

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE SENIOR LAWYER SECTION
MAY 31, 2008**

OVERVIEW

The Senior Lawyer Section activities for the Section year of October through May have been relatively minimal. The Section has been in a holding pattern, expecting to land soon at the threshold of a new era. For years the Section, created to serve 60-year (and older) Michigan lawyers, has been unable to enlist a membership greater than 250 out of an eligible pool of nearly 10,000. The small membership concomitantly produced minimal Section fee income, thus hampering the Section in its efforts to effectuate many of the programs that have languished on the planning table for years.

At the beginning of this Committee year, the Section's Council dedicated itself to revitalizing the Section through a campaign that would change the negative image that our membership consisted of lawyers over age 60 who had "checked out"; and who were primarily concerned about reduced or no bar dues and retirement issues. While these issues are relevant, the Section exists to serve myriad needs and opportunities of nearly 10,000 senior status lawyers – many still professionally active. It is this large unserved group we seek to bring into the fold.

We began our outreach by forming a Bylaws Revision Committee; and by offering free membership for one year to all lawyers when reaching age 60. As we geared-up to take on the daunting task of enlarging our membership and the scope of our Section's services, we learned of State Bar President Ronald Keefe's "second season" initiative to establish a Study Planning Group that recognized the need to enlarge the Section and provide the financial wherewithal in order to serve the needs of all lawyers who reach senior status. Accordingly, President Keefe created a planning group to explore his vision – and develop a going-forward plan of implementation for submission to the SBM final authorities. For now, Bylaw revisions and membership incentives are on hold as we look forward to a new, larger and dynamic Section.

Council Membership:

2007-2008 Officers and Members:

Chair:	Asher N. Tilchin	P21455
Chair-Elect:	John M. Barr	P10475
Secretary:	Dennis F. Shrewsbury	P34128
Treasurer:	H. Rollin Allen	P10113

Term Expires 2008:

Richard F. Fellrath	P13365
George S. Lilly	P16682
Edgar W. Pugh	P19130

Term Expires 2009:

Miles C. Gerberding	P36543
Jon H. Kingsepp	P15982
Daniel J. Van Antwerp	P21703

Term Expires 2010:

Joseph C. Cox	P12288
Alfred E. Gade	P13779
William K. Van't Hof	P21774

Immediate Past Chairperson:

Robert A. Hess, Deceased

Commissioner Liaison:

Gregory L. Ulrich	P27732
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Staff Liaison:

Amy Castner

MISSION STATEMENT

The current Mission Statement of the Senior Lawyers Section from its Bylaws in Section 2 and 3 is as follows:

The Senior Lawyers Section of the State Bar of Michigan provides education, information and analysis about issues of concern through meetings, seminars, this site, public service programs, and publication of a newsletter. Membership in the Section is open to all members of the State Bar of Michigan. Statements made on behalf of the Section do not necessarily reflect the views of the State Bar of Michigan.

Additionally, the By-laws state:

SECTION 2. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Section shall be to promote the particular interests of senior lawyers, to plan and carry out programs, publications and activities of interest to senior lawyers, and to coordinate programs for senior lawyers with national and local bar associations.

SECTION 3. GOALS. The goals of the Section shall be to:

- 3.1 Advocate the interests of senior lawyers.
- 3.2 Assist senior lawyers in continuing to provide high quality legal services to clients by sharing the accumulated knowledge and experience of its members.
- 3.3 Provide guidance and assistance to senior lawyers in preparing for, and adjusting to, changes in their professional status, including second careers and retirement.
- 3.4 Enhance the quality of life of senior lawyers through the exchange of information about health care, financial issues, and legal rights of senior lawyers.
- 3.5 Encourage senior lawyers to continue to contribute to the delivery of legal services to the public through participation in volunteer activities such as pro bono and mentoring programs, and to assist in the development of such programs which recognize and welcome the assistance of senior lawyers.
- 3.6 Coordinate programs for senior lawyers with national and local bar associations.
- 3.7 Cooperate and share information with other groups within the State Bar which have an interest in legal issues of interest to senior lawyers and to seniors generally, including the Senior Justice Section.

The Mission Statement and relevant By-laws provision may well change if some, or many, of the recommendations of the Planning Group are adopted. For example, Section membership may become automatic to all lawyers upon reaching age 60; and the source of funding Section activities may change.

Activities: The Section has, under the direction of past Chairperson and current Council Member, Jon Kingsepp, created a prototype disk for young lawyers. Most of the funding for the project has been identified during this past Section year; and hopefully distribution of this valuable guide to young lawyers (and others) will begin in 2009.

The Section again participated in the 50 Year Honorees ceremonies on May 12, 2008 at St. John's Conference Center in Michigan. There the possibilities of a vitalized Section were announced by President Keefe.

The Chair served this past year as an essay contest judge, a program sponsored by the State Bar Lawyer's Auxiliary chaired by Mary Ann Farris. This program has been embraced by many of the middle schools throughout the State of Michigan. Hundreds of essays were submitted that passed through various judging stages culminating with final awards at a

luncheon on Law Day, May 1st at the Hall of Justice. Participating as a judge of the finalists' essays was a most gratifying personal and professional experience.

Council member, Fred Gade, published a compelling critique (copy attached) of the "emeritus status" designation. Hopefully this unpopular status designation will disappear after the Planning Group's work is complete.

Council Meetings. Council meetings were replete with discussions and exchanges of ideas with respect to the Study Group's agenda providing much material for consideration by them in their deliberations.

Council meetings were held on October 3, 2007 and January 9, 2008 in Lansing in person and by teleconference. The following meetings were by teleconference only: November 8, 2007; December 5, 2007; February 20, 2008; March 19, 2008 with the next meeting scheduled for June 18, 2008.

Annual Meetings. The Section will, as has been its custom, hold an Annual Summer Section Meeting. This year the meeting will be at the Soaring Eagle Resort in Mount Pleasant, Michigan on August 22 through August 24, 2008. Additionally, the Section will be present at the Annual SBM Meeting at the Hyatt Dearborn on September 17 through September 19, 2008. Both meetings will feature the theme of "New Horizons – New Opportunities."

Honors: At our Annual Summer Meeting, the Section will for the first time recognize a lawyer with the Robert Hess, (our immediate past and deceased President) award. Council member Jon Kingsepp will, with other Council members, establish the criteria for the award with a core theme that reflects the many virtues that Bob exemplified and employed as a small town (Roscommon, Michigan) lawyer – which are values and characteristics of exemplary lawyering that apply to everyone in our profession. The Charles Rutherford award will not be awarded this year.

Financial Information. The Section's annual income is approximately \$6,000.00 per year (one of the lowest among the 39 State Bar Sections). The low revenue hindered any programming to which cost is attached. Hopefully the new direction for the Section will remedy that hindrance.

Respectfully submitted,

Asher N. Tilchin
Chairperson of the
SBM Senior Lawyer Section

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