

S T A T E   B A R   O F   M I C H I G A N

# Second Annual Justice Initiatives Summit

Engaging the Next Generation of  
Justice Initiatives Leaders



April 11, 2011, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.  
Lansing, Michigan

## Summary of Events

## **Justice Initiatives Cabinet Members**

Julie I. Fershtman  
John P. Lozano  
Linda K. Rexer  
Hon. Cynthia D. Stephens  
Holli J. Wallace  
Maya K. Watson  
Janet K. Welch

## **Support Staff**

Candace Crowley  
Jennifer Williams  
Marge Bossenbery

## **Facilitator and Presenters**

### **Facilitator:**

Dr. Geneva J. Williams

### **Presenters:**

Thomas M. Costello, Jr.  
Mark P. Fancher  
Professor E. Christopher Johnson  
Elizabeth C. Jolliffe  
Lynn H. Jondahl  
Samantha Meinke  
Thomas W. Linn  
Hon. Mabel Johnson Mayfield  
Richard D. McLellan  
Anne Vrooman  
Maya K. Watson

## **Participants**

Dewnya Bakri-Bazzi  
Shayla D. Blankenship  
Lorray S. C. Brown  
Erika L. Butler-Akinyemi  
Kimberly Coleman  
Gregory Conyers  
Candace Crowley  
Mark L. Dobias  
Robert F. Gillett  
Nino E. Green  
Anita Hitchcock  
Jennifer V. Lamp  
Madelyne C. Lawry  
Dan M. Levy  
Ashley E. Lowe

Elizabeth Lyon  
Rodney D. Martin  
Robert G. Mathis  
Keith L. Morris  
Heidi A. Naasko  
Julianna Rivera  
Amy L. Sankaran  
Hon. William G. Schma  
Hon. Angela K. Sherigan  
Terri L. Stangl  
Joon H. Sung  
Rep. Rashida Harbi Tlaib  
Christopher B. Vreeland  
Janet K. Welch  
Dionnie S. Wynter

## Welcome – State Bar Executive Director Janet K. Welch

Janet welcomed the participants and explained that the Summit was conceived as an annual event to address issues of importance to the Justice Initiatives (JI) community. She referenced the State Bar's historic committee to JI issues, noting that the Bar was formed in 1935 and in a 1936 Bar Journal article authored by Louis Miriani he urged the presidents of local bar associations to appoint a legal aid community "and let these men pay attention" to the issue of legal aid which is part of justice initiatives work.

## Today's Purpose – State Bar President-Elect Julie Fershtman

Julie stated that the legal profession is aging and we need to assure that new leaders are brought forward in a thoughtful way. The State Bar needs guidance from those in attendance on how to improve and perpetuate leadership. Lawyers have new ways of communicating and face significant challenges to finding work-life balance. Nonetheless, it is important to find time for justice initiatives and this summit will help us be purposeful about that.

## Who are Our Future Leaders and How Do They Communicate in Today's World?

**Maya Watson – Facilitator**

**Anne Vrooman** presented a power point showing historic and current membership of the State Bar of Michigan. Key items are that there are 38,750 active members with 85% being Michigan residents, about 70/30 male-female split, half in private practice, and 60% in solo or small (2-10) firms. Boomers (1944-1960) are the largest group at 43.3%; Gen X (1961-1980) is next at 40.2%, Traditionalists at 11.8% and Millennials (1981) at 4.7%. Active Michigan residents joining in 2000 or after are nearly equally split by male/female, and a majority (56%) are ages 30-39.

Generational attributes involve some stereotyping but provide helpful indicators for planning. Most volunteer organizations are made up of four generations – Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen X and Millennials. Key information from the power point slides is that Traditionalists are from nuclear families, used rotary phones and prefer one-on-one communication, use directive/command-and-control leadership styles and operate through formal memos. Boomers are from disintegrating families, used touch-tone phone, have a consensual/collegial leadership style and prefer in-person communications. Gen Xers are latch-key kids, use cell phones, have an "everyone is the same/challenge others/ask why" leadership style and use direct and immediate communications. Millennials are from merged families, use the internet/picture phones and e-mail to communicate and have not yet demonstrated an identifiable leadership style. The power point presentation is available online.

**Samantha Meinke** introduced new social media communication methods by stating that information in these methods flows in two directions. A plan is important when using social media and information must be kept up to date every day. Someone should be put in charge of social media to keep it up and to let people know it is available. **Community based sites** include **Facebook**, the largest social media and a good place to start. Invite people to join your Facebook site, take RSVPs, send updates, videos, photos and suggestions. Facebook involves a very personal

aspect and followers want to see a face and see the passion of the host. **Linked In** is for professional use only. It is a network into which one must be invited. Videos are not used. **Blog hosting sites** include **TypePad** and **Twitter**. **Wikipedia** is an **informational sharing site**. There are also **Virtual world sites** that are explained more in Samantha's handout, available online.

**Elizabeth Joliffe** explained how and for what purpose lawyers are using social media. Facebook is for personal purposes and is not used to market business. It is used to share family and other information and people oftentimes share more information than is good. Solo practitioners use **Twitter** as a support group and share news of work events. A lot of lawyers are on **Linked In**. They create an on-line resume through a profile. They ask questions and use the status bar to announce events. Time is important to lawyers and they want to get information from social media pages. They want their personal lives to be respected and do not want long phone calls or long meetings. In working among generations, Boomers should remember that while they like meetings, a better approach might be to ask "what's the best way to communicate" with the people involved. Facebook, Twitter or Skype might work better. As a final note, Elizabeth addressed the challenge of working with the one person who cannot use email or other new media. We have an obligation to help them learn.

## **Where and How Leadership Occurs – Judge Cynthia Stephens – Facilitator**

**E. Christopher Johnson** spoke to the value of creating a culture of professionalism inside an organization. Signing an honor code, including professionalism as part of every class, committing to pro bono and making your word your bond all become part of the fabric of the culture. **Thomas Linn** emphasized the need to create opportunities and make it easy for young lawyer to do pro bono work, serve on non-profit boards and lead neighborhood organizations to build their network and range of experience. **Judge Mabel Mayfield** addressed the need for a bar organization to create and work from a strategic plan so that the direction of the group is not limited by the leader. It is important to bring in newer lawyers at the ground level and to reach out to students. A bar can't attract young people without a website or information on what's possible, and local bars are the feeder for larger groups.

**Tom Costello** identified credibility and follow-through as key leadership traits. The ability to influence direct action that transforms a situation is leadership, and interest in that is not necessarily generational. It is a matter of an individual's passion point. **Richard McLellan** identified the things that motivate people to be leaders: We must identify those likely to become leaders, tell them we think they have leadership potential, give them meaningful rewards, listen to younger people and motivate them to listen to you, and provide leadership lessons and techniques. **Mark Fancher** contributed to the conversation by referencing his experience as a mentor. Generation has a lot to do with perception and what happened to you at age nine is how you behave. Boomers wanted to change the world now. Millennials do not have a need to change the world. They are narrowly focused, not receptive to grand schemes but will reply to helping one person, one family or one neighborhood. We should look at engaging new leaders through their eyes, not ours, and put the faces of real clients in front of them.

**Lynn Jondahl** observed that one's generation makes a lot of difference and that "old people" are liberated and free to challenge institutions. He identified two distinct meanings for "justice" – the justice system, and justice as a value. He urged people to challenge the system as a value.

A group discussion followed the contributions of the presenters. Inviting people to lead or to join a committee, providing support from existing leaders, and providing mentorship were affirmed as valuable behaviors. Young people want to be given responsibility and encouraged to find solutions on their own. They do not want to be treated as interns. It is important to find the right opportunity for people and to do that your organization must create a broad variety of experiences – to help a client, work on systemic change or accept a discrete task.

The key is to identify passion for work and avoid managing the work or holding on to bureaucratic structures that are common in bar associations. Those structures can be barriers. Invite young people with passion to come in and take over. Learn from them. Allow creativity to flourish. Even the judiciary should examine its customs and work from an ethic of care and healing.

A blending of personality traits is important within a group of people who care about making a difference. We should broaden our understanding of making a difference because it can be done through changing systems or working on one case at a time. There are all sorts of leaders that we won't recognize if we are too narrow in our focus.

The group noted the challenge of engaging leaders when financial pressures – especially on solo and small firm lawyers – can be a barrier. The practice of law is changing and is more difficult with higher expectations and a need to cope with internet resources for clients. To the extent that leadership opportunities occur in an environment that is hostile to the lawyer's work environment it is a problem. Allowing phone participation and otherwise leveraging technology to accommodate participation offers a partial solution.

## **Reflection**

In closing the morning sessions, facilitator **Dr. Geneva Williams** congratulated the group on tackling this issue, noting that the generational transformation issue is hard to deal with. It is difficult for older people to step aside after years of building structure to address change. It is difficult for Gen Xers to figure out how to get in the mix. The commonality is that people want to make a difference and their passion point is key. Dr. Williams reminded us of the wealth of work that's been done on engaging volunteers. To succeed, we must find out and understand their perceptions and what motivates. Money helps, but people solve problems and there is room at the table for everyone.

## **Breakout Sessions**

Group discussion occurred through this charge:

Reflecting on the issues of engaging the next generation of justice initiatives leaders, discuss and report out deliberations on the following question:

**What actions, strategies and approaches can the State Bar of Michigan take to engage the next generation of lawyers in justice initiatives work?**

## **Breakout Group Reports:**

### **First Report:**

1. Match passion with skills and provide opportunities to do the best work.
2. Develop interest while people are still in school. Go to law schools, let people know about opportunities, instill thoughts early, ask questions about how and what to do differently, explain how work will benefit individuals through networking, knowledge and skill development.
3. Define what “JI” means better.
4. Define responsibilities.
5. Empower leaders to devise whatever structures are best for the task.

### **Second Report:**

1. Create a Social Justice Institute. Invite up and coming leaders. Hold it once a year and advertise on social media. Use a professional to facilitate. Create leaders for communities. Include people from specific organizations and ask them to go back and share their learnings with their organization. Explain all bar committees and why their work is relevant. Develop general leadership skills.
2. Use the State Bar to establish mentors in communities or to help match young bar leaders with older experienced lawyers who can help them understand how to lead the bar organization.
3. Identify law students, all people sitting for the Michigan bar exam, and new lawyers and find out what will motivate those people (discrete and specific task, case, project, and seminar). Define why the State Bar is relevant. Emphasize the unmet need and why we need to address it.
4. Publicize committee opportunities within the Bar. Explain the need for new voices.
5. Recognize leadership beyond the chair. Leadership is making a commitment, inviting and igniting others to the task, being prepared, actively participating, hearing and being heard, sharing information and resources, fundraising.

### **Third Report:**

1. JI is integral in the State Bar. Find the connection points.
  - a. Law students. Include “JI in the orientation on professionalism. Plant the seed at law schools and use awards to recognize work – whatever the school honors is what the State Bar honors.
  - b. New lawyers. Use electronic mediums so new layers can log on and find opportunities. Use WIKIs and bars can post what they what. Facilitate an electronic connection with the lowest acceptable monitoring. Mentor by subject matter and service area.

- c. Lawyers with five or more years of experience. Tie in with their stories. Pair lawyers with service opportunities. Ask nonprofits who served you and then recognize them. Recruit and collaborate. Connect with sections of the State Bar. Use listservs, meetings, “Friends of JI” and take advantage of the Bar Leadership Forum, section orientation and other bar gatherings. Meet members where they are at.

#### **Fourth Report:**

1. Law students have passion and identify with organizations. Provide mentoring for committee work for students. Fix the institutional relationship between SBM and law schools.
2. Address the challenge of dealing with new lawyers in solo practice with student debts. Determine whether and to what degree we can expect them to participate in JI.
3. State Bar has resources and affinity bars have attention of members – provide more State Bar resources to involve affinity bar members.
4. State Bar must provide information about opportunities.

#### **Fifth Report:**

1. Change the disconnect between the State Bar and Michigan’s law schools.
2. Use social media, including websites, to post activities and advertise the need for volunteers.
3. Create a dialogue.
4. Use mentors to reach out earlier to save time and get a lot done; be better committee mentors.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Over fifty thoroughly diverse bar leaders gathered at State Bar headquarters on April 11, 2011 to participate in a conversation on “Engaging the Next Generation of Justice Initiatives Leaders.” Participants were presented with demographic information on the State Bar of Michigan membership that included generational and gender factors. General attributes of the generations were identified, including communication preferences, and a “Social Media Basics” session was presented. An interactive conversation on “Where and How Leadership Occurs” was facilitated between the audience and several participants who agreed in advance to offer provocative thoughts on the topic. Participants then worked in breakout sessions to address the question of “What actions, strategies and approaches can the State Bar of Michigan take to engage the next generation of lawyers in justice initiatives work?” The results of those sessions were presented in a final plenary gathering and will be helpful to the Justice Initiatives community in addressing the specific issue it asked the audience to address.

Taken as a whole, however, the day produced five positive and productive points that could be useful for many bar groups.

1. Successful groups are inclusive and make room at the table for everyone. To do well, volunteer organizations should be attentive to age differences as a diversity factor, and include leadership from each of the four generations – Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen Xers

and Millennials. People work and communicate in different ways, though, and thought should be given to all available communication methods before deciding which ones work best for reaching a group and helping them work together.

2. Developing and recognizing leadership requires conscious thought. Leadership should be defined very broadly because it occurs in places other than in the person of the president or the chair. An effective way to develop leaders is to create professional cultures that encourage participation in the organized bar and on non-profit boards. An invitation to participate from an established leader to a new lawyer is a proven way of developing leadership skills. A leadership institute with facilitated programming for people with leadership potential can be useful. Mentoring can be an effective tool, and it need not necessarily be long and drawn out. One contact can be enough. An offer of help from a new person is a sign of good leadership potential.
3. The key to engaging volunteers is to find their particular passion point and have enough opportunities for them to participate on that point. Make sure your name and writings clearly convey what you're about. Opportunities can range from undertaking a discrete task, to helping one client, or to changing the system in a broader way. Communicate exactly what's involved in each opportunity and what's expected of the volunteer.
4. Structures should be prepared to yield to new generations and innovative ways of working together. Ask people to do a job and allow them to work in whatever structure works best for them. Where necessary, fit the work product of the group into the organization's structure but don't bind the volunteers to that structure.
5. Think carefully about where your volunteers and potential leaders might be found; don't wait for people to come to you. Law schools, non-profit groups, community organizations and other bar associations are just some examples of where to look to expand your base. If you find and engage people at an early age they are likely to be engaged for the long term.

These five points are shared with a hope that others will find them useful as they strive to identify motivated volunteers and develop leadership to continue their organizational missions.