will be held 3:00 PM Saturday, January 31, 2015, at Hope Reformed Church with Rev. Steven Hyma officiating. VISITATION with the family will be one hour prior to the service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Harbor Hospice. Share memories with the family at their On-line Guest Book at www.sytsemafh.com. Arrangements by The Walburn Chapel, 1547 W. Sherman Blvd., (231) 759-8565

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 2015

MUSKEGON CHRONICLE / D7



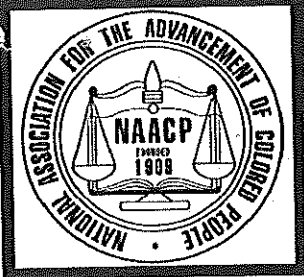
KORTERLING, VERNON
Muskegon



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 **SYTSEMA**
FUNERAL HOMES INC.



RESOLUTION

WHERE AS the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P) was founded February 12, 1909 as the Nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based Civil Rights organization and;

WHERE AS the NAACP's principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of minority group citizens of the United States and eliminate race prejudice and secure all rights guaranteed in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendment of the United States Constitution, and;

WHERE AS the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P) in 1913 organized and founded Branches in cities throughout the United States, and;

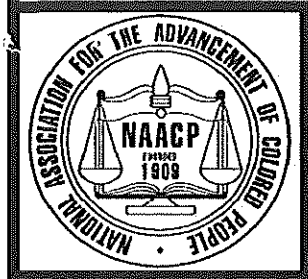
WHERE AS in the Year of 1919 the Muskegon Branch of the NAACP was organized and founded as Branch #3147 to begin its aim to improve the political, educational, social, and economic status of African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities; to eliminate racial prejudice; to keep the public aware of the adverse effects of discrimination, to seek legislation and policies at the local level which advance the programs and policies of the Association in conformity with the Articles of Incorporation of the Association, its Constitution and Bylaws, and;

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NAACP Muskegon Branch Chartered 1919

P.O. Box 0035
Muskegon, MI 49443
Phone/Fax: 231-894-5700

WHERE AS after Vernon Kortering graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1962 he began his illustrious career of representing those who felt that the Vietnam War and subsequent draft were against their philosophical and religious beliefs. It was during that time that he also became an active member of several civil rights and social and human rights organizations: one being the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – NAACP Muskegon Branch #3147. Vern was known as a “Maverick” and was fiercely committed and dedicated to the cause of civil rights. During his years as an advocate in December 1977 he paid down on his Golden Heritage membership and in December 1982 became a fully paid Lifetime Member at the Golden Heritage level.

WHERE AS Vern, in addition to his love of law, he always remained active in politics and the Democratic Party, and became known as a “lawyer’s lawyer” as well as a “judge’s lawyer”. He began his career in Muskegon’s largest firm, Marcus, McCroskey and Libner. He was later joined by his son David into the Kortering Law Firm in 1997.

WHERE AS he had a long and fruitful practice in his field and a long involvement in Civil Rights;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That we, the Executive Committee, Officers and Members of the Muskegon Branch NAACP #3147 will remember his zest for the rights of those underprivileged and downtrodden and commitment to the cause of law and civil rights.

And, that we express to his wife Lois, his children and siblings our deepest sympathy in their loss, yet be reminded that he leaves behind a great legacy of commitment to the cause of law and civil rights.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this Resolution is given to the family of the late Vernon Kortering and a copy is placed in the official records of the Muskegon Branch of the NAACP #3147, in the City of Muskegon (County of Muskegon), Michigan.

Signed and submitted this thirty-first (31st) day of January, in the Year of our Lord, 2015.

Phyllis Loudermill, President
Muskegon Branch #3147 National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People and the
Executive Committee and Members



STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHAEL E. KOBZA HALL OF JUSTICE
14TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
990 TERRACE STREET
MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN 49442-3357

HON. TIMOTHY G. HICKS
CIRCUIT JUDGE

TELEPHONE (231) 724-6337
FAX (231) 724-4587

February 6, 2015

Dear Lois, Dave, and the rest of the family:

I was unable to attend last Saturday's service because of some family commitments.

We have lost a giant in our community.

When I came to town in 1985, Muskegon had several firms of some size and renown. Vern's firm was one of the best. The influence that he, and his colleagues, had both on the community, and the *legal* community, was profound. I have come to appreciate how much we miss the mentoring and the standards he and others provided. And while he was a skilled advocate, he understood that one could zealously argue cases without creating enemies or losing friends. We miss that.

It was only later that I learned that many of those individuals, including Vern, also had reputations statewide and beyond. I think Vern's affable and approachable personality (which is good) led folks to underestimate his influence in those circles.

Of course, with Vern, there was quite often little distinction between the community and the "legal" community. He was THE best person at using the law for perhaps its highest purposes—to help provide justice to those less fortunate, and to move our society to better places.

I cannot close without mentioning the politics which were so much of his life. Yes, we were on different sides of the aisle, but he knew, as many today do not, how to use those principles in a productive way. He attended more Republican events than most Republicans, and knew all of our political leaders. I grew to seek and follow his advice in my own career. He was always astute and on the mark.

We will miss him. We already do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Hicks", written over a horizontal line.

HON. TIMOTHY G. HICKS
Circuit Judge

TGH:sko



LEGAL AID

OF WESTERN MICHIGAN March 16, 2015

Juan Salazar, Interim Executive Director

450 Morris
Suite 104
Muskegon, MI 49440
Telephone: (231) 726-4887
Toll Free: (800) 968-4887
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Ms. Anne Smith
Representative Assembly Awards
State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend Street
Lansing, MI 48933-2012

Sent Via Fax 517-372-2410 & email

Re: Nomination of Vernon Kortering for Unsung Hero Award

I offer this letter in support of the selection of the late Vernon Kortering as a recipient of the State Bar's Unsung Hero Award. Vern's legal career epitomized everything that makes ours such a noble profession.

Upon completion of law school in 1983, my dream was to practice poverty law as a Legal Aid lawyer. When I returned to Muskegon to fulfill that dream, I soon discovered that there was already a lawyer here who had been selflessly representing the poor and the marginalized for years, often at no charge. That man was not a Legal Aid attorney. Vern lived the spirit of pro bono.

I frequently thought of the values and practice of Atticus Finch in "To Kill A Mockingbird" and Vern Kortering as mirror images of each other.

My life and career were richly blessed by my colleague, Vern Kortering. He became a friend, a mentor, a role model.

It is my hope that the good folks of the Representative Assembly will posthumously bestow this high honor on Vern Kortering. The many people who knew and loved him, both in and outside our Bar, will applaud and thank you for selecting a most worthy recipient.

When Vern died in January of this year, I was asked by his family to deliver a eulogy at his memorial service. On that day, I looked out over a church packed with people who represented different ages, different races, and different economic status. We had all been touched by the life and example of the man we remembered—a man who was our hero.

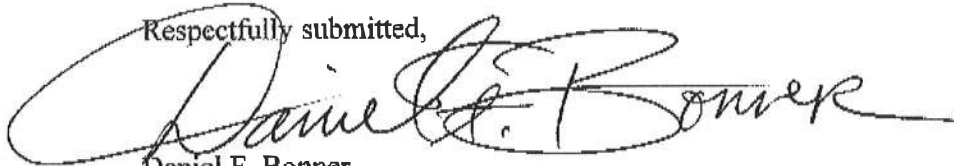
Choosing Vern for this prestigious award would both honor and reward this Unsung Hero's legacy of selfless service.



Ms. Anne Smith
Page Two
March 16, 2015

The words and length of this letter are far too feeble to adequately describe Vern's life of service. Just the same, I thank the members of the Representative Assembly for your gracious consideration of the nomination of Vernon Kortering as the 2015 Unsung Hero of the State Bar of Michigan.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel F. Bonner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Daniel F. Bonner
Managing Attorney and affectionately
Known to the Bar as "P35511"

lc

P.S. It would be remiss of me to close without mention of one of the most unforgettable days of my life. In September of 2009, I stood before the Representative Assembly, humbled and touched beyond words as your 2009 Michael Franck Award recipient. This letter allows me the opportunity to THANK again those of you who were members of the Assembly six years ago for treating Dan Bonner to a day he will never forget.

LEGAL PAGES

Matthew Miller
Tolle & Walsh P/c
Or Current Resident
8 W Wallon
Muskegon MI 49443-1601

January 23, 2015 12 pages

Volume 13 Number 3 © 2015 Detroit Legal News Publishing LLC Muskegon, MI

In Memorial: Attorney Vernon D. Kortering

Civil rights activist — working for the underprivileged and downtrodden

by Diana L. Coleman
Legal News

Attorney Vernon Dale Kortering passed away Saturday January 17, 2015. He was born March 27, 1934, in Holland, Michigan to Bert and Henrietta Kortering. Vern served in the U.S. Air Force from 1952-56 and went on to graduate from Hope College in 1959. He married Lois E. Griffes of Muskegon Heights on June 6, 1959.

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Kortering represented those who felt that the Vietnam War and subsequent draft were against their philosophical and religious beliefs. He supported the Black Panther movement and the Teamsters Union. He was an active member of the NAACP, Planned Parenthood, and Every Woman's Place.

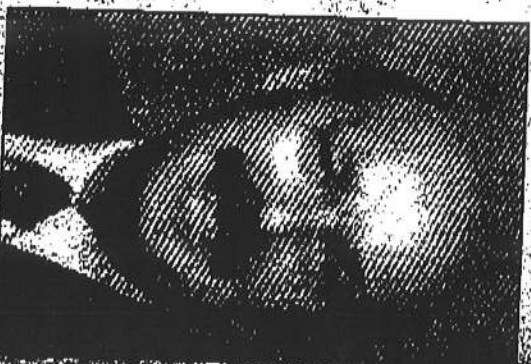
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He was joined by his son, David, into the Kortering Law Firm in 1997. Vernoh Kortering is survived by his wife, Lois, 3 children: Kathryn Kortering, Karyn Verge, and David (Katherine) Kortering; 5 grandchildren: Allison and Owen Verge; Kyla Kortering and Natalie Joley and Rachel Kortering. Kortering is

also survived by a brother, Earl (Betty, deceased) Kortering of Holland, Michigan; Sister Norma Brower of Spokane, Washington; sister-in-law Joan Kortering of Holland, Michigan and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, son Vernon Dale II, and 2 brothers, Lloyd and Ronald Kortering.

A memorial services will be held 3:00 pm Saturday, January 31, 2015, at Hope Reformed Church. Visitation with the family will be one hour prior to the service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Harbor Hospice.



Vernon Kortering, 1934-2015

MUSKEGON COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 88
Muskegon, Michigan 49443

March 17, 2015

Ms. Anne Smith
Representative Assembly Awards
State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend St.
Lansing, MI 48933-2012

Via Facsimile: 517-372-2410

Re: Unsung Hero Award Nomination

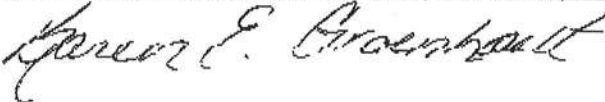
The officers of the Muskegon County Bar Association would like to offer our support on behalf of the Muskegon County Bar for the nomination of Vernon D. Kortering, posthumously, for the Representative Assembly Unsung Hero Award.

Although our Bar is considered small at roughly 200 members, we are diverse. Mr. Kortering epitomized a lawyer in our community who throughout his long and illustrious career, exhibited the highest standards of practice and commitment for the benefit of others. To thousands and thousands of residents of Muskegon County, he is an "Unsung Hero" and very deserving of this award.

Sincerely,

MCBA Officers for 2014-15

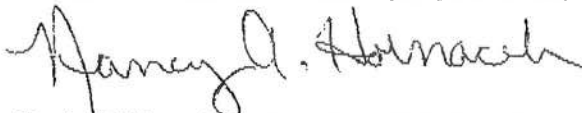
Karen E. Groenhout, President (231) 724-6280; groenhoutka@co.muskegon.mi.us



Cavan J. Berry, Vice President (231) 726-4887 x 24; cjberry@legalaidwestmich.net



Nancy A. Hornacek, Treasurer (231) 722-5406; nah@parmenterlaw.com



Kevin M. Huss, Secretary (231) 724-4320; khuss@shrr.com

