

# State Bar of Michigan 2007 Award Winners

Compiled by Mike Eidelbes

**T**his year's most outstanding attorneys and winners of major State Bar awards will be honored Wednesday, September 26, at a banquet in Grand Rapids during the Annual Meeting. Representative Assembly award winners will be recognized at the inaugural luncheon on Thursday. The following are the 2007 winners:

## Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Service Award

**Hon. Donald E. Shelton**  
Chief Judge Pro Tem;  
Washtenaw County Circuit Court



In his 18 years on the bench, Washtenaw County Circuit Court Judge Donald Shelton has been at the forefront of a number of initiatives aimed at streamlining the county's court system.

Judge Shelton played a major role in the Washtenaw County Unified Trial Court Demonstration Project, a pilot program that combined the county's district, circuit, and probate courts into one entity. He was also instrumental in helping the court eliminate its backlog of criminal and civil cases, and led an effort to implement a single case management system in Washtenaw County.

When organizational issues in the county's juvenile court came to a head in 2001, Judge Shelton was asked to intervene. As a result of his overhaul of the division, a massive backlog of cases was eliminated and the county's Child Care Fund expenditures were slashed in just one year. Three years later, the probate division was in need of a similar fix; Judge Shelton needed just six months to completely reorganize the court.

In 2003, Judge Shelton was named chief judge pro tem of the Washtenaw County Circuit Court. He also serves as the supervising judge of the county juvenile court and probate court chief judge pro tem.

## Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Service Award

**Kym L. Worthy**  
Prosecutor; Wayne County



Kym Worthy was hired as an assistant prosecutor in Wayne County in 1984. Ten years later, she became a judge in Detroit Recorder's Court, which eventually merged with the Wayne County Circuit Court. In 1994, she was appointed Wayne County

prosecutor, a position she's held ever since. The common thread tying the jobs together is Worthy's desire to make the community in which she was raised a better place.

The highlights of her career underscore that commitment. As an assistant prosecutor, Worthy boasted a conviction rate better than 95 percent, and gained national acclaim in 1993 when a jury convicted two Detroit police officers in the beating death of a black motorist. As a judge, she presided over hundreds of cases, but also served on the board of directors of the Wayne County Criminal Advocacy Program, which provides training and continuing education for felony trial attorneys. She was also a faculty member of the Michigan Judicial Institute.

In her current role—Worthy is both Wayne County's first female and first African-American prosecutor—she created the Elder Abuse Unit centering on the needs of senior citizens who are victims of crime, and the "Change the Culture" initiative focused on education and community policing to reduce gun violence. She assigned experienced prosecutors to specific Wayne County neighborhoods to target crime and be a visible presence in the community, and launched the Juvenile Truancy Program, which held parents accountable for kids who chronically ditched school.

## Champion of Justice Award

**Sue Ellen Eisenberg**  
Principal; Eisenberg & Bogas, P.C.



A letter supporting Sue Ellen Eisenberg's nomination for the Champion of Justice Award explains that "she has dedicated her life from the time she was an undergraduate student to equality of opportunity for all people in our society." That dedication led her to a distinguished legal career preserving and protecting civil rights in the workplace.

After graduating from the University of Michigan Law School, Ms. Eisenberg joined the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where she was instrumental in drafting the federal guidelines on sexual harassment. Even after leaving the EEOC, she has served as a facilitator in some of the commission's most difficult cases on a pro bono basis. As a private practitioner, she has challenged the largest corporations on behalf of employees from production-line workers to senior-level executives, worked with clients to resolve disputes, and helped employers implement practices and safeguards to prevent future conflicts.

Ms. Eisenberg is a board member for the Legal Aid and Defender Association, and serves as president of Michigan's chapter of the International Women's Forum. In 2002, she was named one of Detroit's 100 most powerful women by *Crain's Detroit Business*, and was recognized in 2004 as one of Michigan's top businesswomen by *Corp! Magazine*.

### Champion of Justice Award

#### Hon. Amy Krause Judge; 54-A District Court

During her nearly two decades of legal service as an assistant county prosecutor, assistant attorney general, and, most recently, on the bench in District 54-A, Judge Amy Krause has devoted her career to ending domestic and sexual violence. She has also been a main proponent of initiatives that have revolutionized the way the justice system deals with these crimes.



Her most notable achievement occurred shortly after Gov. Jennifer Granholm appointed her to the bench in District 54-A in 2003. Judge Krause established a Domestic Violence Court focusing solely on those crimes; the court's procedures were tailored to ensure safety for victims of domestic violence and accountability for perpetrators. Using a team approach that involved the judge, prosecutors, defense attorneys, police officers, and others, cases were expedited fairly and efficiently.

Judge Krause developed a specialization in prosecuting sex crimes and domestic violence and child abuse cases as an assistant prosecutor in Livingston County. As Washtenaw County's first assistant prosecutor, she served as coordinator for sex crimes prosecution until 1997, when Attorney General Frank J. Kelley appointed her as an assistant attorney general in the criminal division. In addition to her current duties on the bench, Judge Krause chairs Michigan's Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.

### Champion of Justice Award

#### Hon. Denise Langford Morris Judge; Sixth Circuit Court

Even though she is years removed from her previous career as a protective services worker, Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Denise Langford Morris hasn't strayed far from her roots with the Michigan Department of Social Services, where she represented the needs of disabled adults, senior citizens, and abused and neglected children. Over the course of her legal career, she has maintained her commitment to many of the same issues.



Since 1992, when then Gov. John Engler appointed her as Oakland County's first African-American circuit court judge, Morris has participated in the American Bar Association Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly and represented Michigan at the

First National Conference on Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Bias in the Courts. She also served on the Michigan Supreme Court's Access to Justice Committee and Committee on Standard Civil Jury Instructions.

Judge Morris sits on the advisory board for the Detroit chapter of Parents of Murdered Children and is a past board member for a number of organizations, including the Oakland-Livingston Human Services Agency, the Child Abuse and Neglect Council, and HAVEN, a nationally recognized shelter for abused women and children in Oakland County. She counts among her many honors the City of Detroit Distinguished Service Award, the Spirit of Detroit Award, and the NAACP Certificate of Appreciation.

### Champion of Justice Award

#### Jeffrey G. Nutt Attorney; Jeffrey G. Nutt and Associates

Jeffrey Nutt's legal career took him to Washington, D.C., where he served as a U.S. Supreme Court intern, and England, where he spent a year studying international law at Oxford University on a Fulbright Scholarship. But it ultimately led him back to his home state and a lengthy tenure with Neighborhood Legal Services Michigan, where countless Wayne County residents benefited from his commitment to public service.



Nutt started at what was then called Wayne County Neighborhood Legal Services in 1990 as a staff attorney, and two years later became the first staff attorney at the agency's new law center specializing in federal court and administrative law cases. In 1994, he helped found the Child and Family Advocacy Center, the Detroit area's first full-service law office for children and their families.

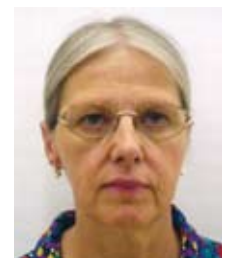
In a landmark case, Nutt and attorneys for the Children's Law Center successfully sued four convicted drug dealers on behalf of five family members of a homicide victim in 1997. The decision was the nation's first successful test case under a state Drug Dealer Liability Act.

Nutt was named Neighborhood Legal Services Michigan executive director in 2001 and, in that role, worked to stabilize the agency's finances and expanded its law-related education programs into 60 Detroit-area schools. He left that post earlier this year to go into private practice.

### John W. Cummiskey Award

#### Maia J. Storm Attorney

If you're trying to find attorney Maia J. Storm on a Sunday, you might swing by the Kalamazoo Drop-In Center. Since 1999, she's spent part of her weekend there, providing pro bono legal counsel for the people who frequent the city's homeless shelter.



Advising Drop-In Center clients is one of Storm's many pro bono causes. She has also assisted some of the Kalamazoo area's smaller organizations seeking nonprofit status. But her primary focus is working with low-income immigrants in need of legal help.

Storm has visited the Calhoun County jail in Battle Creek twice weekly since 2004 to give Know Your Rights presentations to immigration detainees, and stays afterward to discuss cases on an individual basis, helping detainees to file pro per or get representation if they can afford private counsel. She also makes similar weekly presentations to immigration detainees in Chippewa County via telephone; the jail doesn't have space to accommodate a group presentation, so Storm speaks with each detainee individually.

This year alone, Storm has accepted five pro bono immigration clients. Three of the cases, which center on the rights of individuals to remain in the country legally, are being heard in Detroit courts, requiring her to regularly make the 280-mile round trip for hearings. In the other two cases, she has helped low-income farm workers through the naturalization process. Both expect to be approved for U.S. citizenship soon.

### Liberty Bell Award

**Shirley Cochran**  
Motherly Intercession, Inc.

What started in 1999 as an effort to provide Christmas gifts and clothing to the children of Genesee County Jail female inmates has evolved into a multifaceted, year-round endeavor for Shirley Cochran serving the same groups.



After more than 20 inmates requested assistance through her Christmas gift program, Cochran sensed a need. She got permission to meet with the incarcerated mothers regularly, and soon learned of the pain and anguish they faced being separated from their children. Recognizing that children of mothers in jail were at a higher risk of ending up behind bars, Cochran and a group of supporters asked Sheriff Robert Pickell to implement a pilot program granting children increased visitation opportunities. The sheriff agreed: the program, called Bonding From a Distance, now supports more than 200 children.

Two years ago, Cochran's volunteer group evolved into a nonprofit organization called Motherly Intercession, Inc., with the vision of not only assisting the children of incarcerated mothers, but also helping them realize the fate of their mothers does not have to be their fate. Today, Motherly Intercession's services include a program teaching mothers how to develop positive relationships with their kids, a mobile library of children's books mothers and kids can share during visits, a tutoring program for school-age children, and a program that gives the kids free lessons in art, dance, and music.

### Liberty Bell Award

**Jessie Dawkins**

If there's a volunteer effort taking place in the Saginaw area—especially one that involves the community's children—it's a strong possibility you'll find Jessie Dawkins right in the middle of it.

One of the city's most active residents, Dawkins started volunteering in 1990, when her son, a third grader at Carrollton Elementary School, asked her to help a friend who was struggling to read. With her help, that third grader ended up graduating in the top 10 in his high school class in 2000.

Her involvement in the Reading is Fundamental program led her to take part in a number of similar efforts, including stints as trustee, vice president, and president of the Carrollton School District Board. Dawkins also serves on committees at Saginaw Valley State University that encourage minority middle- and high-school students to become teachers and promote the school's commitment to diversity.

Dawkins' efforts stretch beyond the schools. She's been involved with Saginaw County's Crime Prevention Council and the Youth Crime Prevention Implementation Team, the Saginaw County Vision and Saginaw County Promise community groups, the United Way, and the Bridge Center for Racial Harmony, for which she serves as volunteer executive director. She was also part of the Mayor's Task Force on Unity in Diversity, the Mayor's Scholarship Committee, and the Faith-Based Task Force.



### Liberty Bell Award

**Mary Ann Farris**

Mary Ann Farris has become synonymous with Law Day—and more specifically, the annual essay contest, which she took over as the Michigan Lawyers Auxiliary Law Day chairperson in 2000. Over the ensuing seven years, her efforts have sustained the contest in Michigan, and she kept the program alive through funding cuts and tight economic times. The contest, which is open to sixth, seventh, and eighth graders statewide, asks students to use a U.S. Supreme Court ruling to develop an argument for or against the legality of a hypothetical situation.

In addition to sending letters to schools across the state each year to announce the start of the contest, Farris lines up volunteers to judge the essays, arranges the annual Law Day luncheon at the Hall of Justice in Lansing, and puts together prize packages for the top three finishers in each grade. She also coordinates the Michigan Lawyers Auxiliary Golden Apple Award, which is presented to the state's top law-related teachers; one junior high teacher and one high school teacher are honored annually.

Farris's efforts on behalf of Law Day aren't confined to Michigan. As Law Day liaison to the American Lawyers Auxiliary board, Farris helps promote Law Day activities nationwide. She was named the ALA Volunteer of the Year in 2004.



## Representative Assembly Award Winners

### Michael Franck Award

**William P. Hampton**  
Senior Partner; Secrest Wardle

William P. Hampton has been a prominent figure in the legal community for more than 40 years. His contributions at the local, county, and state levels are both numerous and varied.

Starting in 1964, Hampton spent six years as a member of the Michigan House of Representatives, a tenure that included stints as both the body's majority and minority leader. He became an Oakland County Circuit Court judge in 1970 and spent the ensuing seven years on the bench, including a term as presiding judge.

Hampton entered private practice at Secrest Wardle in 1977, and his service to the legal profession continued. He spent nine years on the State Bar of Michigan Board of Commissioners starting in 1977, and he co-chaired the SBM Committee on Judicial Qualifications from 1990 to 1996. In 1994, then Gov. John Engler appointed him to the State Officers Compensation Commission, where he served as the group's chairperson for four years. The Michigan Supreme Court appointed Hampton to the Attorney Discipline Board in 2001, and he earned reappointment in 2004. He is currently the board's chairman, ascending to the post after two years as the board's vice chairman.

Now a senior partner at Secrest Wardle, Hampton is also the managing partner of the firm's municipal department, actively defending and providing support to municipalities across Oakland County.



### Michael Franck Award

**Allyn D. Kantor**  
Principal; Miller, Canfield,  
Paddock and Stone

A supporter of Allyn D. Kantor's nomination for the Michael Franck Award wrote, "[He] has always exemplified civility and professionalism [and] mastered the art of disagreeing without being disagreeable."

It's a fitting paean to an attorney who continues to be a staunch advocate of alternative dispute resolution.

Kantor, who started his legal career in 1966 and has been with Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone for more than 20 years, is a pre-eminent arbitrator and mediator. He's been part of both the State Bar of Michigan Board of Commissioners and Representative Assembly, and served on the SBM Alternative Dispute Reso-



lution Section and its Character and Fitness Committee. At the national level, Kantor has been involved with the American Bar Association's Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Sections, and is a past co-chairman of the ABA committee charged with incorporating alternative dispute resolution into law practice. Kantor was also a member of the Michigan Supreme Court Dispute Resolution Task Force.

A frequent lecturer and author on alternative dispute resolution, Kantor is devoted to mentoring young lawyers to practice by a higher standard of behavior. He is an adjunct professor at the University of Michigan Law School, and is involved in teaching litigation and alternative dispute resolution through the Institute of Continuing Legal Education.

### Unsung Hero Award

**Norris J. Thomas, Jr.**  
Chief Deputy Director;  
State Appellate Defenders Office



Throughout his nearly four decades of public service—starting with the Washtenaw County Legal Aid Society in 1970 and continuing until last January, when his 35-year career with the State Appellate Defenders Office ended with his passing—Norris J. Thomas, Jr. often commented that he provided “the best legal representation that money could buy.” Ironic, considering he served clients with little or no money.

Thomas's commitment to civil rights and constitutional protections sprouted in his home state of Mississippi, especially as a student at Tougaloo College in the 1960s during the height of the civil rights movement. When he enrolled in the University of Michigan Law School, he fought to increase minority enrollment.

The State Appellate Defenders Office's first African-American assistant defender, Thomas was involved in many landmark criminal cases. He also represented SADO in the case establishing the independence of the organization's commission, obtained one of the first drug court delay reduction grants from the federal government to deal with an overload of appellate drug cases, and led the effort to create SADO's Guilty Plea Unit.

After leading Michigan's delegation to the U.S. Department of Justice Indigent Defense 2000 Symposium, Thomas was instrumental in creating the state's Gideon Project and the Michigan Citizens Task Force on Improving Public Defense. These groups continue to work toward the goal of creating a statewide public defender system to ensure that all indigent criminal defendants are treated fairly.

## Honorable Julian Abele Cook, Jr. Receives Founders Award

The Michigan State Bar Foundation named Judge Julian Abele Cook, Jr. recipient of its 2007 Founders Award. Prior recipients include Dennis W. Archer, Wallace D. Riley, and Charlie R. Rutherford.

The Founders Award recognizes a lawyer who deeply exemplifies the Foundation Fellows criteria of professional excellence and outstanding community contributions. Foundation Fellows provide leadership and financial support for the Foundation's public service programs. Judge Cook became Fellows chairperson in 1993.

Judge Cook has received many honors, including the State Bar of Michigan's Champion of Justice Award, the Straker Bar Association's Trailblazers Award, the Bench-Bar Award from the Wolverine and Detroit Bar Associations, and Distinguished Alumnus Awards from Georgetown University and Pennsylvania State University. Judge Cook also served on many civic and professional committees, including chairman of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission (1968–1971); president of the American Inns of Court, Chapter XI; and board member of the Detroit Urban League, American Heart Association of Michigan, and Child and Family Services of Michigan. He has often been named among "the Most Respected Judges in Michigan" and has been an instructor and has published extensively. Judge Cook was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan where he currently holds senior judge status.



## Wayne J. Miller and Peter L. Dunlap are Respected Advocate Award Recipients

Wayne J. Miller and Peter L. Dunlap have been chosen as the 2007 recipients of the shared Michigan Association for Justice and Michigan Defense Trial Counsel Respected Advocate Award.

This award is presented each year to an attorney from the other side of the courtroom who has a "history of success in civil litigation matters, unfailing adherence to the highest standards of ethics and candor in dealing with the court and with counsel, and the respect and admiration of counsel on the opposing side of the bar." Both candidates were nominated "in recognition of their superb skills as courtroom adversaries, whose civility and decorum distinguishes them as outstanding advocates on behalf of their clients."

Wayne J. Miller, Miller & Tischler, Southfield, is a member of the Michigan Association for Justice. Mr. Miller practices in the areas of no-fault benefits and auto negligence. Peter L. Dunlap, Fraser, Trebilcock, Davis, and Dunlap, Lansing and Detroit, is the 28th president of the Michigan Defense Trial Counsel. Mr. Dunlap practices in the area of appellate law, arbitration, legal malpractice defense, mediation, alternative dispute resolution, mediation, and arbitration.