



A Pearl BEYOND Price

Congratulations, Nancy Brown! MBJ Editor Celebrates 30 Years at the Bar

Nancy and I have practically grown up together. Though a gentleman does not ask a lady's age, my guess is that she is only several years younger than I, and I began serving on the "Bar Journal Advisory Board," as it was then called, when I was still a fairly young man of 33, in 1983. Nancy was then the assistant to that lovely curmudgeon, Sheldon Hochman, who held sway over the *Journal* for so many years. Only someone with a personality as patient and understanding as Nancy's could have worked so harmoniously with Shel, who tended to say whatever was on his mind in terms that, although highly literate and articulate, were often equally unvarnished.

Nancy learned the publishing business and, more particularly, the professional journal publishing business, from a master. I was on the Board for two or three years before it dawned on me that Shel was not himself an attorney. When he retired, Nancy assumed the editor's position in the most seamless transition of responsibility I have ever witnessed. Since then, through her quiet competence and creativity, the State Bar's communications division, of which she is now director, has grown by orders of magnitude. I had the privilege of serving with her and observing while she built an in-house, on-demand publication capability of which organizations several times our size would be envious, not only because it is highly efficient and sophisticated, employing state-of-the-art techniques that she used her extraordinary powers as an autodidact to master and persuade the Board of Commissioners to acquire, but because she has done it using fewer people than anyone could reasonably have thought possible. Her quiet good judgment has always extended, as well, to the remarkable people she has chosen over the years to work with her in accomplishing truly remarkable results.

Nancy never balked at weekend meetings and evening sojourns to Blue Pencil, and before them, to Sun Graphics, when we were in the throes of redesigning the book (and doing so on budgets that sometimes seemed most closely to resemble shoestrings when measured against her ambitions for the book), as we have done at least three times over the years (not counting countless incremental improvements). She has never sought limelight or praise or accolades—only to produce the finest bar journal in the country. And, by some measures at least, I believe she has succeeded in that. We have won a number of prizes and awards, beginning almost immediately after she assumed the editor's position with the two Superb Awards. The sincerest flattery is imitation, and the journals of several other state bars have over the years copied several features of our book, which Nancy has brought to our attention, in her typically unassuming way, only as confirmation that we must be doing something right.

Nancy learned the printing business so she could negotiate the best deal for our members on printing costs. She learned the paper business so we could become our own paper supplier, rather than purchasing it from our publisher at a mark up. She participated with me in every negotiation back in the earlier days of our work together and gradually assumed responsibility for renewing and renegotiating our supplier and vendor agreements, but always consulting when she saw a potential problem, always displaying the most mature and sensible good judgment possible. For every year that I can remember, she has found some way to operate at less than the amount budgeted, so successfully in some years that I worried that we would create unrealistic expectations for the future that we could not match again, and then we did.

“When we think of Nancy...”

“And withal, she has been a good friend, a sage counselor, and a powerhouse of quiet energy and ideas, even when sometimes it seemed to me that she accomplished these things at some cost to her health. She now manages a publishing enterprise that would cause anyone’s head to spin if asked to step in and learn it all at once. How she does it all I do not know, but I truly dread the day that she decides, like Shel Hochman before her, that lawyers are all very fine and good, but it is time to have a life uncomplicated by their endless debate and controversy. Mark my words; it will take two to replace her. But in fact no one can truly replace Nancy Brown: she is one of a kind, a pearl (as I have more than once told the Board of Commissioners) beyond price, and it has been one of the great privileges of my very fortunate professional life to have worked with and known her. We have all been fortunate that she chose to make our organization the focus of more than a quarter century of dedicated efforts on its behalf, and nothing could please me more than to be one of the chorus who, at last, call out her name to the rooftops in praise and thanks for all she has done for us. Thank you, Nancy Brown, from the bottom of my heart.”

**Frederick M. Baker, Jr., Chairperson,
Publications and Website Advisory Committee**

“I have had the privilege of working with Nancy for the last six years. In all my career, I have never found a better combination of competence, vision, hard work, calmness under pressure, and just plain down-home nice personality.

I never had to worry about her division. She eagerly pitched in when needed to help other divisions and she brought a true passion for service. Nancy has been the face of the State Bar in all our communications. Executive directors have come and gone. Presidents have come and gone. Nancy remains as the one constant, shining light and great representative for all we do. May the Bar be blessed with many, many more years of service from this incredible lady! I will truly, truly miss her!”

John Berry, SBM Executive Director, Nov. 2000–Oct. 2006

“Nancy Brown is a wonder. She is, in the very best sense of the word, institutional memory, of which we have a great need at the State Bar, and is often in short supply. She not only remembers what we did before we did it this way, she usually remembers why we quit doing it the old way! She is always willing to take on a new project. Nancy works closely with other employees, enhancing SBM projects with her communications savvy. The State Bar is always better for her input. I wish her much health, happiness, and many more years with us at the State Bar.”

Kimberly M. Cahill, SBM President

“One of the great privileges of being the president of the State Bar of Michigan is having the opportunity to interface with the wonderful State Bar of Michigan staff. One of the people that I had the opportunity to get to know much better this past year was Nancy Brown. Nancy was and is someone you can always count on. She is a quiet but extremely insightful, intelligent, and trusted leader. Someone whose opinion is sought after and valued. To me, Nancy epitomizes the spirit of the State Bar of Michigan staff... always looking to do what is in the best interests of the lawyer members of the Bar and the public at large. It is fitting that we honor Nancy for her 30 years of service to our organization and recognize just how fortunate we have been to have had her as a trusted colleague and partner for so long.”

Thomas W. Cranmer, SBM Immediate Past President

“When I think of the State Bar, I actually think of Nancy Brown. SBM has a new president and officers each year, three executive directors in the past 10 years or so, and regular commissioner staff turnover. But Nancy remains, the glue that has held the staff together for 30 years. Not once has Nancy failed to answer a question I have posed. Not once has she altered her professional and friendly demeanor. Not once has she hesitated to serve “above and beyond.”

Francine Cullari, SBM Commissioner

“As we gather here in the *Bar Journal* to mark Nancy Brown’s 30 years of service to the State Bar—Wait a minute! 30 YEARS!! Good grief! It cannot be. I’ve not seen Nancy in a while, but I doubt not that she is still the fresh-faced, cheerful, earnest, energetic All-American Girl (Oops—I should say Young Woman) who signed on not that long ago (30 years indeed!) to share the burden of producing one of the nation’s better bar journals. She is still that in my mind’s eye, but more, I see, from the diversification of the *Bar Journal* and the other tasks entrusted to her direction over these—yes, OK—30 years, from a simple monthly magazine to a broad array of print and electronic services for the members.

Nancy came aboard at a time when the State Bar staff was blessed (probably not quite the right word) with a certain number of “characters.” Fortunately, she did not become one of that number; she rather was one of the quietly competent and hard-working staffers who balanced us more flamboyant types. It takes all kinds, it is said.

As it turned out, I left the *Bar Journal* in good hands, so it remains only to congratulate Nancy and wish her continued satisfaction in her work, not for another 30 years, perhaps, but for as long as she finds it fulfilling.”

**Sheldon Hochman, Former Michigan Bar Journal Editor
(Nancy’s Boss)**

“What little success I had back in the ‘80s in bar work is a large part attributable to Nancy Brown. We had to make sure that the state *Bar Journal* was the best in the nation. We asked Nancy Brown to help us in this goal. She was there. She produced and the goal was reached! With her leadership, working with the *Bar Journal* Committee, we developed the theme issues to make the *Journal* more meaningful to our members. The theme issues continue to this day.

Along the way, under Nancy Brown’s leadership, we introduced the wonderful world of art to the Bar. The Directory issue over the years has contained original works of art on the covers, including a never before reproduced in the United States painting of the great Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch’s court scene. Nancy, with her mighty editor’s pen, made sure that the writing was top notch. She chased down articles and she chased down lawyers to get the articles needed for the *Journal*. She made sure that deadlines were met, and that the *Journal* arrived on lawyer’s desks on time.

All of us are proud of the *Michigan Bar Journal*. It is top notch.

And that’s because we’ve a topnotch editor—Nancy Brown. Thank you, Nancy, for a job well done over the last 30 years.”

**George T. Roumell, Jr.,
President, State Bar of Michigan, 1985–1986**

...we all agree.”



Neuhard Calls for Changes in Michigan's Public Criminal Defense System

Less than two weeks after a group of past and present State Bar leaders called for changes to Michigan's public criminal defense system, State Appellate Defender Office Director James Neuhard advocated creating a similar system to provide assistance in civil matters for people who can't afford a lawyer. Neuhard, speaking to participants at the SBM Access to Justice retreat September 28 in Okemos, said a recommendation passed by the American Bar Association House of Delegates in August urges governmental bodies to guarantee a right to counsel in civil cases where basic human needs, such as housing, health care, and child custody, are at stake. Neuhard was instrumental in developing clear, concise guidelines for creating an effective system of providing public defense services in criminal matters.

(Photo by Mike Eidelbes)

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SBM President Visits Five Bar Associations in the Upper Peninsula



Photo 1



Photo 2

Kimberly M. Cahill, newly sworn in as the 72nd State Bar president, headed north September 25–27, 2006, for the traditional Upper Peninsula tour. Accompanied by Representative Assembly Chairperson Ed Haroutunian (left) and President-Elect Ron Keefe (right), she met with 125 State Bar members, including nine judges in the Delta, Dickinson-Iron, Marquette, and Gogebic-Ontonagon bar associations. During the tour, she heard members' concerns and shared information with them on a number of topics, including the Access to Justice program and the Practice Management Resource Center. She also urged members to use the SBM website to keep in touch with new developments at the Bar.

Second photo, left to right: Ron Keefe; Hon. Michael J. Anderegg, chief judge, Marquette County Probate Court; Ken Penokie, executive director, Legal Services of Northern Michigan; and State Bar President Kim Cahill.

Janet Welch to Serve as Interim Executive Director at the State Bar of Michigan



State Bar of Michigan General Counsel Janet K. Welch has been appointed interim executive director at the Bar effective October 23, 2006. In her new role, she will oversee the day-to-day operations of the State Bar, implement policies set by the Board of Commissioners and the Representative Assembly, and select and direct the efforts of State Bar staff.

Ms. Welch is on an executive search team that is working to appoint a new executive director for the Bar by early next year. In August, former Executive Director John Berry accepted a position with The Florida Bar, where he will oversee lawyer regulation and professionalism.

Ms. Welch joined the Bar in December 2000 as general counsel, coming from the Michigan Supreme Court, where she served as Supreme Court counsel for four years. She has had an extensive career in state government that started as a legislative analyst for the Michigan House of Representatives. In 1980, she was chosen to create a nonpartisan legislative analysis office for the Michigan Senate, and served as its director for five years before attending law school.

After a clerkship with Michigan Supreme Court Justice Robert P. Griffin, Welch accepted a position as executive analyst in the Office of the Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, where her work included analysis of legislative issues affecting the judicial system. In that capacity, she served as reporter for the Commission on the Courts in the 21st Century, and as staff to the Michigan Justice Project. In 1998, the Council of State Governments named her a Toll Fellow for outstanding achievement and service to state government.