

UpFront

By Mike Eidelbes and Samantha Meinke

Legal Milestone Ceremony Commemorates Landmark Civil Rights Legislation



Pictured, from left to right: Former Michigan Representative Mel Larsen; Aliyah Sabree, assistant prosecuting attorney at the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office; former Michigan Representative Daisy Elliott; State Bar of Michigan President Julie Fershtman; Thomas M. Cooley Law School Dean John Nussbaumer; Michigan Representative Fred Durhal Jr.; and Michigan Civil Rights Commission Executive Director Dr. Daniel Krichbaum.

Photo by Tammy Allen for the State Bar of Michigan

Back in 1976, Fred Durhal had his first conversation with Mel Larsen. Larsen, then a Republican state representative, had just helped shepherd a bill—a measure that expanded the reach and scope of civil rights protection in the state—to then Governor William Milliken's desk.

"Thank you," Durhal said, "for having the nerve to cosponsor this legislation."

The Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act prohibited discriminatory practices in employment, education, housing, public service, real estate transactions, and the use of public accommodations because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or marital status.

Thirty-six years to the day after Gov. Milliken signed the bill into law, Durhal, now a state representative from Detroit and chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, joined ap-

proximately 75 others in saluting Larsen, bill cosponsor Daisy Elliott, and the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act at a State Bar of Michigan Legal Milestone dedication ceremony August 28 at the state Capitol rotunda in Lansing.

"These two are living history," Durhal said. "To talk to them [about civil rights] is something very special."

Elliott introduced the bill at what was a divisive time in state politics, especially with regard to civil rights; memories of the Detroit riots and the *Milliken v Bradley* Supreme Court decision were seared in people's minds. The Detroit Democrat and long-time state representative from the 6th District knew the measure would likely stall in committee without a GOP cosponsor.

Trying to find a Republican cosponsor, Larsen said, was "like finding a needle in the

haystack." But he filled that void. Soon, the bill started moving through the legislative maze, passed both chambers of the legislature, and was signed into law on August 28, 1976.

"It was wonderful," Larsen said, "to watch how that thing worked in a bipartisan way."

Both Elliott and Larsen left office in 1978—Larsen was done for good, while Elliott returned for a two-year House term in the early '80s—their legacies cemented by the law bearing their names.

"After the act was passed, Daisy said that they're going to put her name on the bill, and she asked, 'Would Mel mind having his name on there, too?'" Larsen recalled. "I don't mind at all." ■

SBM and University of Detroit Mercy Present Professionalism in Action

More than 20 attorneys helped usher in the incoming class of first-year law students at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law by taking part in the State Bar of Michigan's popular Professionalism in Action program August 13 at the UDM campus.

Now in its fourth year of existence, the program brings together first-year students and veteran attorneys during law school orientation to explore ethical issues. Every law school in the state offers some version of the Professionalism in Action program to its incoming students. ■

Practice Management Resource Center Hosts Interactive iPad Seminar

The SBM Practice Management Resource Center hosted an interactive seminar, "MiPad Practice—iPad for Legal Professionals," on August 20 at Lansing Community College West Campus Auditorium. PMRC advisors JoAnn Hathaway and Diane Ebersole and attorney Brett Burney showed participants how the iPad can be used in their practice, including how to do legal research, sync to the iCloud, give presentations, and use the iPad in court. Because of high demand, the seminar was repeated on September 24 in Auburn Hills. ■

Attendees filled an auditorium at Lansing Community College, where they learned about incorporating innovative technology in their law practices.



Photo by Tammy Allen for the State Bar of Michigan

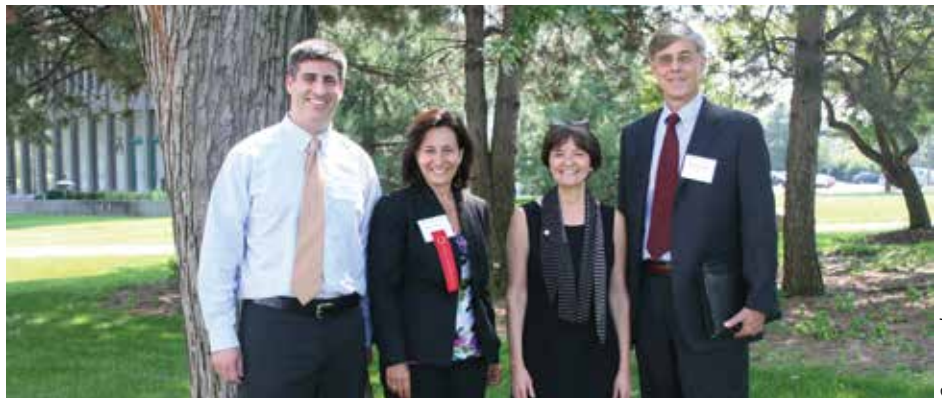


University of Detroit Mercy photo

Professionalism in Action program participants at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law included, in first row (left to right): Lori Lutz, State Bar of Michigan President Julie Fershtman, Alexandra Nicholaides, and Antoinette Porter; second row: Kevin Moffatt, Khalilah Spencer, Denise Glassmeyer, Hon. Katherine Hansen, Lawrence Dubin, Gregory Ulrich, and Brian Renaud; third row: Mark Wisniewski, Joseph Golden, T. L. Summerville, Sherry O'Neal Taylor, Gregory Gamalski, Eric Strauss, Michael Dezzi, Ethan Vinson, and Elizabeth Joliffe.

SBM and Federal Bar Association Host Program on Hydraulic Fracking

The hot-button topic of hydraulic fracturing—more commonly known as fracking—was the centerpiece of an August 5 program at Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, cosponsored by the SBM Environmental Law Section and the Environmental Law Section of the Federal Bar Association for the Eastern District of Michigan. Highlights included an in-depth look at the benefits and drawbacks of fracking, legal challenges to fracking, and an update on environmental issues affecting the Great Lakes. ■



Courtesy photo

Participants in the August 5 fracking program at Wayne State University included (left to right) Paul Sax of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, SBM Environmental Law Section Chair Anna Maiuri, Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 Administrator Susan Hedman, and SBM Environmental Law Section Chair-Elect Dustin Ordway.