

UpFront

By Samantha Meinke

A TIME TO HONOR

OUR BEST

Share the joy and celebrate with our 2011 award winners on Wednesday, September 14.
The place: The Hyatt Regency in Dearborn. The time: 6:30pm–8:30pm.
This banquet is held in conjunction with the State Bar Annual Meeting.

State Bar of Michigan 2011 Award Winners

Roberts P. Hudson Award

James K. Robinson (posthumously)

James K. Robinson was greatly admired by lawyers across the country. He distinguished himself in Michigan as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, a professor and dean of Wayne State University Law School, president of the State Bar of Michigan, and principal author of the Rules of Evidence adopted by the Michigan Supreme Court in 1978. Nationally, he distinguished himself as assistant attorney general in charge of the criminal division at the U.S. Department of Justice during the Clinton administration.

But it wasn't those titles that set him up as a giant among attorneys. It was his actions.

"We live in a skeptical, even cynical time," wrote Thomas M. Cooley Professor Emeritus of the University of Michigan John W. Reed in his letter of support for the nomination. "The only way to teach ethics and morality is by example. And that's why Jim Robinson's life is so important. He didn't lecture us about the high calling of



being a lawyer. He *showed* us. He modeled greatness at the Bar and in his personal life. His integrity was absolute. His word was pure gold. His skills were extraordinary. His commitment to the public good was boundless. He served his clients and his profession and his government with the highest distinction. He was professionally and personally generous and he cared deeply not only about his family and his friends but also those who are disadvantaged. A life like his speaks of what law and lawyers are all about more loudly and more clearly than a library of books or a sheaf of committee resolutions about professional responsibility."

Robinson died last August after a long battle with cancer. At his memorial service, he was remembered fondly by the likes of United States District Court, Eastern District of Michigan Judge Avern Cohn, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, and FBI Director Robert Mueller.

Judge Cohn concluded his eulogy by describing Robinson's life with a quote by Walter Reuther: "There is no greater calling than to serve your fellow man. There is no greater contribution than to help the weak. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well."

Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Service Award

Hon. John A. Hallacy

Since he first entered public service in 1988 as an assistant prosecuting attorney, Hon. John A. Hallacy has continually worked to improve the justice system.

As Calhoun County prosecuting attorney from 2000 to 2008, he worked to create a county Juvenile Diversion Program, which puts first-time juvenile offenders in a special reformatory program and drops criminal charges when offenders complete the program. In 2005, he received a plaque with the names of more than 400 youths who had successfully completed the program.

Hallacy has also been awarded for much of the work he's done for other causes. In 2003, he received an Outstanding Community Advocate Award for his work with Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County after testifying before the legislature for funding for sexual assault nurse examiners. He was awarded the Lifesaver Award by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, won the Brandi Award from the SBM Animal Law Section for his work with the Humane Society, and earned the Distinguished Faculty Award from the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan in 2008.

After becoming a judge in 2008, Hallacy began the process of forming a sobriety court in the 10th District Court. It opened in October 2010 and already has approximately 25 participants.

In Hallacy's nomination, Fran Smith wrote, "He has never been one to keep the status quo, but has always looked for ways to make the justice system work more efficiently and to make the system work for all who find themselves involved in it."



John H. Logie

John H. Logie has devoted more than four decades to renewing and preserving Michigan's city centers.

In 1969, after years spent at the University of Michigan and in the U.S. Navy, he returned home to Grand Rapids and saw its downtown deteriorating. So he volunteered to work with legislators to write Michigan's Historic District Act, helped Grand Rapids draft the state's first historic preservation ordinance, and helped establish Michigan's first two historic districts.

When Logie was a partner at Warner, Norcross & Judd, he couldn't obtain secure mortgage funding for a downtown residence because of redlining. So he became president of his neighborhood association, assembled groups of citizens to confront the banks, and convinced the banks to stop the practice. As a result of these efforts, he was elected mayor of Grand Rapids, a part-time post he held for 12 years. He restored the city's downtown and neighborhood business districts, created the Urban Homesteading and Padlock ordinances,



and fostered area-wide partnerships to draft a joint water system. He also worked with the Engler administration on a state law permitting municipalities to jointly develop convention center/arena authorities. The Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention Authority was the state's first; it now runs Van Andel Arena and DeVos Place.

Logie led the effort to establish Urban Core Mayors, a statewide group that has revitalized Michigan's decaying urban areas. This group conceived, sponsored, and lobbied for the passage of the Part 201 environmental protection funding statute, the Brownfield Redevelopment Act, and the renaissance tax-free zones statute. Under Logie's leadership, Grand Rapids established the largest number of brownfield redevelopment sites and renaissance tax-free zones of any city in Michigan.

"Throughout his long and dedicated career, he has shown himself to be a true public servant in every sense of the term," wrote U.S. Senator Carl Levin.

Hon. Milton L. Mack Jr.

Hon. Milton L. Mack Jr. has devoted his career to making Michigan's government more fair and accountable to its citizens.

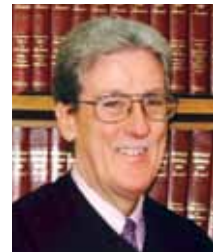
After serving six years on the Wayne City Council, Mack became a Wayne County commissioner. In that position, he uncovered corruption in the Wayne County Drain Commissioner's office, had the office terminated, and helped pass a statewide public act that made drain assessments more fair and transparent.

"Millions of dollars were eventually refunded to Wayne County residents who had been overcharged for drain fees," wrote Hon. Patrick McGraw in his nomination. "He did the right thing at the right time, without regard to political ramifications."

Mack has been a Wayne County probate judge since 1990 and chief judge since 1998. He has instituted new technology as a cost-saving measure. He led the statewide effort by the Michigan Probate Judges Association to reform the state's minor guardianship law, guided an effort to help everyone in need of qualified court-appointed guardians to obtain them, and directed the effort to make Michigan's probate processes more efficient and accountable to the public. He won the Judicial Pioneer Award from Wayne Mediation Center for promoting alternative dispute mediation.

More recently, Judge Mack has focused on reforming the state's mental health laws. He served on Gov. Granholm's Mental Health Commission, wrote "Involuntary Treatment for the 21st Century," and continues to work toward changing the standard for involuntary treatment so people can get help before they commit a crime or hurt themselves or others.

"He uses his talent as a public speaker to improve the law and inspires confidence in judges and the justice system," wrote Judge McGraw.



Champion of Justice Award

Jacqueline Doig

Jacqueline Doig has devoted her career to helping indigent people obtain justice. She did this for 22 years at Legal Services of Eastern Michigan, where she rose to become deputy director of litigation. Since 1996, she has worked as a senior staff attorney at the Center for Civil Justice.



At the CCJ, she has filed a lot of significant litigation. Three of these cases in particular have benefitted many low-income people. In *McKuhn v Olszewski*, she helped enforce the Michigan Social Welfare Act by ensuring that 35,000 people kept their Medicaid benefits. In *Crawley v Olszewski*, she protected the rights of 400,000 Michigan residents by preventing them from being illegally cut from Medicaid under federal law without a fair review of eligibility based on disability. In *Beeker v Olszewski*, she ensured that people without resources to pay co-pays were not illegally cut from Medicaid service.

"Jackie Doig is one of the top attorneys representing low-income clients in the nation," wrote John Bowman, president of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law. "She has mastered the Byzantine statutes and rules that govern public benefits in the U.S. and Michigan, particularly Medicaid."

Doig doesn't always resort to litigation, and quite often works to help state agencies and legislators adhere to existing law. She has worked closely with the state Department of Human Services to ensure that drafted materials, notices, and benefits applications are simple, accessible, and accurate. During each year's legislative appropriations process, she explains public benefits to lawmakers. She serves on the Medical Care Advisory Council—an advisory body for the state Medicaid program—and the Policy Committee of Michigan Consumers and Health Care Advancement. She is board president of the United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan and a past chair of the SBM Administrative Law Section.

Barry L. Howard and Edward H. Pappas

In October 2009, the State Bar of Michigan convened the Judicial Crossroads Task Force to identify how Michigan's justice system can meet the needs of the public in the face of unprecedented economic upheaval. Barry L. Howard and Edward H. Pappas co-chaired the task force for two years.

The task force was comprised of 29 voting members and four committees, with a combined total of 98 voting members. The four committees conducted in-depth analyses of access to justice, business impact, court resources and structure, and technology, and reported back to the full task force, which used that information to create a report of concrete, practical, and innovative recommendations for the future of Michigan's justice system. The report is recognized nationally as a model for reforming the justice system in the face of changing economic and demographic conditions.

"The task force met numerous times and while all the subcommittees did their part in the fundamental process, Mr. Howard and Mr. Pappas were instrumental in keeping everyone focused on the task and keeping the momentum going full-speed," wrote Hon. Kurtis T.

Wilder in their nomination. "Their hard work and efforts resulted in the successful completion of an undertaking that will meet the needs of not only the public, but the justice system, as well, when the committee's recommendations are implemented."

Howard and Pappas both volunteered their time in addition to continuing their full-time careers. Pappas, who served as SBM president from 2008 to 2009, is a partner, chairman, and client service director at Dickinson Wright PLLC in Bloomfield Hills. Howard, a former Oakland County judge, is currently president of the Law Offices of Barry L. Howard, P.C., and serves of counsel to the law firm of Lipson, Neilson, Cole, Seltzer & Garin, P.C. in Bloomfield Hills.



Photo by John Minnis, Detroit Legal News



Kary L. Moss

Kary L. Moss isn't afraid to take a stand for social justice, no matter how unpopular it might be. It's a quality that has served her well since she became the first female executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan in 1998.

During Moss's tenure, the ACLU of Michigan has expanded from a staff of five and a membership of 6,000 to a staff of 22 and a membership of 16,000. The organization has an annual operating budget of \$3 million and late last year opened its first staffed office in Grand Rapids.

(Continued on next page)

"She has strengthened the ACLU significantly," wrote Michigan Supreme Court Justice Marilyn Kelly in her nomination. "She has filed groundbreaking lawsuits challenging impediments to free speech. She has initiated actions to safeguard religious freedoms, protect affirmative action at universities, and gained recognition of the rights of the LGBT community. In the face of the state's economic downturn, Kary has shown enormous determination to ensure that all our residents have access to equal justice, particularly the indigent and those who are at risk."

Moss also leads the ACLU on the national level as president of the ACLU Executive Directors Steering Council since 2010, after serving as its vice president from 2007 to 2010. She also takes on leadership roles in other state organizations. She has been vice president of the Michigan Campaign for Justice since 2006.

"She has never wavered from her commitment to ensuring that everyone has access to the freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the U.S. Bill of Rights," wrote Justice Kelly. "For her, no issue is too large or too small."

Hon. M. T. Thompson Jr. and Monica Nuckolls

Hon. M. T. Thompson Jr. and his daughter, Monica Nuckolls, grew weary of watching young people in their hometown of Saginaw get caught in a cycle of drugs, gangs, violence, prison, and death. So they decided to do something about it.

Using real-life examples, they wrote two books, *Making Choices and Facing Consequences: Gangs, Bullies, and Violent Crime* and *Making Choices and Facing Consequences: Drugs and Alcohol*. They used these books as part of a drug abuse and crime-prevention program they developed and present to kids in Michigan's most troubled schools.

"The young people gain valuable coping skills and an awareness of sound decision-making processes," wrote Judge Leo Bowman in their nomination. "These acquired skills, in my opinion, are both life-altering and life-saving for many of the students who participate. . . . This program keeps urban youth out of the criminal justice system."

The program has been successful in many schools and youth programs in the Saginaw area. Nuckolls and Thompson also partnered with Thomas M. Cooley Law School to train more than 50 volunteers to present a similar program, "Project Future," to junior-high and high-school students in Pontiac.

They have also trained police in North Carolina and Virginia to use the program in their communities, and are currently working to develop partnerships to bring "silos of hope" to other distressed areas in Michigan.

Judge Thompson has served as a judge in the 70th District Court since 1997. Monica Nuckolls has been a professor at Thomas M. Cooley Law School for more than six years.



Rebecca Shiemke

Rebecca Shiemke has an innate ability to see the big picture. As managing attorney of the Family Law Project of Legal Services of South Central Michigan and state support specialist on family law for the Michigan Poverty Law Program, she uses that ability to help low-income survivors of domestic violence seek justice. She goes far beyond her job responsibilities to do so, volunteering her time to serve on advocacy committees and help legislators and administrators set policy.

Shiemke has contributed to ongoing work at the State Court Administrative Office and the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, and provided information to the state legislature that resulted in the creation of a sexual assault personal protection order. She has served on the Battered Women's Justice Project for 12 years and the SBM Domestic Violence Committee for 18 years, and worked with the SBM Judicial Crossroads Task Force Access to Justice Committee and the SBM Pro Bono Initiative's

Qualified Domestic Relations Order Program and Justice Policy Initiative.

"At every level and opportunity, Rebecca has provided a voice for the victims of domestic violence and their families," wrote Ann Routt. "I have observed Rebecca exemplify a superior level of compassion combined with excellent legal skills as she has advocated to positively impact the lives of hundreds of low-income women."

Shiemke's biggest contribution came during the appeal of *Brandt v Brandt* in 2002. Due in large part to her efforts, the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that trial courts could include children on personal protection orders, keeping their mothers and them out of potentially lethal situations.

"Rebecca's work on that appeal literally saved lives," wrote Mary Lovik.



John W. Reed Michigan Lawyer Legacy Award

Harold P. Norris

Professor Harold P. Norris may be retired, but his influence extends far into the future.

During his 35-year career at Detroit College of Law (now Michigan State University College of Law), Norris taught Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, and Women and the Law to more than 5,000 students. He is fondly remembered by his students as one of their best teachers, always willing to stick his neck out for others.



Norris helped write the Michigan Constitution. As vice chair of the Declaration of Rights, Suffrage, and Elections Committee, he co-authored provisions creating the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, the right to appeal in criminal cases, an expanded freedom of expression and expanded right of petition, and the right to fair and just treatment in legislative and executive investigations.

"So few people live lives that make a difference and inspire others to emulate them," former Michigan Supreme Court Justice Patricia Boyle said of Norris. "No matter how far we stray from them, they are with us, for... they 'have planted trees under the shade of which they know they will never sit.' This is the gift to us Harold Norris made of his life."

Norris has always been committed to diversity and inclusion. He joined the Detroit chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union in 1952, serving as its president from 1958 to 1961. He received a special award from the Wolverine Bar Association in recognition of his outstanding support and guidance to minority law students, and won the SBM Champion of Justice Award.

An accomplished poet and author, Norris is best known for his poem, "The Liberty Bell," which hangs in the lobby of the Liberty Bell Center in Philadelphia.

John W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award

Elizabeth Joy Fossel

In 15 years, Elizabeth Joy Fossel has worked on 15 pro bono cases, donating a total of 1,520 hours of her time, worth just under \$400,000.

Fossel is a partner at Varnum Law, with a practice focused on health care litigation and complex business and commercial litigation. But when presented with people in need of her help by Legal Aid of Western Michigan (LAWM) through her firm's pro bono administrator, she never says no.

"Whenever Joy takes on a pro bono file... she spares no time or effort to ensure that the clients are provided with the absolute best representation," wrote LAWM Pro Bono Coordinator Paul Abrahamsen.

Fossel donated 891.75 pro bono hours on one complicated case—more hours on just that one case than any other attorney in LAWM's history. The case, which lasted two years and contained a pleading index that went on for 13 pages with more than 175 entries, in-

involved a client who, along with nine other defendants, was sued for abuse of process, malicious prosecution, false light/invasion of privacy, and intentional infliction of emotional distress in U.S. District Court by her ex-husband. Without Fossel's help, this client would have been subject to more than \$250,000 in legal fees and a judgment for damages that would not have been dischargeable in a bankruptcy—a debt from which she would likely never recover.

Fossel obtained a complete dismissal, with prejudice, of all claims filed against the client, making the client very relieved and happy with her work.

"Her clients are effusive in their accolades regarding her willingness to help them through difficult times," wrote Varnum Law's Pro Bono Administrator Mark Allard.



Kimberly M. Cahill Bar Leadership Award

A is for Attorney Program

Lisa Kirsch Satawa and James Samuels

Lisa Kirsch Satawa and James Samuels, longtime Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan (CDAM) Board of Directors members, realized that new solo practitioner defense attorneys had a big gap in their legal education and needed help learning to investigate and defend criminal prosecutions.

So Kirsch Satawa and Samuels volunteered hundreds of hours to conceptualize a program, A is for Attorney, to fill that gap. They

consulted with circuit courts, local county criminal law committees, and judges for input on the curriculum; created a 490-page practice guidebook; and worked with CDAM, which provides financial support and a training venue.

A is for Attorney has trained more than 300 attorneys since its inception in 2005. Officially, the program is an eight-hour seminar



Liberty Bell Award

Judy Ellis

Judy Ellis has devoted her life to championing the rights of victims.

Since 1981, she has served as executive director of First Step, an agency that works with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in western and downriver Wayne County. Under her leadership, it has grown from a small agency in Westland to one that now serves 35 communities with 45 staff members, several hundred volunteers, and a \$2.7 million operating budget.

First Step makes a huge difference in its community. It offers a 24-hour daily assault response team and a 24-hour help line, which handled 17,800 calls last year. It also provided 11,228 free hours of counseling to adult survivors of violence and 1,117 hours to child survivors. In 2009, First Step formed a partnership with Wayne State University School of Social Work to implement a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program, including a specialized forensic exam and immediate crisis intervention. Last year, its nurses conducted 155 exams.

First Step helps victims navigate the criminal justice system with support from local police officers and prosecutors. Recognizing that victims of sexual assault often could not afford legal representation, Ellis worked with attorneys to found the First Step Legal Advocacy Program, a pro bono legal program.

When First Step's last facility became irreparable, Ellis headed up a four-year fundraising effort to build a new facility. First Step hosted the grand opening celebration of its new building in Wayne this May. It will offer temporary emergency housing in 10 apartment-like suites, as well as a clinic and office space.



Kate White

As executive director of Elder Law of Michigan (ELM) since 1996, Kate White has guided it from a fledgling organization into a nationally recognized resource for vulnerable elderly adults with an annual operating budget of \$1.5 million.

Under White's leadership, ELM expanded and strengthened the Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors through which licensed attorneys offer basic, personal legal advice and information by phone to approximately 10,000 seniors yearly. In 1998, White started the Michigan Pension Rights Project, which has expanded into the Mid-America Pension Rights Project, and has helped pensioners in Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee recover more than \$24 million in benefits.

In 2001, she started the Michigan Coordinated Access to Food for the Elderly program, which helps seniors apply for food stamps and Medicare. In 2007, she secured a three-year grant from the American Association of Retired Persons to educate victims of telemarketer fraud. The Consumer Fraud Prevention Project made contact with 420,000 elderly adults, and in 2010 it became Elder Abuse Prevention Services.

White also serves on the SBM State Planning Body and was a member of the SBM Judicial Crossroads Task Force Access to Justice Committee. She assisted in strategic planning for the SBM Master Lawyers Section, and organized the Elder Rights Summit with funding from the Michigan State Bar Foundation.



that begins with the anatomy of a criminal case and breaks down the practice of criminal law into bite-sized pieces. Unofficially, Kirsch Satawa and Samuels mentor many of the young attorneys well after the seminars.

"For those of us beginning our practice in criminal defense, the program provides a comprehensive outline of basic practice that, along with the materials provided and indi-

vidual contacts gained there, is more than sufficient to allow one to 'hit the ground running,'" wrote Brian J. Prain in the nomination. "We young lawyers have clients who depend on our skills and abilities in and out of the courtroom, sometimes even for their freedom. If filling this void does not benefit equal justice, benefit professionalism, and fulfill a compelling legal need in the community, then nothing can."

Representative Assembly Award Winners

The Representative Assembly's Michael Franck and Unsung Hero awards will be presented on Thursday, September 15, during the RA's general meeting.

Michael Franck Award

Clark C. Johnson

Clark C. Johnson is a living example of the power of education.

After 20 years in the U.S. Navy, Johnson returned to Michigan and earned his juris doctor degree in 1970 from Wayne State University Law School. He became an assistant attorney general of Michigan under Frank Kelley before becoming a partner in the firm of Schmidt, Nahas, Coburn and Johnson.

In 1973, Johnson became a professor at the Detroit College of Law (now Michigan State University College of Law), where he taught Equity, Contracts, Commercial Transactions, Secured Transactions, Bankruptcy, Medical-Legal Problems, Property, Insurance, Mortgages, and Suretyship.



"He epitomizes the type of professor who not only goes about the sometimes mundane task of educating law students in substantive and procedural principles of law, but one who does it with enthusiasm and vigor," wrote Michael S. Hale in his nomination. "He has gained the respect of hundreds, if not thousands, of students for these many years."

He served as associate dean of the law school from 1984 to 1985, founded the school's *Journal of Medicine and Law* in 1997, and served as its advisor until 2005.

He inspired his students by example to continue their educations throughout their lives. He earned a PhD in psychology from Wayne State University in 1990 and received his LLD from Michigan State University in 2002.

"At the end of every final examination, Dr. Johnson includes these words, 'Your tuition is good for a lifetime. Please contact me at any point in time that I can do anything for you,'" wrote Hale. "To say that students have taken him up on this would be an understatement."

Unsung Hero Award

Karen Gullberg Cook

Karen Gullberg Cook works tirelessly to help Michigan's most vulnerable children and families. A solo practitioner in Beverly Hills, she is frequently appointed as a guardian ad litem for children by the Oakland County Probate Court.

"Karen Cook is an expert when it comes to child welfare law and Department of Human Services policy," wrote Stacy M. Combs in her nomination. "Karen can cite case names, citations, and statutes off the top of her head. When any attorney has an issue, Karen is always willing to help and can give advice without opening a book.... She is also an expert on DHS policy and continues to hold DHS to the requirements of its policy. She consistently takes the extra step and tries... to make sure that the agencies that provide services are following state laws, rules, and regulations."



Cook strives to help children and families get the resources they need. She is a strong advocate for them in the court system. She even gives blankets for Christmas to the children she represents.

"She often does things quietly and behind the scenes for the benefit of the children of southeastern Michigan," Robert C. Gardella wrote in Cook's nomination. "Often devoting uncountable hours tending to her duties without pay on weekends and evenings, Karen carefully coordinates supervised parenting time sessions and seeks to comprehensively implement the orders of the court."

She served on the advisory board to prepare the Michigan Judicial Institute's Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem Protocol Handbook. She is currently serving her third term on the SBM Children's Law Section Council, which awarded her the Child Advocate of the Year Award in 2004.

Mayra Lorenzana-Miles

Mayra Lorenzana-Miles volunteers countless hours to help non-English-speaking clients gain a voice in the justice system. It's not something she felt a calling to do while studying maritime law in her native Puerto Rico, but after moving to Michigan with her

husband in 1990, she met a Guatemalan family at the airport who had come to the U.S. for work. They were completely lost, couldn't communicate with anyone because



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they didn't speak English, and had a hungry 10-year-old who was in tears.

So she helped them find their way.

Lorenzana-Miles has been helping Spanish speakers navigate the system ever since. As a shareholder at D'Luge Miles Miles & Cameron PLC, she focuses exclusively on immigration law. She has litigated extensively in immigration court, helping people who are facing deportation and seeking asylum. She provides volunteer and pro bono legal services to people who do not have English language skills. Without her, they would have no access to justice.

"She... has done more to minimize the suffering of families affected by deportation and status issues than any five lawyers I know combined," wrote Lawrence Garcia in her nomination.

She manages at least 12 pro bono cases at any given time and volunteers her time twice a month at Latino American for South-eastern Michigan and Latino Mission Society-Lutheran Church.

Lorenzana-Miles is also one of the founding members of the Hispanic Bar Association of Michigan and served as its president for years. She has served on the SBM Open Justice Commission, the SBM Character and Fitness Committee, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Respected Advocate Awards

Thomas J. Evans of Muskegon and Paul Lazar of Flint are the recipients of the 2011 Respected Advocate Awards. They will be honored at the State Bar's Awards Banquet on Wednesday, September 14.

The Respected Advocate Awards are presented annually by the Michigan Association for Justice (MAJ) and the Michigan Defense Trial Counsel (MDTC) to attorneys who have 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 opposite side of the bar." Evans and Lazar 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."

Thomas J. Evans, president of Evans Portenga, P.C., in Muskegon, is the MDTC's choice for the Respected Advocate Award. He and partner Roy Portenga limit their practice to serious personal injury cases, workers' compensation claims, and social security disability. The firm also does pro bono work on a referral basis from Legal Aid of Western Michigan. Evans is a board member of Family Promise of the Lakeshore, an organization dedicated to finding permanent housing for homeless families.



Paul Lazar is the MAJ's pick for the Respected Advocate Award. A Flint resident for most of his life, he practices law at Hanba & Lazar, a firm he formed in 1981 that focuses on workers' compensation and business law. Lazar worked in the financial sector for 22 years before attending the Detroit College of Law (now Michigan State University College of Law) during the evenings and graduating with a JD in 1974.



Michigan State Bar Foundation 2011 Access to Justice Award

By Linda Rexer

The Michigan State Bar Foundation has created the Access to Justice Award to honor individuals who have significantly advanced access to justice for the poor in Michigan. The 2011 inaugural award recipient is **Robert F. Gillett**.

The Access to Justice Award recognizes Mr. Gillett's career and volunteer leadership efforts to advance access to justice for indigent persons. Since 1983, Mr. Gillett has been executive director of Legal Services of South Central Michigan, a nonprofit agency based in Ann Arbor providing civil legal aid to the poor. During his tenure, the program added statewide services and went from an annual budget of \$500,000 to more than \$5 million. In addition, Mr. Gillett is a national and state legal services leader and has assisted other nonprofits. He helped found or was counsel to the Washtenaw



Housing Alliance, the Washtenaw Health Plan, and Avalon Housing. He served as chair of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association's Civil Policy Group; chair of the State Bar Pro Bono Initiative; member of the State Bar's Committee on Justice Initiatives, Judicial Crossroads Access to Justice Committee, and Access to Justice Campaign Internal Cabinet; and co-chair of the Michigan State Planning Body, which helps coordinate civil and criminal legal assistance for low-income persons. Mr. Gillett served on many other committees working to improve legal aid for the poor, including for the State Bar, Legal Services Association of Michigan, and NLADA. He taught poverty law as a visiting associate professor at the University of Michigan Law School. He has received several awards, including the City of Ann Arbor Leadership In Community Development Recognition and the Wilma T. Donuhue Award for Advocacy for Seniors. He received his BA from Kenyon College and his JD from the University of Michigan.

Judicial Downsizing Set in Motion

A change in the distribution of judgeships across the state may be near if the legislature accepts the recent recommendations of the State Court Administrative Office. At an August 17 press conference, the SCAO recommended that Michigan cut 49 judgeships by attrition, including four on the state Court of Appeals. The downsizing could be accomplished as soon as 2017 and save the state approximately \$8 million a year.

"We are making data-driven recommendations and need the legislature to enact it," said Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert Young Jr. The SCAO's Judicial Resources Recommendations report also notes that 31 new judgeships are needed in trial courts statewide, but none are recommended at this time because of current economic challenges.

The report has the unanimous backing of the Supreme Court, various judges associations, and Governor Rick Snyder. Chief Justice Young added that the recommendations were "unprecedented, not just in Michigan but nationally, to have a state court system not only recognize that it needs to shrink, but also have a practical plan to accomplish that goal." ■

—By Naseem Stecker



Left to right: State Court Administrator Chad Schmucker, Michigan Association of Counties President Tom Mullaney, and Chief Justice Robert Young Jr. at the press conference.