



For Immediate Release

Distinguished Michigan Bar Associations Announce MLK Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition Finalists

Detroit – The D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, Wolverine Bar Association and the Association of Black Judges of Michigan today announced the finalists of the 16th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition (MLK Competition).

Eligible high school students in Wayne and Oakland Counties submitted essays focusing on if Dr. King were alive what, if anything, might he find troubling about the criminal charges of the Jena Six students. The students also had to discuss an approach to eradicating disparate treatment between African Americans and whites.

In total the MLK Competition received approximately 80 essays from nine schools. The students created a 300-word or less essay of original work, supporting their position based on the principles adopted by Dr. King. The top five entries were selected based on quality and analytical skills. Finalists will orally present their winning essays publicly on March 1 at the Oakland County Courthouse Auditorium in Pontiac.

"This is the 16th year of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition," said Solon Phillips MLK chairperson. "It is an exciting project that incorporates the talents of diverse local youth – each expressing their views on how Dr. King would handle current issues."

All the finalists are in the twelfth grade. They are:

Detroit residents Sierra Bonner, Tonique Brown and Jasmine Smith, all students at Mumford High; Pontiac resident Melanie Hampton who attends West Bloomfield High; and Kasey Wang of Troy who attends Troy High School.

- - more -

Entries were selected by a panel of attorneys and judges, including Danon Goodrum of Clark Hill PLC, Elmeke Allen, Assistant Corporation Counsel with Wayne County, Solon Phillips, also Assistant Corporation Counsel with Wayne County, the Honorable Wade Mc Cree of Wayne County Circuit Court and Linda Johnson of the United States Housing and Urban Development.

About D. Augustus Straker Bar Association, Wolverine Bar Association and the Association of Black Judges of Michigan

The competition originated as a result of a “pact” between Southfield District Court Magistrate A. Kay Stanfield Spinks, the 1992-93 president of the Straker Bar Association, Darwyn Fair, the 1992-93 president of the Wolverine Bar Association and the 1992-93 Association of Black Judges of Michigan’s president, the Honorable Jacqueline Y. Hall-Keith. The Straker Bar proposed that the three bar associations jointly sponsor an oral advocacy competition for high school students. Thus, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition (MLK Competition) was born.

Contact

Doris Powers Toney
Power Tone Communications, LLC
doris.toney@powertonecommunications.com

248-981-9550

###