

Real Property Law Section Sponsors

"HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOUSE BUILD" in Honor of Detroit's Tricentennial

By Carol Ann Martinelli

One mile from Detroit's Tiger Stadium, on Roosevelt between Michigan Avenue and M.L. King Jr. Boulevard, stands an exceptional house. Exceptional not because of its size or design—it is 1,150 square feet with a full basement and three bedrooms—but because Michigan's real estate attorneys both raised the \$50,000 to sponsor its construction, and participated in the actual building process. Together with a number of Detroit metropolitan area law firms, banks, and businesses, the Real Property Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan sponsored this Habitat for Humanity "house build" as a special project to honor Detroit's Tricentennial (see sidebar).

Many section members, as well as their friends and families, worked on-site to build the house, which is in the Core City Neighborhood Development in southwest Detroit. They worked during the four designated build days on June 9, 16, 22, and 23 constructing the house floor, walls, and roof.

June 16th was designated for Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone's almost 30 volunteers "to wall" the house. Under the direction of section member Scot Norris, the group



(Above) Gregg Nathanson; Carol Ann Martinelli, then section chairperson; Belinda Badalamenti; Vicki R. Harding, section council member; John Simon; Fara Shimek Karam; and Grant R. Trigger.
(Right) Mavis Street (selected new Habitat for Humanity homeowner).



worked efficiently to make a house appear on the floor built the previous Saturday, also under Norris's direction. Standard Federal Bank chose June 23rd to bring its approximately 40 volunteers to "roof" the house and participate in ground work for other nearby Habitat for Humanity house builds.

Before becoming the homeowner and taking on the responsibility of the monthly interest-free (20-year) mortgage payments,

the new homeowner must contribute "sweat equity" to qualify for the ownership of the house. Our selected homeowner, Mavis Street, worked with our volunteers at the worksite during several of our build days. She is the single mom of 11-year-old Stephanie and currently works as a clerk at the Detroit Medical Center.

The land was provided by the City of Detroit through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. MSHDA and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board of Indianapolis each provided \$10,000 grants for the construction of the house.

Robert Dewaelsche, executive director of Habitat for Humanity Detroit, and Kenneth Benson, president and founder of Habitat for Humanity Michigan, joined section volunteers on the worksite June 9th and 16th. Benson was particularly pleased to participate in the raising of the walls, which were built through Michigan's Prison Build Program and delivered to the site by the Michigan National Guard.

PRIMARY PROJECT SPONSORS

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Real Property Law

THEME INTRODUCTION

The Prison Build Program's more than 100 minimum security inmates frame walls, build cabinets, and mill trim on prison grounds for houses built by HFH in Michigan. The inmates, who are at Michigan prisons in Ionia, Freeland, Lapeer, Plymouth, Kinross, and St. Louis, earn \$1.75 a day and learn valuable skills they can use upon their release. The Thumb Correctional Facility in Lapeer provided the walls for the section's house. The enthusiasm of the program participants and the



Marvin Daitch; Jennifer Nowaczok; Mark Makower, section council member; and Rick Haberman.

resulting job opportunities for them have provided positive evaluations of the Prison Build Program initiated by Benson. The program recently received national recognition as a finalist in the Council of State Governments' Innovations Awards Program.

This Habitat for Humanity house is a tangible and enduring statement of the Real Property Law Section's commitment to the Detroit community and reflects positively on the section and the members of the State Bar of Michigan in general. The section council and all section members take pride in their gift to Detroit and sincerely thank all of the generous contributors who have supported this Detroit Tricentennial project! ♦



Carol Ann Martinelli was the Real Property Law Section's chairperson at the time of the house build.

The real estate attorney may be a litigator, a transaction negotiator with an extensive knowledge of finance, taxation, and lending issues, or a general practitioner whose clients periodically require advice on real estate issues. From the sophisticated commercial development transaction to the purchase and sale of a single family residence, real property law issues are many and diverse.

The Real Property Law Section is one of the State Bar's largest sections with its 3,500 members providing educational opportunities for all real estate attorneys. Whether our members' practices focus primarily on real estate law or if real estate is only one component of their work, the real estate issues our members encounter relating to the environment, title, development, zoning, lending, taxation, leasing, eminent domain, and bankruptcy are addressed by the section's Continuing Legal Education Committee's programs. Those programs include the section's "Homeward Bound" Series throughout the year and our Annual Summer Conference.

Mary M. Fowlie, section council member, coordinated the selection of the feature articles in this issue. Since the issues encountered in transactional real estate work and construction contracts affect the work of most practitioners, articles focusing on each of these practice issues were selected. If those contracts should result in disputes that become court cases, the special rules of evidence for real estate, addressed in our first article, will play a significant role in the outcome of those disputes.

In addition to its continuing legal education programs, the section publishes a quarterly journal, the *Michigan Real Property Review*, for the benefit of its members. To peruse the *Review's* cumulative article index and to access a number of its articles, please visit the section's website at www.michbar.org/sections/realprop. The website will also provide you with more information about section activities. The benefits of section membership, including opportunities to participate in our special committees and network with other attorneys in similar areas of practice, are valuable to all real estate attorneys. Please contact Arlene Rubinstein, Section Administrative Assistant, at LawA1@aol.com to become a member.

Carol Ann Martinelli, 2000-2001 Chairperson, Real Property Law Section

JOIN THE Real Property Law Section STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

Membership Benefits Included:

- The quarterly *Michigan Real Property Review*
- **Attend the Homeward Bound Seminars at a discounted rate!** Eight monthly Seminars are presented to help keep Michigan attorneys abreast of the latest developments in real property law.
- **Attend the Annual Summer Conference at a discounted rate!** This yearly event is held at a popular Northern Michigan Resort. Next year's conference will be held July 17-20, 2002 at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.
- **Opportunity for Networking with Colleagues**

Please enroll me as a member of the Real Property Law Section. Enclosed is my \$35 membership fee made payable to the State Bar of Michigan.

Mail to: Real Property Law Section, P.O. Box 473, Birmingham, Michigan 48012.

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**For further information contact:
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