

UpFront

By Naseem Stecker and Samantha Meinke

Cranbrook Fifth Graders Win SBM's First Annual Law Day Contest



SBM photos

A group of talented fifth graders from Cranbrook's Brookside Elementary in Bloomfield Hills has won the State Bar of Michigan's first annual Law Day Contest.

Brookside Elementary students pose with their \$1,000 grand prize award. On their left are attorneys Theresamarie Mantese and Gerard Mantese. On the bottom right are SBM President Julie Fershtman with Law-Related Education and Public Outreach Committee member Susan Learman and Co-Chair Jeffrey Paulsen. Seated at top right is Co-Chair Margaret Krasnoff.

The group, led by attorney advisors Gerard Mantese and Theresamarie Mantese, submitted a 26-minute video reenactment of the Roosevelt Newett defamation trial, which was the subject of a 1986 State Bar of Michigan Legal Milestone. Contest entrants had to link this year's Law Day theme, "No Courts, No Justice, No Freedom," to one or more Michigan Legal Milestones.

Brookside Elementary received a \$1,000 grand prize award that was presented by SBM President Julie Fershtman on May 10. The school donated its prize to the Early Childhood Center at Hamtramck Public Schools.

Brookside student winners are Mahshad Afshar, Sydney Allison, Grace Coleman, Matthew Forbes, Spencer Forbes, Gabrielle Gross, Sofie Harb, Zehra Husaini, Emily Jones, Swathi Karthik, Isabel Mantese, Claire Pearce, Kareem Rifai, Hanna Rodriguez, Sierra Safian, Surina Sheth, and Paige Tar. ■



Brookside Elementary teacher Jason Tar and Hamtramck Public Schools Federal Programs Manager Sharalene Charms talk to the Law Day winners about how the \$1,000 donation will help Hamtramck's Early Childhood Center students.

Criminal Law Section Makes a Cuban Connection

The State Bar Criminal Law Section sponsored a week-long trip to Cuba in May to learn more about that country's criminal justice system. Ten State Bar members met with Cuban judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, litigators, and law professors in Havana and Cienfuegos. The Michigan contingent toured places of cultural, historical, and economic significance to gain insight into local lifestyles and the future of U.S./Cuba relations. The Cuban legal system stands in stark contrast to its American counterpart. Most Cuban lawyers are paid a union wage of approximately \$35 a month by the government. According to Havana's chief prosecutor, criminal trials are "more ceremonial in nature." The prosecutor's file, containing the facts of the case and, invariably, the defendant's confession, is reviewed by a three-judge tribunal. Then the defendant testifies and a verdict is rendered. ■



Pictured in the Cuban countryside in front of a billboard extolling the virtues of the 1959 revolution are (left to right) Stephen Taratuta, Peter Van Hoek, Timothy Zeller, Dawn Van Hoek, Thomas Rombach, Zachary Smitt, Patrick Jennings, Martha Jennings, and Steven Geller. Not pictured are Brett Baird and tour director Bill Rubinsohn.

Information and photo courtesy of Tom Rombach

Kalamazoo Law Day Celebrations

The Kalamazoo County Bar Association and the Kalamazoo County Trial Lawyers Association celebrated Law Day with a luncheon attended by more than 150 lawyers, students, and other members of the community. Local attorney Samuel Field received the prestigious Raymond Fox Award in recognition of his outstanding legal career and his effective advocacy promoting renewable energy. Members of the Kalamazoo Central High School mock trial team also received recognition for their second-place finish in the recent Michigan Mock Trial competition. Guest speaker Rich Vanderveen spoke on the "Role of Advocacy in Pursuit of a Sustainable Energy Future." ■



Left to right: Arianne, Brenna, Shon, and Sam Field.

Courtesy photo

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SBM Hosts Fourth Annual Spring Pro Bono Workshop

The State Bar of Michigan Pro Bono Initiative hosted its fourth annual Spring Pro Bono Workshop on May 23 at the Michael Franck Building in Lansing. More than 70 participants representing Michigan's law schools, legal aid providers, law firms, bar associations, and community service organizations spent the day examining ways to expand pro bono services and funding in Michigan. The workshop looked at ways to connect law schools and legal services organizations, encourage law firms to increase their pro bono services, motivate attorneys, and use technology to increase efficiency. ■



Participants in the SBM Spring Pro Bono Workshop examine ways to leverage Pro Bono Month in October to increase pro bono legal services and financial support for indigent defendants.

SBM photo

New Exhibit Honors Women in Michigan Politics

A new exhibit at the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing, "Women Who Dared to Lead: Michigan Women in Politics," celebrates the careers and contributions of many of Michigan's female attorneys and politicians. Among those featured in the exhibit are Mary Stallings Coleman, the first female chief justice of the Michigan Supreme Court; former Lt. Governor Connie Binsfeld, the first woman to serve in both Michigan's legislative and executive branches; and Geraldine Bledsoe Ford, the first African-American woman elected to a judgeship in the United States. The exhibit runs through February 2013 and can be viewed from noon–4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and 2–4 p.m. the first Sunday of each month. ■



"Women Who Dared to Lead: Michigan Women in Politics" will be on display at the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame through February 2013.

SBM photo

Correction

Please note that the May 2012 Michigan Lawyers in History article on Kim Sigler contained an error. When Sigler ran for governor in 1946, the incumbent was not Murray Van Wagoner, as stated. It was, in fact, Harry F. Kelly, who would later serve on the Michigan Supreme Court with Leland W. Carr. Many thanks to the observant *Bar Journal* readers who notified us of this error. ■

Constitution Day: Start Planning Now

September 17 marks the date in 1787 when the Constitution was signed in Philadelphia. To commemorate this important date in our nation's history, Michigan lawyers will participate in presentations, talks, and seminars to educate students and foster greater public understanding of one of our nation's most precious documents. With the November presidential elections just six months away, this year's Constitution Day activities can revolve around the theme of elections and voting. Interested groups should plan on making connections with teachers and schools in their communities to set up classroom visits for September. Online resources and sug-



gestions, including a "Practical Guide to Planning Constitution Day," can be found on the State Bar website at <http://www.constitutionday.info>. For more information on Constitution Day, please contact the Law-Related Education and Public Outreach Committee's Constitution Day chairperson, Matthew Krichbaum, at matthew@srkllp.com. ■