

2003 State Bar of Michigan Award Winners

Each year, the State Bar of Michigan presents awards to those in the profession who are truly outstanding. Although they each have chosen different career paths, the award recipients are all exemplary in their work and have displayed an extraordinary level of commitment to the ideals of the law profession.

Roberts P. Hudson Award— George T. Roumell, Jr.

George T. Roumell, Jr., the 51st president of the State Bar of Michigan, will receive the organization's highest and most prestigious award for 2003. Roumell is recognized for his dedication to the State Bar having served in several capacities, including vice president (1983–1984), president-elect (1984–1985), commissioner (1975–1986), and chairperson of the Character and Fitness Committee (1969–1972). Roumell was also chairperson of the Young Lawyer's Section (1959–1960), chairperson of the Bar Journal Advisory Board (1981–1985), and was instrumental in the founding of the Institute for Continuing Legal Education. Roumell is past president of the Detroit Bar Association (1973–1974), which changed its name to the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association in 1992. In 1968, Roumell co-founded the Detroit firm of Riley & Roumell, P.C., which is now Riley Roumell & Connolly, P.C. Roumell is considered an arbitrator of national reputation and is a writer and lecturer on labor law. Mr. Roumell speaks throughout the country on labor arbitration and has authored several books. He has also worked for more than 43 years as an associate professor at the Detroit College of Law and for the past few years as a lecturer at the University of Detroit Law School.



George T. Roumell, Jr.

Champion of Justice Award— Stephen R. Drew, Robert E. Gilbert, and William M. Saxton

Stephen R. Drew, a senior partner in the firm of Drew, Cooper & Anding P.C. and a certified facilitator, has spent much of his career working to advance minority issues and rights. He has been active on the boards of numerous organizations, including the Hugh Michael Beahan Foundation, the NAACP—Legal Redress Committee, and the A. Phillip Randolph Institute. He has devoted significant time to the issue of jury representation and community education about the legal system and civil rights. As president of the Grand Rapids Bar Association, Drew was involved in the creation of a committee that studied and made recommendations to deal with the issue of under-representation of minorities on Kent County Circuit Court juries.



Stephen R. Drew

Robert E. Gilbert, principal of Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone, P.L.C., has been involved in many activities within the pro bono community. In 1990, Gilbert helped organize the Friends of Legal Aid Campaign, which has become one of the most successful local legal aid fundraising campaigns to date. In 1998, Gilbert joined the State Bar's Pro Bono Involvement Committee, and helped to develop the Michigan Litigation Assistance Partnership Program, a pro bono project that matches high-impact cases and low-income clients with practitioners in large firms. In 2000, Gilbert became involved with the State Bar's Access to Justice Corporate Committee. As a lead solicitor, he was instrumental in gain-



Robert E. Gilbert

ing large law firm support of more than \$1 million for the ATJ fund. Since its beginning, Gilbert has also been involved in developing programs and securing financing for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

William M. Saxton, counsel, a director emeritus, and former chairman and CEO of Butzel Long, P.C., has worked for nearly 50 years as a litigator, negotiator, and counselor. He has handled



William M. Saxton

a number of landmark labor law cases and has been recognized previously by the State Bar of Michigan's Labor and Employment Law Section and the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association for his contributions to the legal profession and community. He has served many organizations, including the Detroit Industrial Relations Research Association, where he was president from 1984–1985, the State Bar of Michigan, where he was chairperson of the Young Lawyers Section from 1955–1956, and the Detroit Bar Association, where he was director from 1975–1979. He founded Butzel Long's labor and employment practice group and is known nationally as an expert in the field of labor and employment law.

Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Servant Award— Robert P. Griffin

Recognized for his extraordinary governmental service, Robert P. Griffin has been named the recipient of the 2003 State Bar of Michigan Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Servant Award.



Robert P. Griffin

During his extensive career, which spanned five decades, Griffin served for 22 years in the U.S. Congress. He spent 10 years as a U.S. Congressman (1956–1966), 12 years as a U.S. Senator (1966–1978), eight years as Minority Whip in the U.S. Senate (1969–1977), and eight years as an associate justice of the Michigan Supreme Court (1987–1994). After retiring from the Michigan Supreme Court, Griffin served as a visiting judge on the Michigan Court of Appeals. While in Congress, Griffin's many accomplishments included co-authoring the Landrum-Griffin Act (Labor/Management Reporting Disclosure Act of 1959) and the National Student Loan Program.

John W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award— Nino E. Green

A pioneer in the legal services movement in Michigan, Nino E. Green of Escanaba has been committed to pro bono work and access to legal services since the mid-1960s. From 1966–1969 Green served as the first director of the Upper Peninsula Legal Services, which is now Legal Services of Northern Michigan. Green is credited for helping create the legal aid model in the Upper Peninsula and establishing legal services offices in Sault Ste. Marie, Marquette, Houghton, Escanaba, and Bessemer.

Green's partners at Green, Weisse, Rettig, Rademacher & Clark, P.C., where he has served as a shareholder and president, estimate that he regularly spends up to 15 percent of his time advising low-income people, providing legal advice and seminars to community non-profit organizations, and representing individual clients on a pro-bono basis. Much of Green's work is "quiet" pro-bono work and is not reported.

Green has also been active in the State Bar's Access to Justice (ATJ) campaign, and has successfully gained greater ATJ support from Upper Peninsula lawyers.



Nino E. Green

Michael Franck Award— Justice Marilyn Kelly and Wallace D. Riley

Justice Marilyn Kelly and Wallace D. Riley have been named this year's Michael Franck Award winners. The award is given annually by the State Bar's Representative Assembly to a lawyer in good standing who has made an outstanding contribution to the improvement of the profession.

Justice Marilyn Kelly was elected in 1996 to the Michigan Supreme Court for an eight-year term after serving as a judge on the Michigan Court of Appeals, 2nd District, from 1989 to 1996. Prior to this, Justice Kelly worked as a trial lawyer for 17 years in Wayne and Oakland counties and founded Marilyn Kelly & Associates. A former educator, Justice Kelly served as president of the Michigan State Board of Education from 1965 to 1977. Justice Kelly has been an active member of the State Bar and was a member of the Representative Assembly (1986–1988), a member of the Communications Committee (1988–1993), a member of the Family Law Council (1988–1994), and Co-Chairperson of the Open Justice Commission (1998–2003).

During her career, Justice Kelly has also served as president of the Women's Bar Association of Oakland County and of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, chaired the Oakland County Bar Association's Family Law Committee, and co-chaired the Circuit Court Mediation Committee and President's Task Force on Improved Dispute Resolution.

The State Bar's 38th president, Wallace D. Riley is widely recognized for his record of leadership in local, state, and national organizations and his dedication to the improvement of the legal profession. Throughout his career, Riley has taken on leadership roles in numerous organ-



Justice Marilyn Kelly



Wallace D. Riley

izations and still continues to do so. His many roles include serving as president of the American Bar Association (1983–1984), president of the Detroit chapter of the Federal Bar Association, president of the State Bar Foundation, and president of both the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society and Michigan Historical Center Foundation. Riley also served on the Attorney Discipline Board from 1999–2002, and chaired the organization from 2000–2002. Before serving as president, Riley held many State Bar offices, including chairperson of the Young Lawyer's Section (1960–1961), Board of Commissioners member (1965–1973), secretary (1969–1970), vice-president (1970–1971), and president-elect (1971–1972). Riley is co-founder of the Detroit law firm of Riley & Roumell, P.C., which is now Riley Roumell & Connolly, P.C.

Liberty Bell Award— Wayne Bentley

The Liberty Bell Award recognizes a non-lawyer who has given his or her time to strengthen the effectiveness of the American system of freedom under law. Wayne Bentley, a Grand Rapids City Middle/High School government teacher, has spent more than a decade researching the representation of minorities on Kent County juries. Bentley worked with his students and the Grand Rapids Bar Association to study the jury selection process in Kent County, and his research led court administrators to the discovery that a computer glitch had kept minorities from serving on local juries. Bentley has also worked with students through award-winning mock trial, debate, and academic teams.

The award winners will be honored at a luncheon during the State Bar of Michigan 68th Annual Meeting. The luncheon will take place on Friday, September 12, in the Lansing Center ballroom. For more information about awards criteria and the awards process, visit <http://www.michbar.org>. ◆



Wayne Bentley