

UpFront

By Naseem Stecker and Samantha Meinke

Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights Opens

"Democracies die behind closed doors"

—Hon. Damon J. Keith

Hundreds of people, including national and local dignitaries, gathered on the campus of Wayne State University Law School in Detroit recently to celebrate the grand opening of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights. The 10,000-square-foot, two-story building honors the life and legacy of Judge Keith, a civil rights leader, one of our country's foremost jurists, and 1956 Wayne State University Law School alumnus. The center, which features classrooms, conference rooms, a lecture hall, and student organization space, will advance learning, encourage community engagement, and promote civil rights. An interactive exhibit, *Marching Toward Justice: The History of the Fourteenth Amendment*, was unveiled before the opening ceremony.

The Keith Center has been supported by endowments and donations from prominent foundations and philanthropists in Metro Detroit and beyond, including A. Alfred



Photos courtesy of Wayne State University

Taubman, the Henry Ford II Fund, the Edsel B. Ford II Fund, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the DTE Energy Foundation, and the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. ■

INTERESTED IN BEING UpFront?

The news, people, and events featured on this page attract notice. If you'd like to share news of an interesting event or law-related news, send us a few lines (not to exceed 150 words) and include a photograph or high-quality digital image. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for clarity, and the right to decline to publish. Please submit your news to:

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State Bar Leaders Tour the Upper Peninsula

SBM President Julie Fershtman and a delegation of bar leaders toured Michigan's Upper Peninsula October 3–5. The delegation met with the Gogebic-Ontonagon Bar Association for dinner on Tuesday, October 4. Pictured from left are SBM Representative Assembly Chair Stephen Gobbo, SBM President Julie Fershtman, and Gogebic-Ontonagon Bar Association President Michael Pope. ■



SBM photo

Environmental Law Section Celebrates 30th Anniversary



Left to right: Anna Maiuri, John Cruden, and Claudia Rast

A big anniversary—three decades of environmental law was celebrated in Lansing October 6 at the University Club. Anna Maiuri, chairperson of the Environmental Law Section, welcomed speakers and guests from more than 25 firms and businesses as well as past section leaders and members. The anniversary program celebrated the past and pondered the future. Speakers included William Rustem, director of strategic policy for the state of Michigan; Jack Bails, former deputy director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; environmental attorney James Olson of Olson, Bzdok & Howard; Christopher Shafer, former chief of litigation, Michigan Department of Natural Resources; and Wayne State environmental law professor Noah Hall. On the national front, John Cruden, president of the Environmental Law Institute, updated the group on the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill.

The Environmental Law Section—the oldest of its kind in the country—educates, informs, and analyzes environmental issues through meetings, seminars, its website, public service programs, and publication of the *Michigan Environmental Law Journal*. Membership in the section is open to all members of the State Bar of Michigan and to law students. ■

SBM 2011–2012 Justice Initiatives Committee Kick-Off



SBM photo

The State Bar of Michigan Justice Initiatives Committee officially began its year on Monday, October 17, at the Michael Franck Building in Lansing. The Justice Initiatives Committee develops and recommends proposals for the effective delivery of high-quality legal services for all Michigan residents. ■

SBM Seeks Submissions for 2012 Michigan Legal Milestone

The State Bar's Michigan Legal Milestone program, which recognizes significant cases, events, and people in the state's legal history, seeks suggestions for a 2012 dedication. To date, 36 bronze plaques describing significant cases and events have been dedicated throughout the state, including Marquette, Cassopolis, Harbor Beach, and Detroit. At the SBM Annual Meeting in September, the Bar unveiled its latest plaque commemorating *Milliken v Bradley*, a 1970s case centering on school desegregation in Detroit that advanced all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

To suggest a notable case, person, place, or event, please submit a 500- to 600-word summary explaining its significance

to Michigan legal history. Also identify potential speakers for the dedication ceremony, locations where the plaque could be permanently placed, and links to reference material. Suggestions will be reviewed by the Milestone subcommittee of the Law-Related Education and Public Outreach Committee (LREPO).

Please send your milestone suggestions to Allan Motzny, chairperson of the Milestone subcommittee, at MotznyAT@troymi.gov and Naseem Stecker, SBM media and public relations manager, at nstecker@mail.michbar.org. For more information about the Michigan Legal Milestones program, visit <http://www.michbar.org/programs/milestones.cfm>. ■