

UpFront

By Samantha Meinke

21st Century Practice Task Force Unveils Vision to Transform Legal Profession

After a comprehensive year-long process examining how the State Bar of Michigan can best serve the public and support lawyers in the face of a rapidly evolving profession, the SBM 21st Century Practice Task Force outlined five key problems the legal profession must address, and visions and key innovations necessary to overcome them. The work product of the task force is available at www.michbar.org/future.

The five problems outlined by the task force are a dysfunctional legal marketplace, significant issues for new lawyers and new challenges for experienced lawyers, inefficient and overly complex legal processes, regulatory hurdles, and cultural resistance to innovation. The task force recommendations include developing a comprehensive public platform linked to a full range of legal services and information; nurturing new service

delivery options; simplifying and standardizing courts; dynamic, data-driven new lawyer support; a new model for continuing legal education and professional development; innovative changes to bar admissions; and practical strategies for persistent, value-driven change. ■



From left to right: SBM Vice President Donald Rockwell, Representative Assembly Vice Chair Fred Herrmann, President Lori Buiteweg, Secretary Jennifer Grieco, and President-Elect Lawrence Nolan celebrate the task force's work.



SBM 21st Century Practice Task Force Co-Chairs Julie Fershtman and Bruce Courtade share their vision for "coloring outside the lines" in the future.

Photos by David Trumple

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UpFront?

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Samantha Meinke, State Bar of Michigan, 306 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48933-2012

e-mail: smeinke@mail.michbar.org

phone: (517) 346-6332

ABA President Paulette Brown Addresses Annual SBM Brunch for Bars

American Bar Association President Paulette Brown addressed attendees at the second annual State Bar of Michigan Brunch for Bars on April 17 in Detroit. Brown discussed the ABA Commission on Diversity & Inclusion 360, a program she created to formulate methods, policy, standards, and practices to best advance diversity and inclusion in the legal profession over the next 10 years. The commission's four working groups on implicit bias projects, pipeline projects, diversity and inclusion guidelines, and implementation and economic opportunities will develop sustainable action plans to move the needle on diversity and inclusion in an impactful way.

The brunch, cosponsored by the SBM Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Equal Access Initiative, took place the morning after the Wolverine Bar Association's 54th Annual Barristers Ball and offered an opportunity for leaders of local and affinity bar associations to network, share information, and discuss collaboration opportunities. ■



Photo by Steve Thorpe

From left to right: SBM Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair Hon. Cynthia Stephens, SBM President-Elect Lawrence Nolan, ABA President Paulette Brown, SBM President Lori Buiteweg, and SBM Diversity and Inclusion Committee member Alisa Parker.

To see more photos from both events, visit www.facebook.com/sbm.news/

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