

# Local and Special-Purpose BAR ASSOCIATIONS

## The Ingham County Bar Association

By Jessica S. Fox

From its humble beginnings in the early 1900s as the second local bar association in Michigan, the Ingham County Bar Association is now nearly 800 members strong. Its original aims were to maintain the honor and dignity of the profession, promote due administration of justice, and cultivate social interaction among the members of the Ingham County bar. Those goals remain today as the association strives to meet the needs of its members in a diverse and rapidly changing profession.

The association is a blend of tradition and new ideas. Its shrimp dinner, inaugurated in 1946, is held each May as an opportunity for members to socialize and to announce the election of new board members. At the annual dinner in November, the association presents a number of awards to members for their achievements and contributions to the bar and the community at large.

The association continues to provide quality educational opportunities for its members by holding monthly section meetings by practice area, led by volunteer chairs who concentrate in that particular area. A significant recent contribution was the business court training sessions led by Hon. Joyce Draganchuk in conjunction with the introduction of a business court in Ingham County.

*BRIEFS*, the association's newsletter, is still in publication after 37 years, though it looks much different. The newsletter is now available only electronically; the new online format is easy to read on computers, tablets, and smartphones.

The association has an extremely active Young Lawyers Section, which has a voting presence on the Board of Directors and is open to members who are under the age of 35 or have been in practice less than five years. The section puts together an annual



A composite of the Ingham County Bar Association membership from 1962, courtesy of Meg Higham. Higham's grandfather, H. H. Warner, is the association president in this photo. Her father, Bob Warner, and the late Donald L. Reisig, 54th president of the State Bar of Michigan, are also pictured.

swearing-in ceremony for those who have passed the bar and are seeking to practice law in the state of Michigan. It conducts numerous educational programs for both young and seasoned lawyers on various topics, typically with a number of judges as speakers. In 2015, the section held its Bar-rister's Night and presented its Top 5 Under 35 awards. It also organized The Paper Chase 5K run in 2015, benefitting Legal Services of South Central Michigan.

The Ingham County Bar Association works with the Ingham County Bar Foundation, a separate, charitable nonprofit entity, to hold numerous social events, including an annual golf outing and Fellows reception. The foundation has given grants or donations to several organizations, including the Greater Lansing Food Bank, Elder Law of Michigan, Dwight Rich Middle School's Emotionally and Mentally Impaired Educational Program, the H.O.P.E. Scholarship Program with the Lansing Police Department and Lansing Public Schools, and many others.

The association is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors led by President

Mark Kellogg, President-Elect Jessica S. Fox, Vice President Mary Chartier, Treasurer James Dalton, and Secretary Charles Barbieri.

In recent years, the association transitioned from a single staff manager to a professional association management company called Shared Resources, Inc., led by Madelyne Lawry. The transition has kept the association running effortlessly and allows the board to focus on providing educational opportunities for its members and finding ways the association can be involved in the community. ■



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