

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
2009-2010 COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Article VI §6, Bylaws of the State Bar of Michigan

No later than May 1 of each year, the chair of each committee and sub entity of the Bar, with the assistance of the staff liaison, shall report to the Executive Director on a form provided by the State Bar on the activities and accomplishments of the committee or sub entity.

Committee Name: Standing Committee on American Indian Law (67).

Jurisdiction: Review issues of American Indian Law, focusing on the relationship between tribal courts, state courts, and federal courts, and on the promotion of positive relationships between the lawyers of Michigan and the American Indian Community.

Officers and Membership:

William J. Brooks, Chair

Members:

Hon. Timothy P. Connors
Dawn S. Duncan
Ezekiel J. N. Fletcher
Sheila Hackett Gaskell
William S. Gregory
John A. Jarema
Shaun Matthew Johnson
James A. Keedy
James M. Kinney
Charles H. Koop
Denise A McNulty
Joseph P. O'Leary
Michael D. Petoskey
Michael G. Phelan
Kathryn L. Tierney
R. John Wernet, Jr.

Advisors:

Carlos H. Alvarado-Jorquera
John J. Lemire
Aaron C. Schlehuber
John Garett Zevalking

Non-Bar Member:

Jeff Davis, Grand Rapids

Supreme Court Representative Member:

Angela D. Sorrells, Lansing

Law Student Advisor:

Adrea Korthase, Lansing

Commissioner Liaison:

Stephen J. Gobbo, Lansing

State Bar Liaison:

Gregory Conyers

2009-2010 Meeting Schedule:

- Friday, November 13, 2009 Telephone conference
- Friday, January 15, 2010 Telephone conference
- Friday, March 12, 2010 Telephone conference
- Friday, May 14, 2010 Telephone conference
- Saturday, June 12, 2010 Mackinac Island
- Friday, August 13, 2010 Telephone conference
- Friday, October 8, 2010 Telephone conference
- Friday, December 10, 2010 Telephone conference

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Resources provided by the State Bar of Michigan in support of committee work:

- Assistance in getting conference call for meeting set up.
- Liaison to resources at ICLE.
- Guidance on State Bar requirements for Committee activities.
- Assistance in scheduling/facilities for Committee meeting at Annual Upper Michigan Legal Institute.

Committee Activities: The major activities include:

- Continuation and completion of review of the Michigan Family Law Bench book published by ICLE. Committee members provided input on revisions to the Bench book to ensure that appropriate text and/or cross-references are in the text concerning the Indian Child Welfare, Tribal jurisdiction over family law matters (i.e. support; custody; paternity).
- Other activities included surveying Tribal Court/Local Bar Relations to determine how the tribal courts interact with the local bar. For example, compiling information on what steps do Tribal Courts take to inform the local bar of: Rules for admission to practice and Civil/Criminal Procedures. Also, are the local bar members able to access Tribal laws?
- The Committee also adopted a position on ADM File No. 2008-43, after a thorough review, which provided for numerous amendments to the Michigan Court Rules that were recommended by the Indian Child Welfare Act subcommittee. The Committee recommended one amendment change to the rules as proposed and one recommended change to the staff comment. The State Bar's Executive Committee authorized the Committee to advocate its position. The Committee continued its participation by responding to positions submitted through the Court's comment deadline and by participating in the Public Administrative Hearing. Both of the changes recommended by the Committee were adopted by the Michigan Supreme Court, effective May 1, 2010.

Future Goals and Activities:

- Continue efforts to monitor drafting of revisions to Michigan Court Rules designed to implement responsibilities under the Indian Child Welfare Act.
- Continue to develop relationships with other Committees/Sections within the Bar to raise the profile/familiarity with Indian Law and the role/jurisdiction of Indian tribes and Tribal Courts in the State.