

Jeanne Skilton: 45th President of the Michigan Lawyers Auxiliary

The Michigan Lawyers Auxiliary (MLA) has great programs that benefit the young people of Michigan. One of the programs, "The Late Show," has volunteers who read to young people in the evening at juvenile detention facilities. In the March 1999 *Michigan Bar Journal*, Audrey Nesbitt Gray, MLA chair of "The Late Show" and member of the State Bar LRE Committee, praised the volunteers in this program. She stated that they "epitomize the commitment that the legal community and concerned citizens have made to these young people who forge through childhood with adult-brand troubles and burdens that would be difficult for the most hardened and mature of us to shoulder."

"The Late Show" is now in five communities in Michigan. In Grand Haven, the chair is Dr. David Schock, (616) 395-7361. He found out about the program through his wife, Kathryn Neville, an attorney, who had been following the articles in the *Michigan Bar Journal*. The other four communities have local lawyers' auxiliary chairs: Judy Weldy, (989) 799-6545 or mortjudy@prodigy.net, Saginaw; Karen Parent, (616) 868-0071, Grand Rapids; Barbara Hill, (989) 835-6134 or Daria Potts, (898) 839-2745, Midland; and Audrey Gray, (616) 342-1435, Kalamazoo. Contact the chair in your community to be a volunteer reader. Gray, the innovator of the program in Michigan, is enthusiastic about helping anyone in the state start additional "The Late Show" programs.

MLA Law Day co-chairs and the MLA Law-Related Education chair work hard for the young people of Michigan. Mary Ann Farris (fmaunique@aol.com) is the MLA Law Day chair, and Jan Tableman is the MLA Law Day assistant chair. Both have years of experience with Law Day. They are already hard at work getting the state essay contest together and planning the state Law Day luncheon honoring the state essay winners. Law Day 2002 information will be online



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at www.michbar.org/meetings/lawday02/welcome.html.

Fran Anderson, MLA Law-Related Education chairperson, has materials for the Third Grade Teaching Unit on Laws, Rights and Responsibilities. Contact her for materials at (248) 673-7707. We need enthusiastic people to get this nationally field-tested program into more schools in Michigan. If you know a teacher in the state who excels in the teaching of legal education, contact Anderson to nominate a teacher for the Crystal Apple Award.

I look forward to being president of MLA, which does so much for the young people of Michigan. Working with children and young people has been an important part of my life. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, I taught preschool, kindergarten, and first grade. During the 20 years my husband, Bob, practiced law at the Grand Rapids office of Warner, Norcross and Judd, I did extensive volunteering with young people. I was awarded the East Grand Rapids PTA Council Distinguished Service Award in 1991 for my work not only in PTA, but also Girl Scouts, church, booster organizations, Community Action Council, and the EGR Schools Foundation. I was also a parent advocate for children with learning disabilities.

I've continued to work with young people in the Detroit area. Bob and I moved to West Bloomfield in 1996, and he is the partner in charge of Warner Norcross & Judd's Metro Detroit office. I am tutoring Pontiac elementary students and raising funds for CARE House (facility to help abused children) and SCAMP (summer camp for special needs children). I assist in putting on an annual day-long "hands on" seminar to promote girls going into the sciences.

Bob and I have three daughters (and one son-in-law). One of our daughters, Anne, is an attorney with Foster, Swift, Collins and Smith in Lansing. Our other two daughters live in the Chicago area. Sarah is a library director and Mary Beth (Geerts) is a registered nurse.

The MLA and its local auxiliaries are working for the young people in Michigan and promoting the legal profession. Pass this information on to your spouse to volunteer to do a "done in a day" activity or get more involved with a program. The following are the presidents of the local Michigan auxiliaries: Helen Smith, (616) 949-4033 or Marilyn Van Orden, (616) 949-4519, Grand Rapids; Judi Hurford, (313) 343-0711 or Hford313@aol.com, Grosse Pointe; Rosemarie Perrone, (517) 886-0627 or remperon@aol.com, Ingham County; Karen Allen, (616) 349-4886 or allenK33@aol.com, Kalamazoo; and Marty Triantafillou, (989) 791-2046, Saginaw. Get involved. This is one of my favorite quotes: *I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family and friends, THE NEEDS OF OTHERS, your work and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you.* (Emphasis added, author unknown.) ◆

Jeanne Skilton is president of the Michigan Lawyers Auxiliary, a member of the Grosse Pointe Lawyers Auxiliary, past MLA Law Day chair, and past president of the Young Lawyers Wives in Grand Rapids.