

UpFront

By Naseem Stecker and Mike Eidelbes

Governor Visits SBM



Gov. Jennifer Granholm visited the State Bar of Michigan headquarters in Lansing in December 2006 to thank members of the State Bar Judicial Qualifications Committee for their service. Pictured from left to right are State Bar of Michigan Vice President Edward H. Pappas, President Kimberly M. Cahill, Gov. Granholm, and President-Elect Ronald D. Keefe.

(Photo by Mike Eidelbes)

"Ask the Lawyer" Debuts on Michigan Talk Network

Michael Patrick Shiels (left), host of Michigan Talk Network's Big Show, teamed up with the State Bar and attorneys Marguerite Munson Lentz and Matthew Disbrow of Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn January 25 to launch "Ask the Lawyer."



"It's our hope to provide the public with legal advice on a wide range of issues, including child support, bankruptcy, contract disputes, estate planning, landlord-tenant problems, equal access to justice, and other topical matters," said Kimberly Cahill, president of the State Bar.

"We see 'Ask the Lawyer' as a valuable public service and a perfect fit with our daily content of news, sports, weather, business, and politics," said Tim Hygh, general manager of Michigan Talk Network. "The State Bar is an excellent source for reliable information on legal issues and our system of justice."

The program was produced at WJIM-AM in Lansing and simulcast on 10 stations throughout the state. The Big Show is Michigan's only statewide morning talk radio show. The call-in show will feature a different law firm on the fourth Thursday of each month from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. Law firms and practitioners who are interested in being featured on "Ask the Lawyer" should contact Tim Hygh at (517) 394-7272 ext. 277 or e-mail tim.hygh@citcomm.com.

Pro Bono Lawyers Honored for Transforming Neighborhoods



Meet the Legal Team of the Year! From left to right, General Motors legal staff members Renee Phillips, Gary Toth, Jim Walle, Kimberly Hudolin, and Chris Johnson were recognized by Community Legal Resources (CLR) Executive Director Angela Gaabo at a recent event in Detroit. These GM lawyers and others were honored for the thousands of pro bono hours they contributed to Michigan nonprofits in 2006. Since 1998, CLR, which links nonprofits with pro bono attorneys, has generated more than \$5.5 million dollars in free legal services from hundreds of volunteer lawyers from major Detroit law firms. Volunteer lawyers have helped nonprofits to build affordable housing, operate job training and youth programs, and feed and shelter the homeless.



Left to right: Volunteer Lawyer of the Year Rebecca Simkins Seslar, of Barris, Sott, Denn & Driker, PLLC, is joined by other attorneys from her firm, Matthew Millikin and Tiffany Robinson, who were also honored. Dan Share (not pictured) was also recognized at the CLR's Eighth Annual Celebration and Recognition Event December 5, 2006, in southwest Detroit.

(Courtesy photos)

Update on Rule 19

The State Bar of Michigan's proposed Rule 19 struck a nerve with the media last month. Editorials appearing in various newspapers characterized the proposed rule as a restriction on the public's right to know and accused the Bar of, among other things, covering up the ethical lapses of its members! Rule 19 seeks to codify confidentiality that is already in practice for five State Bar programs: the Ethics Helpline, the Practice Management Resource Center, the Lawyers and Judges Assistance Program, the Client Protection Fund, and the Unauthorized Practice of Law program. Deputy Director of Professional Standards Victoria Krenski provided testimony at a Michigan Supreme Court hearing January 17 and emphasized that many states have confidentiality rules in place to protect members of the public and attorneys who seek help to avoid ethical lapses. Assistance programs everywhere are protected by confidentiality because users have a reasonable expectation of privacy when they participate, and understandably shy away if privacy is not afforded. State Bar President Kim Cahill and Interim Executive Director Janet Welch have been setting the record straight and replying to all editorials. The State Bar also issued a media advisory statewide to dispel misconceptions about Rule 19. The Bar is in contact with the Michigan Press Association and working to make any necessary amendment to clarify that documents can be disclosed pursuant to a court order.

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