

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE**

Committee Name: Standing Committee on Professional Ethics

Jurisdictional Statement:

- Prepare written opinions on professional ethical conduct at the request of the State Bar President, Board of Commissioners, Representative Assembly, Attorney Discipline Board, Attorney Grievance Commission, Executive Director, or individual members of the State Bar inquiring about their own contemplated conduct.
- Recommend amendments to the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct and other standards of professional conduct, and review proposed amendments.

This committee may have more than 15 members.

Officers and Membership:

Chair: Stanley H. Pitts, Detroit

Members:

William J. Ard, Williamston
Michael P. Ashcraft, Jr., Bloomfield Hills
Lori Grigg Bluhm, Troy
John G. Cameron, Jr., Grand Rapids
Donald C. Campbell, Southfield
Stephanie L. Crino, East Lansing
Edward J. Hood, Detroit
Daniel R. Hurley, Detroit
Larry W. Lewis, Hastings
Frank T. Mamat, Farmington Hills
G. Michael Meihn, Ferndale
Kenneth M. Mogill, Lake Orion
Amy Neville, Detroit

2011-2012 Meeting Schedule (date and location):

October 28, 2011, Lansing, Michigan
January 27, 2012, Lansing, Michigan
May 4, 2012, Lansing, Michigan
June 22, 2012, Lansing, Michigan

Committee Activities:

During each committee meeting, the members discuss proposed topics for ethics opinions; receive updates about pending matters; and discuss and debate opinions in progress. Additionally, members receive information about and discuss inquiries received on the Bar's ethics helpline and address other matters as they arise, such as proposed changes to the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct. Between meetings, the members work in subcommittees to review materials, form recommendations about whether to respond to opinion requests with a letter or an opinion, and research and draft opinions for discussion and approval by the committee as a whole. Since the last annual report, the committee voted to approve three opinions – RI-353 (pertaining to a lawyer's ability to practice in a law firm containing the name of a lawyer not licensed in Michigan), RI-354 (prohibiting a domestic relations lawyer's taking a mortgage in the marital homestead to secure fees in the divorce case), and an opinion pertaining to the ethical use of trust accounts, which the committee is recommending for adoption as a formal opinion. Since the last annual report, the committee reviewed thirteen written requests for opinion. At the conclusion of the May 4, 2012, meeting the committee continues work on eleven subjects.

Resources Provided by the State Bar of Michigan in Support of Committee Work:

The committee has been assisted in its work by staff liaisons Dawn Evans, Danon Goodrum-Garland, and Nkrumah Johnson-Wynn, as well as staff member Karen Spohn.

Future Goals and Activities:

The committee continues to identify issues of interest to Michigan lawyers as evidenced by questions posed by letter or ethics helpline inquiry that might be appropriate as the subject of an opinion either because the topic has not previously been addressed or because changes in the area have rendered previous opinions no longer appropriate. To the extent that the Committee's input is sought by the Board of Commissioners, the Representative Assembly, or the Supreme Court on discrete issues or projects, the committee stands ready to respond with appropriate research and commentary.

Chair/Co-Chair Contact Information:

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