

UpFront

By Samantha Meinke

Royal Oak Attorney Takes Freedom Tour with High-School Students

Last summer, attorney Cary McGehee led a group of Michigan high-school students on a two-week bus tour through Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi. The Freedom Tour, sponsored by the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights, took the teenagers and their chaperones on a journey of historical places associated with the civil rights movement.

"The trip allowed these kids to gain some firsthand understanding of civil rights history, which they aren't learning much about in school," McGehee said. "It was transformational and everyone was inspired by the courage and power of the early civil rights activists. We hope they continue to work for social justice in their own schools and communities."

McGehee, an attorney with Pitt McGehee Palmer Rivers & Golden in Royal Oak—a major financial supporter of the Freedom Tour—is the longtime chair of the coalition. The group was founded in 1980 by her father, the late human rights leader Bishop Coleman H. McGehee. ■



Cary McGehee



Courtesy photos

The Freedom Tour group visited significant civil rights sites and monuments, including a stop at the Ray Charles Plaza and statue in Albany, Georgia, dedicated to the memory of the entertainer and civil rights activist.

INTERESTED IN BEING UpFront?

The news, people, and events featured on this page attract notice. If you'd like to share 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 publication is at the discretion of the editor. Please send your submission to:

Samantha Meinke, State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48933-2012
e-mail: smeinke@mail.michbar.org
phone: (517) 346-6332



McGehee and civil rights activist Diane Nash at the Mississippi Civil Rights Martyrs Memorial Service in Meridian, Mississippi last summer. Nash was one of the original Freedom Riders and founded the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Selma Voting Rights Campaign. She accompanied the group and shared many experiences of her involvement with the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

Law Firm Employees Find Purpose Volunteering at Detroit Food Bank



Courtesy photos

Volunteers Tracey Watt, Karsen McMaster, Trevor Jarvi, Carrie Heist-Jarvi, Carmen Moyer, Cathy Peabody, Mary Mahoney, Beth Brown, and David Brown stand by a mural in Detroit.

Employees of the Schwartz Law Firm in Farmington Hills volunteer at Detroit Gleaners Food Bank four times a year. Carmen Moyer, an attorney at the firm, says she loves meeting and bonding with volunteers from all walks of life.

"We all have a common purpose," Moyer said. "We want to do good. We want to make a difference. . . . This one singular purpose brings us all together in the spirit of cooperation. After receiving instructions from Karen, the volunteer coordinator, people naturally organize themselves into work groups. We find our tasks. We help each

other. We take turns. We share. We switch places. We bump into each other. We laugh and slap each other on the back. We find our rhythm. And the work gets done by a group of strangers who will probably never see each other again. This all happens in the heart of Detroit."

On one recent trip to Gleaners, the morning shift of volunteers packed 239 boxes containing 7,170 pounds of food. ■



Volunteers, including attorney Michael Huff, pack boxes of food at Gleaners.

Panel Discusses Diversity in the Legal Profession

C-minus. That's the average grade given to the legal profession by panelists at Thomas M. Cooley Law School's "Breaking Barriers—Grading Diversity in the Legal Profession" discussion on January 30.

The grade came as part of a discussion on how well the legal profession has embraced diversity in the workplace. Grades from individual panelists ranged from a D-minus to an A, which was awarded by Hon. Hugh Clarke, who said when he started practicing law in Ingham County in 1979 there were few minority attorneys and no minority judges compared to far more minority attorneys and three minority judges in the county today. The panel, moderated by Dean Cynthia Ward, also included Aaron Vaughn Burrell, Laurin' Roberts Thomas, Angie Iglesia Martell, Dewnya Bazzi, and Krystal Denise Player.

The discussion was sponsored by Cooley's Student Bar Association Diversity Committee, Career and Professional Development Department, and Enrollment and Student Services Department. ■



Hon. Hugh Clarke of the 54th District Court speaks during Cooley Law School's panel discussion on diversity in the legal profession.

Courtesy photo

Health and Wellness Are Focus of MSU College of Law Discussion

More than 95 law students learned that getting well and staying well requires constant attention and effort at "Food for Thought: A Conversation about Health & Wellness in the Legal Profession," hosted by the Michigan State University College of Law, Office of Student Engagement on February 13.

Keynote speaker Katherine Bender, PhD, of the Dave Nee Foundation said approximately 8–9 percent of incoming law students suffer from depression; after three years of law school, that figure climbs to 40 percent. Lawyers are the most frequently depressed occupational group in the United States. The second keynote speaker, John Taylor, PhD, of the MSU Counseling Center, said depression is treatable, and advised students that free one-on-one and group therapy sessions are available to them.

The second portion of the event focused on tips for staying well. MSU Law Professor



Katherine Bender of the Dave Nee Foundation (at podium) and Caroline Kingston, MSU College of Law associate director for student engagement (seated at left), speak to MSU law students.

Photo courtesy of MSU College of Law

Brian Pappas, co-director of Mindfulness@MSU Law, discussed the benefits of meditation; Paul Nagel, co-owner and fitness manager of The Institution fitness studio in Lansing, spoke on the benefits of exercise

to reduce stress; and Ann Chrapkiewicz, director of certified Bikram Yoga at Bikram Yoga Capital Area, spoke on the mental and physical benefits of yoga practice. ■