

REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY AWARDS

By Mike Eidelbes

The State Bar of Michigan Representative Assembly presented awards to two individuals during its virtual general meeting on September 17.

Michael Franck Award

The Van Buren County Courthouse is a classic revivalist structure that has been serving citizens since 1903 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. **William Buhl** hasn't been around that long—he's only been in Paw Paw for a little more than 50 years—but he's as much of an institution in that county's legal community as the stately building.



Buhl left his boyhood home in Deckerville in Michigan's Thumb in 1960 for the University of Michigan. He spent seven years in Ann Arbor while earning a bachelor's degree in history and a law degree. In January 1968, Buhl was hired by a private practitioner in Paw Paw.

Buhl, the recipient of this year's Michael Franck Award honoring an attorney who has made an outstanding contribution to the improvement of the profession, has been there ever since.

One month after setting up shop on the west side of the state, Buhl's career in the public sector began when he was appointed Van Buren County assistant prosecuting attorney. Later that same year, he was elected county prosecuting attorney. In 1971, he became the county's first full-time prosecutor and in 1972, he was reelected.

In 1974, Buhl moved to the bench, chosen by then Gov. William Milliken to fill a vacancy as judge for Van Buren County's 7th Judicial District. He won reelection in 1976, 1978, and 1984. In 1988, he was elected to the 36th Circuit Court, where he stayed until retiring in 2010.

Buhl was instrumental in helping launch the Van Buren County drug treatment court, the county's first specialty court, in 2008, and he chaired the county's Community Corrections Advisory Board while a circuit judge. He also spent two decades on the Michigan Court Forms Committee, all but one of them as the body's chair.

Now semi-retired, Buhl has engaged in limited private practice and pro bono activities over the last decade and has advocated for the repeal of Michigan's driver responsibility fee and reform of the state's sex offender registry.

Unsung Hero Award

If you've seen **Clark Andrews'** résumé—and since he's been with the same law firm since 1974, you probably haven't—one thing that jumps out is his extensive list of volunteer participation and community and civic service.



Not long after graduating from the University of Michigan Law School and joining what was then known as Stewart, O'Reilly, Cornell, Donovan, Lascoe and Rancilio, Andrews became a member of the Sterling Heights Rotary Club. Forty-five years later, he's still with the organization whose motto is "Service Above Self," participating in endeavors ranging from bike helmet giveaways and fittings for kids to trail improvements in local parks. He's also been a longtime member of the Sterling Heights Chamber of Commerce and Industry, including stints as president, vice chair, and director, and helped launch the Sterling Heights Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

For more than two decades, Andrews was a pro bono volunteer on the Macomb County Legal Assistance Program for Senior Citizens Board. In 2013, he was honored by the Macomb County Bar Association for his dedication to the board. He's spent many years with the Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys Professional Education Committee, which collaborates with the State Bar of Michigan Public Corporation Section to put on educational seminars for municipal lawyers.

Andrews' devotion to education doesn't end with municipal attorneys. He's been part of the Utica Community Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence since 1993 and volunteers each year to take part in the district's Career Focus Luncheon, which provides career guidance for 2,000 sixth-grade students. For several years, Andrews has helped sixth graders at Utica's Roberts Elementary School conduct mock jury trials as a part of Law Day.

"Clark has made a difference in our community and at our firm," said Chuck Turnbull, president of the firm now known as O'Reilly Rancilio. "He...has positively impacted the people of Macomb County for over 45 years. His skills, knowledge, willingness to help others, and dedication to our community make him a shining example of an unsung hero."

The ongoing pandemic forced the State Bar of Michigan to postpone indefinitely its annual awards ceremony. While we don't know when the awards will be presented, we do know who will receive them. The 2020 State Bar of Michigan award recipients are:

Roberts P. Hudson Award: Barry L. Howard

Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Service Award:

Ronald J. Frantz and Anita L. Hitchcock

Champion of Justice Award:

Thomas P. Boyd, Hon. Susan L. Dobrich, and James H. Fisher

John W. Reed Michigan Lawyer Legacy Award: Paul D. Reingold

John W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award: Heidi A. Naasko

Kimberly M. Cahill Bar Leadership Award:

ATJ Mid-Northern Michigan Expungement Project

Liberty Bell Award: Timothy Skubick

More information about the recipients, and details about the award ceremony, will be published in a future issue of the *Bar Journal*.