

UpFront

By Naseem Stecker and Mike Eidelbes

Law Day Celebrated



This is the second year in a row that Lansing attorney Steven M. Idema (below) has volunteered his time to answer calls on the Law Day hotline. He spent a couple of hours May 1, taking calls from 10 surrounding counties. Callers took advantage of the free legal advice on a variety of issues, ranging from small claims disputes to divorce, malpractice, and probate matters. The hotline was organized by the State Bar of Michigan in conjunction with Legal Services of South Central Michigan, the Young Lawyers Section, and Citadel Broadcasting's Michigan Talk Network (MTN). Bar leaders were also interviewed on MTN about the significance of Law Day and the importance of the legal profession.



Winners of this year's Law Day essay competition (above) were saluted at a May 1 luncheon at the Hall of Justice in Lansing. "Separate Branches, Balanced Powers" was the theme of the contest sponsored by the Michigan Lawyers Auxiliary. Guests of honor included the top three finishers in 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade age groups, their teachers, and families. Michigan Supreme Court Justice Marilyn Kelly was the luncheon's keynote speaker. Pictured from left to right are Wendy Raymond, a teacher at Tappan Middle School in Ann Arbor; Tappan Middle School 6th-grader Eli Rosen Sugarman, who finished second in his age group; Supreme Court Justice Marilyn Kelly; third-place finisher Jooyoung Moon, also a 6th-grader at Tappan Middle School; 6th-grade winner Sarah Raich of L'anse Creuse Middle School North in Macomb; and her teacher, David Nordstrom.



Also in conjunction with Law Day, State Bar of Michigan leaders attended an ABA Day conference in Washington, D.C. May 3. The SBM group included President Thomas Cranmer, President-Elect Kimberly Cahill, Commissioner and current co-chair of the Committee on Justice Initiatives Richard McLellan, SBM Executive Director John Berry, and Justice Initiatives Program Administrator Gregory Conyers. The focus of the visit was to support the Legal Services Corporation's budget for the 2007 financial year and to make the case for a modest increase in their appropriation to meet the civil legal needs of Michigan residents. A recently released study entitled *The Justice Gap in America—The Current Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans* indicates a significant shortage of civil legal assistance available to low-income Americans. The study shows that nationally for every client who receives services, one is turned away. Michigan data reveals similar results. For every four persons served, three are turned away. In Michigan, every day at least 100 people with significant legal needs are denied civil legal services because of lack of resources. The SBM team met with nine Michigan congressional delegation members or their staff, including Senator Carl Levin and Representatives Dave Camp, Vernon Ehlers, Sander Levin, Joseph Knollenberg, John Dingell, Joe Schwarz, Thaddeus McCotter, and Dale Kildee.

Dealing with the Media



How to handle the media? That was the question that members of the Law and the Media committee and special guests State Bar President Thomas Cranmer and *Detroit Free Press* columnist Brian Dickerson helped answer recently at a lively lunchtime program April 29 at the Representative Assembly meeting in Lansing. Moderator and committee chairperson Andrew Doctoroff (extreme left) presented a hypothetical scenario and asked panel members (seated left to right: Thomas Rombach, Thomas Cranmer, Brian Dickerson, and Jesse Green) to comment and explain. To schedule a "Dealing with the Media" seminar, please contact Andrew Doctoroff at (313) 465-7360.

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