

Mary Ann Farris: 46th President of the Michigan Lawyers Auxiliary

I Challenge You!

The purposes of the Michigan Lawyers Auxiliary (MLA) are educational and charitable: to create a better citizen awareness of the law, to serve the organized Bar Association of the State of Michigan, and to support and assist local lawyers' spouses' organizations. We are also an affiliate member of the American Lawyers' Auxiliary (ALA). I challenge every local bar association to organize or promote a local Lawyers Auxiliary! Auxiliaries can help you accomplish more and promote the good that lawyers do in your community.

We Are Here to Assist You

If you need any assistance please let us know. MLA has a brochure that we can send you to help you get started, or you can download it at <http://www.michbar.org/localbars/mla/mla%20brochure%201.pdf>. We have many members at large that participate in our organization at the state level only, without belonging to a local auxiliary. We welcome any spouse that would like to join us at the state level.

Activities

There are many activities that an auxiliary can do. It is not just a social organization (although we do have our fun). An auxiliary can get started with just one project and then expand as you have the time and the volunteers.

For example, one of our local auxiliaries, in Midland, only has three active members. They provide a "Late Show" program for the Juvenile Detention Center. This is a bedtime reading program where a community volunteer reads some words of inspiration and relaxation over the intercom system to



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the residents in the facility. They also serve as tour guides for school children at the county court house. They promote the MLA state Law Day Essay Contest and have had top

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winner the last two years. They also help organize and co-sponsor an annual county Law Day luncheon with the Midland County Bar Association.

Saginaw County Lawyers Auxiliary (SCLA) is the largest auxiliary in the state and has received national honors. It has more than one hundred registered members with a

very active core of 30–50 members. Visit the SCLA website <http://community.mlive.com/cc/scla> to see all of the activities that it sponsors.

These activities include tour guides for court house student tours, a 3rd grade law-related education teaching unit to all county schools, the "Late Show" program for the juvenile home, and contribution of funds from yearly fund raisers (more than \$5,000 last year) to many local charities and to an annual college scholarship.

Many Law Day activities are co-sponsored by the Saginaw County Bar Association (SCBA), such as the county-wide Coloring Contest (pre-school–3rd grade), Poster Contest (3rd grade–6th grade), Law Day Essay Contest (6th grade–8th grade, winners are entered in the State Essay Contest), Billboard Contest (high school), and Mock Trials (high school). SCLA awards a deserving teacher a Golden Apple Award for excellence in law-related activities. In May of each year, the SCLA and SCBA co-sponsor an annual Law Day Banquet honoring all of the contest win-

ners. You can see that they have something for every age level.

From the above two examples you can see that the MLA and a local auxiliary can augment your Bar activities and help your bar association a great deal. You can start small and choose one activity to promote or choose several activities.

A Little About Me

I look forward to assisting you in your projects as MLA president. I now live in Frankenmuth. I have three grown children and one grandchild. My husband is a patent attorney with Reising, Ethington, Barnes, Kisselle, Learman & McCulloch of Troy and Saginaw and was patent counsel for Massey Ferguson in Detroit for many years. I have art education and education degrees from the University of Kansas. I taught fifth grade and

was an art consultant in Kansas and a computer coordinator in Bloomfield Hills.

In addition to MLA and SCLA, my other community involvement activities have included being a Cub Scout leader, Girl Scout leader, AAUW member, a church volunteer at Christ Church Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills and now at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth, Historical Museum volunteer of Frankenmuth, a member of the Frankenmuth Women's Club, and a member of the Frankenmuth Lions. I created the state

Law Day Essay Contest in the format that is used today. I have been co-Law Day chairperson in Saginaw County for the last six years. In my free time I teach baton twirling, and I am an active miniaturist (doll house miniatures), artist, and craftsman.

You may contact me at (989) 652-6095 or fmaunique@aol.com. You may also go to the MLA website <http://www.michbar.org/localbars/mla/home.html> to find out more and to link to the State of Michigan Law Day Essay Contest materials for 2002 and 2003. ♦