

Connections

Linking

State, Local, and Special Purpose Bar Associations

links to help you

Legal Milestones Program

www.michbar.org/programs/milestones.cfm

Access to Justice Pledge Form

www.michbar.org/programs/ATJCampaign/pledgeOnline.cfm

Member Services Orientation

www.michbar.org/programs/

SBM Free Subscriptions Sign-Up

www.michbar.org/publications/signup.cfm

Connections is an electronic newsletter published three times a year by the State Bar of Michigan and distributed without charge to recognized Michigan local and special bar associations and the State Bar Board of Commissioners.

Announcements, articles, and pictures for Connections are highly encouraged. Please send suggestions to Candace Crowley at ccrowley@mail.michbar.org. The State Bar of Michigan reserves the right to edit for clarity and suggests that submissions be kept at 500 words or fewer.

Submission Deadlines:

February 15, 2008

June 15, 2008

October 15, 2008

Communication with Affinity Bars

By Candace Crowley

Just like his predecessors, Ron Keefe truly enjoys the bar association visits he makes across the state. Not only do they provide a great opportunity to offer greetings and good will, but they also serve as a forum to share State Bar programs and policy information with you. This year's UP Tour, for example, allowed Ron to let our members in the North know about the impending release of the indigent criminal defense report and the judicial resources report, and the role of the bars in addressing those two important items. He noted that over 50 percent of Michigan lawyers are 50 years or older, and that 23 percent are age 60 or older. We see a great opportunity to identify a range of services and activities for so many lawyers facing retirement, and Ron recently appointed a planning group to look at this issue.

The president's remarks and informal conversations lead to questions and comments from you that help inform decisions and assure that the State Bar stays relevant to its members. Your Representative Assembly members and commissioners often accompany the president on these visits, providing a good reminder about who speaks for you in State Bar discussions.

We welcome the opportunity to meet members where they feel most comfortable and have fun, and we look forward to supporting your bar's activities. Visits from the State Bar president can boost meeting attendance as well. Let me know if you'd like Ron to attend one of your meetings or events; he looks forward to them very much.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Offers Program for Bar Associations

Looking for a topic or a speaker for an upcoming meeting? The ADR Section of the State Bar is offering to present an informative, entertaining, interactive show on civil mediation at no charge to your association. The presentation includes a simulated mediation, demonstrates how mediation works, and explains how lawyers can better serve their clients and increase their income by using mediation. Members of the local bench and bar perform the simulation, with written instructions sent in advance. If possible, a member of the ADR Section will be present to facilitate the presentation. For further information, contact Robert E. L. Wright at (616) 776-6334, wrightr@millercanfield.com, or Richard Morley Barron at (810) 487-1368, rmorleybarron@charter.net.

Calendar of Events

Mark Your Calendars: Bar Leadership Forum and Upper Michigan Legal Institute

These two events will join together again this year and will occur on June 13-15 at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT RESOURCE CENTER Offers "How to Start a Law Practice"

-This seminar will be held on January 11, 2008 at the Lansing Community College, West Campus, and offers great speakers and helpful sessions that address financial management, law firm formation, attracting good clients, marketing, records management, and support staff hiring issues. See http://www.michbar.org/pmr/pdf/Law_Practice.pdf.

ABA Legal Opportunity Scholarship Fund

March 1, 2008 is the deadline for racial and ethnic minority students to apply for this \$5,000 financial award. The application can be downloaded from the ABA website at www.abanet.org/fje.

Important New Decision Regarding Non-refundable Retainers

A recent Attorney Discipline Board opinion addressed problems that arise when the term "non-refundable retainer" is used in a fee agreement. The ADB held that a client's agreement that a fee is a "minimum fee" and "not refundable" does not override the duty to refund the unearned fees paid in advance for work to be performed in the future. This case remains on appeal. See the opinion at <http://www.michbar.org/opinions/ethics/cooper.pdf>. The Practice Management Resource Center has retainer agreement forms that comport with the new opinion. Visit <http://www.michbar.org/pmr/resources.cfm>, click Client Relations, Client Intake, and then Forms.

Representative Assembly Invites Issue Proposals for April Meeting

The Representative Assembly invites bar associations and sections to submit policy items for review and voting at its April 12, 2008 meeting. Contact your RA member, Chair Bob Gardella at (810) 220-4200 or bobgardella@yahoo.com, or Anne Smith at (517) 346-6374 or asmith@mail.michbar.org by February 27, 2008. Information on actions taken at the September 2007 RA meeting can be found at <http://www.michbar.org/generalinfo/announcements.cfm>.

Criminal Issues Initiatives Focuses on Civil Consequences of Criminal Convictions

The Criminal Issues Initiative of the Justice Initiatives Division has several publications available on their website for download and printing, in addition to their Michigan Reentry Law Wiki. The materials are part of their Know Your Rights: Collateral Consequences of Criminal Conviction series, and include brochures about immigration and employment issues for persons facing criminal conviction, attorney-client questionnaires developed to minimize the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction, and a "Top Ten Resources" card (available in print only) for reentry persons. Please contact Judy Hershkowitz at (800) 968-1442 ext. 6335 or jhershkowitz@mail.michbar.org for more information or to receive printed copies. <http://www.michbar.org/programs/criminalissues.cfm> and http://reentry.mplp.org/reentry/index.php/Main_Page

Give the Gift of Access to Justice this Holiday Season!

Lawyers, sections, and bar associations have generously supported the Access to Justice Campaign since its inception in 1997, helping the ATJ Fund reach over \$7.5 million in gifts and pledges to date for civil legal aid for the poor. However, the need still far outstrips available resources. A recent State Bar study showed that for every four persons who receive assistance, civil legal aid programs turn three others away because they lack sufficient resources to help more people. More than 1.3 million persons in our state qualify for help from legal aid because their income is no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level, or just over \$21,000 annually for a family of three.

Your continued generosity will help assure that low-income persons in Michigan receive help with civil legal needs such as keeping families safe in their homes, protecting the elderly from unscrupulous contractors, or helping the



Bar Associations Partner to Place Prentiss Brown Legal Milestone in St. Ignace
Marilyn Keefe, Michael Ekdahl (Secretary, Cheboygan County Bar Association), Aaron Gauthier (President, Cheboygan County Bar Association), Ron Keefe, Paul Strom (member, Delta County Bar Association), Peter Strom (President, Delta County Bar Association), Anthony Domiano (member, Cheboygan Bar), Thomas North (member, 50th Judicial Circuit Bar Association) Photo by Naseem Stecker

disabled access medical care. A gift of at least \$300 is one way lawyers may satisfy their annual obligation under the State Bar's Voluntary Pro Bono Standard.

Please consider making a tax-deductible gift before December 31, 2007 to continue building a statewide endowment that can generate much-needed revenue, or direct your ATJ Fund gift to an eligible nonprofit civil legal aid agency. Endowment gifts may also qualify for a state tax credit. To donate online, print a pledge form, see a list of eligible agencies, or obtain information about possible tax benefits or gift options, go to www.atjfund.org or call the Michigan State Bar Foundation at (800) 968-8723. The ATJ Campaign is a partnership of the State Bar of Michigan, the Michigan State Bar Foundation, and civil legal aid programs in Michigan. The Bar Foundation holds the ATJ Fund and receives and administers contributions according to the ATJ Fund Guidelines, located at www.msbf.org/atjfund.

Legal Milestones Program

Jeff Paulsen, chairperson of the State Bar's Public Outreach Committee, is encouraging bar associations, sections, and committees to suggest persons, places, statutes, cases, and events in Michigan's legal history for the Legal Milestone program. The program educates the public about the law and the legal process, and reminds people of the unique role that lawyers and judges have in our society. The Outreach Committee partners with bar association and others to honor these milestones. Contact Jeff at (248) 203-0889 or jpaulsen@dykema.com, or Naseem Stecker at (517) 346-6428 or nstecker@mail.michbar.org for more information. More information about the milestones can be found at <http://www.michbar.org/programs/milestones.cfm>.

Out and About

The Young Lawyers Section, the Straker Bar, and the Wolverine Bar are joining forces to raise funds for children of incarcerated parents by hosting an Old School Skate Party on Thursday, December 27 from 9:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. at Bonaventure Skating Rink in Farmington. Contact Solon Phillips at (313) 598-2724 for more information.

Genesee County Bar Executive Director **Ramona Sain** was recently honored with the Athena Award, recognizing women in Flint who have made significant contributions to their community and exhibit outstanding leadership.

Honorable Michael F. Sapala is the new president of the Michigan Judges Association, with **Honorable Fred L. Borchard** as president-elect.

President Michael J. Sullivan is leading the Oakland County Bar Association this year.

Scott Schisler has been elected as president of the Bay County Bar Association.

Joel Bauer was recently elected president of the 26th Judicial Circuit Bar Association in Alpena.

Amanda Haverdink will lead the Allegan County Bar Association this year.

The Isabella County Bar will look to **Matthew A. Romashko** for leadership for the 2007-2008 year.

Richard M. Wilson, Jr. has been identified as the president of the Manistee County Bar Association.

Frank Ford succeeds **Theodore J. Johnson** as president of the Suburban Bar Association of Western Wayne County.

The Downriver Bar Association has elected **Neal C. DeBlois** as president for the new term.

Anthony Cho succeeds **Lawrence Almeda** as president, Michigan Asian Pacific American Bar Association.

The Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys has elected **Andrew J. Mulder** as president.

The Michigan Council of School Attorneys will look to **Laura Katers Reilly** for leadership this year.

Jeffrey Pepper is the new president of the Wayne County Family Law Bar Association.

Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys, Public Corporation Law Section Host Joint Summer Conference

These two groups have partnered to present a Summer Conference on Drummond Island to occur on June 27-28, 2008. Watch the Public Corporation Law Section website for more details.

Nominations Open for McCree Award for Journalists

You have until February 14 to nominate Michigan broadcast and print media journalists who foster greater public understanding of the inherent values of our legal and judicial system through their published materials. See http://www.michbar.org/news/releases/archives07/mccree_nomination.cfm for more information.



Macomb Bar Installation Dinner Celebration—right to left: Janet Welch, Executive Director, State Bar of Michigan; Rick Troy, Executive Director, Macomb County Bar Association; Kim Cahill, Immediate Past President, State Bar of Michigan Photo courtesy of Macomb Bar Association



Bar Leaders Gather in UP —right to left: Michael Pope, President, Gogebic-Ontonagon Bar Association; Ron Keefe, President, State Bar of Michigan, Janet Welch, Executive Director, State Bar of Michigan; George Brown, Executive Director, State Bar of Wisconsin; Thomas Basting, Sr., President, State Bar of Wisconsin

SBM

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

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