

# UpFront

By Naseem Stecker

## Michigan Attorney Wins Historic National Women's Air Race Classic



Courtesy photo

They had every reason to smile—attorney Kelly Burris (left), a shareholder in the Ann Arbor office of Brinks Hofer Gilson and Lione, and co-pilot Erin Recke of Atlanta, Georgia, recently won first place in the 2009 Air Race Classic, an all-female aviation race that dates back to 1929 and the era of famed woman pilot Amelia Earhart. Ms. Burris was piloting her 1962 Beechcraft Debonair airplane, which is affectionately known as “The Deb.” The race route, which started in Denver, Colorado and ended in Atlantic, Iowa, covered about 2,400 miles. Burris and Recke will donate their \$5,000 prize to Air Charity Network, a charity that matches people in need with free flights and other travel resources. They flew on behalf of Angel Flight

Central, part of the Air Charity Network. “I raised about \$12,000 for Air Charity Network through the 2008 Air Race Classic and my goal was to raise more than \$25,000 this year; I believe we are very near that goal,” Burris said. She was also recently named a 2009 State Bar Representative Assembly Unsung Hero award winner. Burris will be honored at the SBM Annual Meeting in mid-September.

A pilot since 1984, Burris learned to fly at Western Michigan University while pursu-

ing her bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering. Before attending law school, she worked for more than 11 years as an engineer in the aviation industry. As a practicing attorney, she has handled hundreds of patent issues involving aviation. She focuses her legal practice on the preparation and prosecution of U.S. and foreign patent applications in the mechanical, material science, and electrical arts. ■

## Videoconference Swearing-In

Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly had a unique opportunity recently to swear-in as a new lawyer Army Reserve Major Miles Gengler of Grand Blanc, who is currently serving in Iraq. The ceremony in Lansing took place via a live videoconference at the Michigan National Guard

Joint Force Headquarters. Major Gengler, 35, was deployed to Iraq shortly after taking the February 2009 Michigan bar exam. He is a recent graduate of the Thomas M. Cooley Law School and is believed to be the first attorney in the country to be sworn in via videoconference. ■



Photo by Kevin Fowler/Thomas M. Cooley Law School

**Suddenly Solo:** Online Resource for Lawyers Starting a New Practice <http://www.abanet.org/lpm/lpt/archives/july09.shtml>

## Clark Hill Cares

Photos courtesy of Clark Hill PLC



Clark Hill attorneys Cynthia Filipovich (left) and Caryn Gordon had their hands full packing produce recently in a big effort to feed the hungry. The company-wide initiative involved more than 200 employees in three states. ■

Attorney volunteers, including Greg Moore, sorted and packed food at Gleaners Community Food Bank and partner locations near the firm's offices in three Michigan communities—Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Lansing—as well as Chicago and Phoenix. “We wanted to do something that would be especially meaningful to the communities where we do business,” said Don Lee, chief marketing officer of Clark Hill PLC. “Gleaners tells us the demand for their services is up significantly this year, and they regularly see a sharp decline in volunteer support after the winter holidays. We hope our first Clark Hill Cares effort helps them feed many hungry people in the communities where we’ll be working.” For more information, visit [Clarkhill.com](http://Clarkhill.com) and A Lawyer Helps at [www.alawyerhelps.org](http://www.alawyerhelps.org). ■



## YLS Honors Jade Edwards with Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award



Jade Edwards, right, with friend Jessica Hawkins.

Jade Edwards from Genesee County is the 2009 Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer. The award was presented to her in Mt. Pleasant recently by Chris Christenson, chair of the State Bar Young Lawyers Section. Ms. Edwards has been active in reinvigorating the local minority bar association in her area as well as involvement in a host of community projects, such as the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program, and coordinating Law Day events in her community. ■

## October is Pro Bono Month

The American Bar Association has designated the week of October 25–31 as National Pro Bono Week, and all across the country lawyers will be taking part in events to educate the public and the legal profession about pro bono. This will be an opportunity to also honor those in the legal profession who routinely provide free legal help to improve the lives of the needy.

To facilitate increased focus on pro bono activities across the state, the Pro Bono Initiative of the State Bar of Michigan is extending the celebration through the entire month of October. We are encouraging you to join us and celebrate the efforts of Michigan's pro bono attorneys. This will be an opportunity to promote pro bono activities, including recruitment and training, and to celebrate the value of pro bono service.

If you have questions or already have plans to celebrate Pro Bono Month, please contact Dionnie Wynter at [dwynter@mail.michbar.org](mailto:dwynter@mail.michbar.org) so we can help publicize your event.

For more information and ideas for celebrating Pro Bono Month, please visit the ABA website at <http://www.probono.net/celebrateprobono/>. ■