

Dues Process

To the Editor:

Writing does, indeed, come naturally to Dave Hornstein (Opinion and Dissent, December 2011): “To require someone who isn’t actively practicing law to pay bar dues is a rip-off, making those Supreme Court justices who voted for the rule change a gang of thieves in black robes.”

As much as I applaud the sentiment, I think it’s not quite accurate. The justices may have passed the rule, but the silence of the active members has allowed the injustice to continue.

Why, in Heaven’s name, should non-active members pay two-thirds as much as active members? For what? Recordkeeping? That can’t cost more than \$50 a year. The fees should match the benefits.

We all know the real reason the rates were raised. The state of Michigan, with its insistent compulsion to raise revenue, has encouraged all state agencies to increase user fees regardless of user benefits. Raising rates on inactive attorneys is one way. And it’s not unpopular among active attorneys, who simply look the other way. If the majority of active attorneys would object, I’m confident the rule would be changed.

This is a perfect example of “the tyranny of the majority” imposing an unfair burden on the minority. Sometimes it takes an outsider with inside information, such as Mr. Hornstein, to bring attention to an overlooked injustice.

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