

UpFront

By Naseem Stecker and Mike Eidelbes

Michigan Public Defense System Subject of U.S. House Hearing



Photos by Dawn Van Hoek

On March 26, the United States House of Representatives Committee on Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held a hearing on Representation of Indigent Defendants in Criminal Cases: A Constitutional Crisis in Michigan and Other States? The State Bar of Michigan was represented by two past presidents, Dennis W. Archer and Nancy J. Diehl. The

hearing focused on the growing national crisis to provide effective representation to indigent persons in criminal proceedings, as required under the Constitution. The State Bar is currently working to address the state problems documented in a report released in June 2008, "A Race to the Bottom, Speed and Savings Over Due Process: A Constitutional Crisis." A federal response is being

considered and may include elements of proposals discussed at the hearing by the American Bar Association or the American Civil Liberties Union. Written testimony provided at the hearing and a webcast are available online at http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/hear_090326.html. ■



Presenters, from left to right: David Carroll, director of research, National Legal Aid and Defender Association; Nancy Diehl, past president, State Bar of Michigan; Dennis Archer, chairman, Dickinson Wright PLLC, and past president, State Bar of Michigan; Professor Erik Luna, Washington and Lee University School of Law, Virginia; Regina Daniels Thomas, chief counsel, Legal Aid and Defender Association Juvenile Law Group; and Robin Dahlberg, senior staff attorney, American Civil Liberties Union, New York.

Milestone Highlights Case that Gave Rise to the Asian American Civil Rights Movement

The 34th Michigan Legal Milestone is set for Friday, June 19, 2009, at 11 a.m. at the Chinese Community Center in Madison Heights. The center is located at 32585 Concord Drive, south of 14 Mile Road.

The ceremony will commemorate the Vincent Chin case and reflect on its significance in our legal history. Chin's beating death in 1982 in Highland Park and the lenient sentences meted out to his assailants caused an outcry in the Asian American community and led to the birth of a civil and victims' rights movement. (See related article on page 30.)

A bronze plaque memorializing what occurred will be unveiled at the end of the ceremony. State Bar President Ed Pappas and SBM Executive Director Janet Welch will share the duties of master of ceremonies. Speakers are:

- L. G. Almeda, past president, Michigan Asian Pacific American Bar Association; president, American Citizens for Justice
- Roland Hwang, assistant attorney general, Michigan Department of Attorney General; immediate past president, American Citizens for Justice; past president, Michigan Asian Pacific American Bar Association
- Robert Sedler, distinguished professor of law, Wayne State University Law School
- Frank H. Wu, professor of law, University of Maryland (via video from Beijing, China)
- Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, executive director, American Citizens for Justice; editor, Asian American Village, IMDiversity.com

The State Bar Michigan Legal Milestone program is overseen by the Public Outreach Committee, chaired by Jeffrey Paulsen. ■

Pro Bono Attorneys Tackle Increasing Load of Foreclosure Cases



Cooley students Leisha Caddle and Norina Anton (in foreground) check in attorney Marie L. Baranda at the training program.

Foreclosure prevention training is in demand. A two-day session in mid-February in Novi attracted 60 attorneys. Over 300 had actually signed up for the 200 available spots. After completing the program, the lawyers were assigned cases and offered the help of law students. As a result of the program, a new roster of trained pro bono lawyers and students has been set up to deal with the increase in foreclosure cases being filed by pro per litigants in federal court. The training project was a result of the combined efforts of the Federal Bar Association for the Eastern District of Michigan, Eastern District Judges Pro Bono Committee, the Michigan

Poverty Law Program, the Thomas M. Cooley Law School Alumni Association, and the State Bar of Michigan. Funding was provided by the Michigan State Bar Foundation, the FBA Eastern District Chapter, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, and other organizations. People who need assistance with a foreclosure problem can get free help by calling the statewide "save the dream" number at (866) 946-7432 or visiting www.miforeclosure/mplp.org or by calling their local legal services program. For more information about foreclosure prevention training, please contact Julie Tiffany at (248) 751-7800 ext. 7784 or tiffanyj@cooley.edu. ■

Bowling for a Just Cause



Photo by Mike Eidelbes

For the third straight year, the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section took on the State Bar Board of Commissioners and SBM staff members in a bowling challenge—and for the third time in a row, the Young Lawyers Section emerged victorious. The event took place Friday, March 6, at Royal Scot Lanes in Lansing. In addition to retaining bragging rights for another year, the Board of Commissioners made a \$360 donation on behalf of the Young Lawyers Section to the State Bar of Michigan Access to Justice Fund. ■