

UpFront

By Naseem Stecker and Samantha Meinke

Photo by Tammy Allen for the State Bar of Michigan



Left to right: SBM Director of Diversity Gregory Conyers, Michigan State University College of Law Director of Diversity Mary A. Ferguson, SBM Equal Access Initiative Co-Chair Erika Akinyemi, SBM President Charles Toy, and Thomas M. Cooley Auburn Hills Associate Dean John Nussbaumer.

Boosting Diversity in the Legal Profession

The State Bar of Michigan held three colloquia sessions in June to receive input on a draft statement aimed at increasing diversity in the legal profession at Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, Thomas M. Cooley Law School Grand Rapids Campus, and Michigan State University College of Law in East Lansing.

The events were kicked off by SBM Director of Diversity Gregory Conyers and a video welcome by Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly, who pledged her personal support for the efforts of all involved in the colloquia.

Kelly said the law is lagging far behind many other professions in diversity, with people of color making up only 10 percent of the population of the profession. In comparison, 25 percent of medical doctors, 21 percent of accountants, and 18 percent of college professors are people of color.

"For a profession that prides itself on equal protection under the law, that's a troubling statistic," Chief Justice Kelly said. "If we fail to diversify to reflect the makeup of those we represent, we will face a crisis in trust."

Other leaders involved in the colloquia include SBM President Charles Toy; SBM

President-Elect W. Anthony Jenkins; Rodney D. Martin of Warner, Norcross & Judd; and John Nussbaumer, Thomas M. Cooley Law School Auburn Hills associate dean and member of the American Bar Association's Presidential Advisory Council on Diversity in the Legal Profession.

"We hope to release the final document at this year's SBM Annual Meeting in September," Conyers said. "Then we will begin the process of seeking support for this agenda by asking members of the profession to sign on to the document in agreement with its tenets." ■

Award Winners to Be Honored in September

The following individuals are the recipients of the 2010 SBM Awards, which will be presented at a banquet on September 29 at this year's Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids.

2010 State Bar of Michigan Award Recipients

Roberts P. Hudson Award: James C. Cotant

Frank J. Kelley Award: Hon. Donald A. Scheer, Edward M. Zelenak

Champion of Justice Award: Charles W. Borgsdorf, John J. Conway and Gerard Mantese (shared), John R. Nussbaumer, James M. Olson, Hon. Wendy L. Potts

Kimberly M. Cahill Bar Leadership Award: Ingham County Bar Association

John W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award: Eric I. Frankie

Liberty Bell Award: Audrey Nesbitt Gray

The following individuals are the recipients of the State Bar Representative Assembly Awards, which will be presented at the Assembly's September 30 meeting in Grand Rapids.

2010 State Bar Representative Assembly Award Recipients

Michael Franck: Sheldon J. Stark, John F. Van Bolt

Unsung Hero: Kevin J. Moody (posthumously)

2010 Michigan State Bar Foundation Founders Award Recipient

The Michigan State Bar Foundation Board of Trustees has named John W. Cummiskey (posthumously) as the recipient of its 2010 Founders Award.

More information about each award recipient will be released before the SBM Annual Meeting, which will be held September 29–October 1 in Grand Rapids. ■

MSU Law Professor David S. Favre to Receive ABA Award for Animal Law Work

The Animal Law Committee of the American Bar Association Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section will honor David S. Favre of East Lansing with its Excellence in the Advancement of Animal Law Award.

Presented annually, the award recognizes exceptional work by a member or leader of an international, national, regional, state, or local bar association's animal law committee who, through commitment and leadership, has advanced the humane treatment of animals.

The award will be presented to Favre on August 7 during the ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

Favre has been at Michigan State University College of Law since 1976. He teaches courses in animal law, international environmental law, property, and wildlife law. He has written several articles and books dealing with animal issues covering topics such as animal cruelty, wildlife law, the use of animals for scientific research, and international control of animal trade. His books include *Animal Law and Dog Behavior*; *Animal Law: Welfare, Interest, and Rights*; and *International Trade in Endangered Species*. He also has presented to international audiences on these topics. ■

New Member Benefits and Discounts

SBM is proud to announce a partnership with three new programs for home and auto insurance, phone and web conferencing, and mobile phone service.

Liberty Mutual is now offering SBM members special discounted rates on home and automotive insurance. Find out more at www.libertymutual.com/sbm.

SBM members and their immediate families can now receive discounts on mobile phone services from Sprint with savings of up to 25 percent for business accounts and 23 percent for individual accounts. The offer is through a partnership with Midwest Cooperating Communications. For more information, visit <http://www.midwestco-op.com/> or call 1-888-ST.BAR.MI (888-782-2764), ext. 239.

InterCall, the world's largest conferencing services provider, now offers SBM members exclusive pricing on audio, video, and web conferencing on cutting-edge web conferencing platforms WebEx and Microsoft Live Meeting. There are no contracts to sign or minimum spending requirements. For more information, visit www.intercall.com/affinity/sbm.htm or call (800) 514-2818. ■

SBM Elections

A complete listing of winners of SBM's 2010 elections is available at www.michbar.org.

INTERESTED IN BEING UpFront?

The news, people, and events featured on this page attract notice. If you'd like to share news of an interesting event or law-related news, send us a few lines (not to exceed 150 words) and include a photograph or high-quality digital image. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for clarity, and the right to decline to publish. Please submit your news to:

Naseem Stecker, State Bar of Michigan
306 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48933-2012
e-mail: nstecker@mail.michbar.org
phone: (517) 367-6428