

# UpFront

By Samantha Meinke

Share the joy and celebrate with our 2012 award winners on Wednesday, September 19. The place: Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids. The time: 6:30 pm–9:00 pm. This banquet is held in conjunction with the State Bar Annual Meeting.

## A Time to Honor Our Best

### State Bar of Michigan Awards



Frederick M. Baker Jr.  
*Roberts P. Hudson Award*



John M. Barr  
*Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Service Award*



Hon. Willie G. Lipscomb Jr.  
*Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Service Award*



Kathleen L. Bogas  
*Champion of Justice Award*



Hon. Karen M. Fort Hood  
*Champion of Justice Award*



Frederick W. Lauck  
*Champion of Justice Award*



L. Roland "Bud" Roegge  
*Champion of Justice Award*



Thomas K. Thornburg  
*Champion of Justice Award*



Robert A. Sedler  
*John W. Reed Michigan Lawyer Legacy Award*



Ann M. Ozog  
*John W. Cumiskey Pro Bono Award*



OCBA Pro Bono Mentor Match Program  
(Past President Jennifer M. Grieco)  
*Kimberly M. Cahill Bar Leadership Award*



Sgt. Major David Dunckel  
*Liberty Bell Award*

### Representative Assembly Awards



Hon. James H. Fisher  
*Michael Franck Award*



Judy B. Calton  
*Unsung Hero Award*



Jeffrey S. Kopp  
*Unsung Hero Award*



Katherine Smith Kennedy  
*Respected Advocate Award*



Laurel F. McGiffert  
*Respected Advocate Award*



Candace A. Crowley  
*Access to Justice Award*

### Respected Advocate Awards

### MSBF Access to Justice Award

## State Bar of Michigan Awards

### Roberts P. Hudson Award

*The Roberts P. Hudson Award is presented periodically to commend one or more lawyers for their unselfish rendering of outstanding and unique service to and on behalf of the State Bar of Michigan, the legal profession, and the public. It signifies unusual and extraordinary help and assistance to the Bar and the legal profession, which has been given generously, ungrudgingly, and in a spirit of self-sacrifice. It is awarded to a member of the State Bar of Michigan who best exemplifies that which brings honor, esteem, and respect to the legal profession. The Hudson Award is the highest award conferred by the State Bar.*

### Frederick M. Baker Jr.

*Roberts P. Hudson Award*



Ask Fred Baker why, despite undertaking a very demanding career as an attorney and law professor, he has given so much of his time to volunteer efforts and he'll give you a simple answer.

It just plain feels good.

"That feeling of having come to the defense of someone who cannot defend themselves—that is a reward that no other profession delivers in greater abundance than the practice of law," Baker said.

A Michigan Supreme Court commissioner, Baker previously worked for years as a partner at Honigman, Miller, Schwartz and Cohn's Lansing office. He also taught courses on legal writing, research, advocacy, insurance, and conflict of laws at Michigan State University College of Law, Thomas M. Cooley Law School, and Wayne State University.

In addition to taking on those demanding roles, Baker has set the record as the longest-serving chairperson of a State Bar committee. For 24 years, he oversaw the SBM Publications and Website

Advisory Committee, providing editorial guidance to the *Michigan Bar Journal* and the State Bar's website.

Each year, Baker offered to let anyone on his committee take over his leadership role, but it wasn't until last year that someone finally took him up on the offer. When he stepped down, no fewer than 23 current and former committee members wrote words of praise about his work and accomplishments for a special section in the *Bar Journal*.

"Fred's record of service is extraordinary," wrote Joseph Kimble in his nomination of Baker. "I hesitate to even guess how many volunteer hours he has spent for the State Bar, but after 24 years, it's in the hundreds, and probably the thousands.... As you can imagine, endless issues of various kinds have arisen over the years—members who were upset about something that appeared in the *Bar Journal*, strident letters to the editors, copyright matters, licensing matters, claims of plagiarism, postal requirements, the *Journal's* format and content, advertising, contract negotiations with vendors, and all the rest. When the issue was sensitive, Fred almost always volunteered to contact the person who raised it, and I can never remember his failing to resolve it.... Throughout all these years and meetings and hours, Fred has been the consummate class act. He is a kind, generous, friendly, and funny man who makes everyone he deals with feel appreciated and liked."

Baker has also served on the board of the ACLU Greater Lansing chapter since 1997 and the board of the Lansing Area Community Trust since 2002, as president of the Beckwith Fund since 2002, and as co-founder, secretary-treasurer, and trustee of the John D. Voelker Foundation since 1989.

He was named volunteer of the year by the Ingham County Bar Association in 2000.

In 1984, he won the SBM John W. Cumiskey Award for Pro Bono Service for founding in 1977 Cooley's Sixty Plus Inc. Elder Law Clinic, a program that allows qualified law students to represent individuals over the age of 60 in general civil legal matters.

Baker acknowledges that doing so much for his fellow attorneys, law students, and community members has come at a sacrifice on the part of others he holds dear—his wife of 42 years, Irene, and daughters Jessica and Jordan. But he's making up for that now in retirement by spending a well-earned respite in the company of his new grandchildren.

### Frank J. Kelley Distinguished Public Service Award

*This award recognizes extraordinary governmental service by a member of the State Bar of Michigan and is presented to individuals demonstrating the highest standards of integrity, fairness, leadership, excellence, dedication to principle, and dedication to the ideals of democracy. Criteria for the award include service in public office in a way that has strengthened the American system of justice under the law and a significant lasting contribution to the nation, the state, or the community in which the public servant lives or serves.*

#### John M. Barr

*Frank J. Kelley Distinguished  
Public Service Award*



Ypsilanti attorney John M. Barr knows a thing or two about serving his community.

For 53 years, he has served the people of Washtenaw County with an unparalleled dedication to principle and fairness. He has been Ypsilanti city attorney for 30 years, Lodi Township attorney for 14 years, and for five years in between he served as Belleville city attorney. He also spent nearly a decade as a State Bar commissioner.

Despite the heavy workload, Barr never wavered from his commitment to justice and democracy, which has earned him a stellar reputation among his colleagues and the citizens he serves.

"I found [Barr] to be thoughtful, respectful, and of the highest ethical character," said Cheryl Farmer, immediate past mayor of Ypsilanti, who noted that Barr encouraged her to restore the lost practice of beginning city council meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance as well as an opening prayer or moment of silence.

These practices, which are still employed by the city council today, helped create "a sense of the gravity of the decisions we were making for the future of our community" and "helped to set a tone of civility that was generally retained throughout the evening by council members and the audience alike," Farmer said.

That sense of respect and civility permeates everything Barr touches, both as an attorney and as a human being. Whether he's in the courtroom or in public, community means everything to him.

A Boy Scout leader for more than 40 years, Barr has received many awards including the Scouter's Key for creating, maintaining, and serving on a quality scouting program and the Silver Beaver Award, given to those who implement a scouting program

and perform community service through hard work, self-sacrifice, dedication, and many years of service.

Barr has never sought any of the awards he has received, which is what endears him to everyone with whom he interacts.

Fellow attorney Dan Matson may have summed it up best when he said that Barr has a "quiet confidence" about him that has given rise to respect from his colleagues—a respect he has earned without seeking it.

#### Hon. Willie G. Lipscomb Jr.

*Frank J. Kelley Distinguished  
Public Service Award*



Hon. Willie G. Lipscomb Jr.'s work as a prosecutor, private attorney, magistrate, and judge is well known. In each of these roles, he has demonstrated a unique ability to repair things that were already broken. But his desire to fix things *before* they break sets him apart.

That desire and the shooting death of a teenager he knew led the judge to develop and launch the 36th District Court's Handgun Intervention Program (HIP) in 1993. The program is aimed at young black males who are first- or second-time offenders charged with carrying a concealed weapon and who have no other serious offenses pending. The program's goal is preventing these young men from committing gun violence or becoming victims of gun violence themselves.

HIP is ordered as a condition of a defendant's bond. Once ordered, the individual is required to attend a four-hour class that stresses choices, consequences, responsibility, and nonviolence. Standout features of the class include images of murder victims, discussions about participants' responsibility as African-American men, and an optional vow of nonviolence, which the vast majority of participants end up taking. Since its inception, the program has expanded to include middle and high school students and has reached thousands of young men throughout metro Detroit.

Hon. Cylentia LaToye Miller, who nominated Judge Lipscomb for the award, said the program has made a "huge difference" in the lives of participants. She praised the judge for his "integrity, fairness, leadership, excellence, dedication to principle, and to the ideals of democracy through [this program] that he founded and now administers."

It's impossible to say how many lives have been saved because of Judge Lipscomb's vision, but whether it's one or one thousand, there's no doubt that the impact of his desire to fix things before they break is being felt.

## Champion of Justice Award

*This award is presented to practicing lawyers and judges who show integrity and adherence to the highest principles and traditions of the legal profession, superior professional competence, and extraordinary professional accomplishments that benefit the nation, the state, or the local community in which they live.*

**Kathleen L. Bogas**  
*Champion of Justice Award*



Kathleen Bogas has dedicated her life to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to pursue the American dream.

As a litigator, she has fought for the proper enactment of civil rights laws, including Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

"Most Michiganders have been enriched by her triumphs in the civil rights arena by having more opportunities in employment and education, better workplace environments where discrimination and harassment are no longer the norm, and a champion at the ready to make sure no one stands alone when their civil rights are violated," wrote Marla Linderman in her nomination.

By all accounts, she has been very successful in her efforts because she is an exemplary attorney.

"I believe she is one of the very best civil trial lawyers in our state," wrote Hon. Gerald Rosen in Bogas's nomination. "She not only exhibits outstanding lawyering skills, but also extremely good judgment and common sense. She has a highly developed ability to prepare and present her case clearly, cogently, and compellingly without unnecessary and distracting adornment. I have also observed that in her relationships with clients, opposing counsel, and the court she is unfailingly thoughtful, courteous, and professional."

Bogas has also worked outside the courtroom to advance civil rights laws and her profession by volunteering on the boards of many professional organizations. She has been president of the National Employment Lawyers Association, a member of the U.S. Senate's Judicial Advisory Committee, co-chair of the State Bar of Michigan Judicial Qualifications Committee since 2005, and president of the Michigan Employment Lawyer Association for nearly 10 years.

Over the past three decades, she has crisscrossed the country educating fellow attorneys and law students as a speaker, instructor, and mentor, and she teamed with Judge Rosen and three others to author *Federal Employment Litigation*.

"We practice in the same area and geographic location and compete for business," wrote Darcie Brault in her nomination. "She has provided guidance and direction to me and countless other professionals making our way. Her willingness to take this time, for me and many others, is a testament to her energy, her integrity, and her loyalty to the cause of justice for workers."

**Hon. Karen M. Fort Hood**  
*Champion of Justice Award*



Judge Karen Fort Hood has devoted her life to serving our most vulnerable citizens—children.

She first served children as a teacher in the Detroit Public Schools and later as a special assistant prosecutor in the Wayne County Juvenile Court, prosecuting juvenile offender and abuse and neglect cases.

"In both professions, I encountered child victims daily, many of whom without intervention or guidance were future perpetrators and unproductive citizens," Judge Hood said. "More than ever in our history, our youth face tremendous challenges and must have exceptional tools and resources to compete and excel. . . . I have a duty to pass on the knowledge, opportunities, and many blessings that have been bestowed upon me."

Judge Hood continues to serve her community in many ways.

She has worked to improve her profession by serving as president of the Association of Black Judges of Michigan, a judicial council member of the National Bar Association, a member of the Wolverine Bar Association, and a facilitator and judge for moot court and mock trial competitions. In addition, she mentors new attorneys, new judges, and students of all ages at primary and secondary schools and at her alma mater, Michigan State University College of Law (formerly Detroit College of Law).

"She is appreciated in her community for her high level of integrity and work ethic," wrote Hon. Denise Langford Morris in her nomination.

These traits have helped Judge Hood rise through the ranks at the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office to the bench and to presiding judge of the Wayne County Circuit Court Criminal Division.

"She worked tirelessly to improve the administration of our court system," wrote Judge Kirsten Frank Kelly. "Presiding over the Criminal Division in Wayne County Circuit Court can be and sometimes is a thankless job. She served in that capacity with distinction. Respected by her colleagues, she was able to diffuse potential

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**Champion of Justice Award** *(Continued)*

conflicts between the 31 judges of the division before they became full-blown controversies. She is a woman of bedrock integrity. . . . I believe she demonstrates superior professional competence. She is thoughtful and dedicated to the principled application of the law. Judge Hood is a role model in every way."

For those reasons and more, in 2002 she became the first and only nonincumbent African-American woman elected to the Michigan Court of Appeals.

**Frederick W. Lauck***Champion of Justice Award*

Frederick W. Lauck has devoted his career to speaking for those whose voices would otherwise go unheard.

As an attorney in the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, a trial lawyer for Plunkett Cooney, and, since 1976, a solo practitioner, Lauck has always worked diligently for the underdog, representing, among others, mentally ill clients, a widow whose husband was cheated out of his business on his deathbed by his brother, a construction worker brutally injured on the job, and a young man violently victimized by a gang and later blamed for its crimes.

In one of many of his prominent cases, *People v Wade*, Lauck helped secure the freedom of a security guard who was wrongfully convicted of murder and sent to prison.

The guard accidentally killed a fugitive thief when a warning shot he fired at the ground ricocheted and struck the thief. The trial judge in the case created a flawed form he required the jury to use. Although the jury verbally stated that it found the guard not guilty, the jury form required the jurors to find him guilty of a minimum of manslaughter. The guard served four years in prison, but his conviction was ultimately overturned by the Michigan Supreme Court.

Lauck's work in the courtroom has earned him the respect of judges—18 of whom wrote letters of support for his nomination.

"He is constantly helping those in need," wrote Hon. Sean Cox in his nomination. "He is one of the very, very few lawyers who can get a not-guilty verdict in a murder-one case, a multimillion dollar

verdict in a personal injury case, and successfully litigate a complex business case."

He has also earned the undying admiration of his fellow attorneys, who have described him as a tireless advocate, a courtroom gladiator, St. George the dragon slayer, and a man to whom they would entrust their children's lives.

Elmer L. Roller summed it up best in his support of Lauck's nomination:

"Known for his uncompromising allegiance to the protection of the impoverished, uneducated, mentally ill, and disenfranchised members of society, Fred's unabashed and balanced sense of justice and inexhaustible zeal for the improvement of our profession has made him a true champion of justice and a role model for other members of our profession."

**L. Roland "Bud" Roegge***Champion of Justice Award*

"To be a good lawyer, you must first be a good person."

That is the sentiment L. R. "Bud" Roegge teaches all his West Michigan colleagues.

Roegge served as president of Grand Rapids-based Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge until 2002. He led the firm during its transition from a small Grand Rapids office of seven to a large, statewide firm of nearly 90 attorneys. During his years in command, he focused on not just expanding the firm's reach, but also enabling the attorneys in his firm to become brighter and more versatile.

"Talk to any lawyer who has ever worked with him and they will tell you that Bud is a force like few others," wrote his nominators. "An exemplary leader, Bud Roegge has taught all of us that being a lawyer is more than a job. It is a calling with incredible responsibilities to the profession and the community. Those who have been fortunate enough to know him and to have learned the lessons he has taught them are forever the better for it."

His work at the firm has centered on alternative dispute resolution, environmental litigation, legal malpractice defense, medical malpractice defense, and professional liability. He is known by his colleagues in Grand Rapids and beyond as being one of the

best attorneys in the state, winning over clients, opposing counsel, witnesses, jurors, and judges with his signature gentle honesty, wisdom, and unfailing respect, and wowing colleagues with his depth of knowledge.

Roegge has also tirelessly volunteered for decades on committees and task forces at the local, state, and national levels to effect meaningful changes in the civil justice system. He has served as president of the Grand Rapids Bar Association and continues to volunteer to help the underserved with the Justice Foundation of Western Michigan.

What truly sets him apart from other attorneys and leaders is his capacity for giving his time, knowledge, and inspiration to others.

"The path leading to Bud Roegge's office is the most worn piece of carpet in his law firm, and has been so for decades," wrote Carol Carlson in Roegge's nomination. "He is trusted beyond measure for having an open ear, an open mind, and a thoughtful regard for the varied personalities and motives that cross his threshold. . . . It is worn because those of us he mentors need his model of professionalism to help us remember our calling."

## Thomas K. Thornburg

*Champion of Justice Award*



Thomas Thornburg has devoted his life to serving as a voice for the voiceless.

For more than 30 years he has worked as a poverty lawyer in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

But it is his work since 1997 as co-founder and co-managing attorney of Farmworker Legal Services of Michigan, a division of Legal Services of South Central Michigan, that has truly been exceptional.

In this role, he has worked tirelessly on behalf of Michigan's 90,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Each summer, Thornburg and his employees pile into his worn, air-conditioner-less minivan and document the living and working conditions of migrant workers in an effort to improve their health and safety.

When the state looked to cut funding for inspections of migrant housing in 2009, Thornburg and his bilingual team led Michigan Department of Civil Rights and Michigan Civil Rights Commission employees and commissioners on a tour to witness migrant workers' living conditions and instituted a subsequent series of public forums for migrant workers to share firsthand testimony.

"The conditions facing migrant and seasonal workers in Michigan would never have seen the light of day but for the dedicated staff of FLS and the leadership of Tom Thornburg," wrote George Wirth, retired MCRC director of hearings and mediation and legal counsel, in his nomination. "Tom and his staff spend the summers risking their safety while they investigate living conditions where there is sometimes no running water, rat infestation, and families with male and female children forced to live in trailers with unrelated single men. . . . We heard testimony from a farmworker who was fired and had a gun pulled on him by the camp foreman because he complained he wasn't properly paid for his work. . . . During our public forums, several of our staff were in tears over what we saw or heard, most of us were upset and even angry at what we saw or heard, and without exception, everyone came away with respect and admiration for the hard work and selfless dedication of Tom Thornburg and his staff."

Their efforts paid off in 2010, when the Michigan Department of Civil Rights released the *Report on Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers*. The report garnered national attention and caused the Michigan legislature to pass a bill increasing funding for inspections of migrant housing. Several other state departments also instituted changes to improve other services including accepting wage/hour claims, improving access to community health, and offering education assistance.

## John W. Reed Michigan Lawyer Legacy Award

*This award is named after a professor who over the course of his decades-long career at the University of Michigan Law School earned a reputation as a preeminent scholar, teacher, and gentleman. Reed also served as dean of both the University of Colorado Law School and Wayne State University Law School. This award in his name is presented periodically to an educator from a Michigan law school whose influence on lawyers has elevated the quality of legal practice in our state.*

## Robert A. Sedler

*John W. Reed  
Michigan Lawyer Legacy Award*



Everyone remembers their favorite professor.

For many Michigan lawyers, that memory includes Wayne State University Law School Professor Robert A. Sedler.

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**John W. Reed Michigan Lawyer Legacy Award** *(Continued)*

But those memories extend far beyond the four walls of the classroom where Sedler taught, entertained, and guided them in their quests to become lawyers. Those who know Sedler see him as both an outstanding professor and a larger-than-life constitutional scholar who has made an indelible mark in his field.

Jules B. Olsman, who nominated Sedler, said “those individuals who were fortunate enough to have Professor Sedler as a teacher continue to talk about him like they were still in his class,” adding that it would be an “understatement” to say Sedler has had a “positive impact on the law.”

Current Wayne State University Law School Dean Robert M. Ackerman agreed. Ackerman noted in a letter of support that this year marks Sedler’s 50th as a law professor, but added that his “prowess in the classroom is matched by his voluminous scholarly output.”

Ackerman also made sure to point out that Sedler is “no mere ivory tower lawyer,” noting that “for several decades he was a leading constitutional and civil rights litigator in cases involving racial discrimination, the First Amendment, privacy, and other fundamental rights.”

Detroit attorney John P. Jacobs, in his letter of support, called Sedler “the dean of constitutional lawyers in Michigan” and painted a vivid picture demonstrating how revered Sedler is by all those in the legal community.

“[J]udicial waves part and legal continents move based on his years of study [and] his nearly infallible and insightful interpretation of constitutional law,” he wrote.

Jacobs also described Sedler as a true guardian of civil liberties.

“The enemies of . . . civil liberties advance [a] counter-revolution by imperceptible gradations; nuanced changes in the law,” he said. “Professor Sedler is there to call them out.”

In his support letter, Judge Gerald Rosen said there could be no worthier recipient of this award than Sedler.

He noted that Sedler “has truly established for himself, and for all of us, a legacy of careful scholarship, passionate advocacy, professional achievement, and impeccable integrity.”

**John. W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award**

*The purpose of this award is to foster awareness of the need for involvement of the private bar in delivering legal services to the poor by giving public recognition each year to a Michigan lawyer who has made a significant pro bono contribution to this effort. The award was established in the name of John W. Cummiskey of Grand Rapids, a leading advocate and activist in making legal services available to all without regard to economic status.*

**John. W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award****Ann M. Ozog**

*John. W. Cummiskey Pro Bono Award*



“What does Yahweh require of you, but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”—Micah 6:8

Those words have served as the compass guiding Ann M. Ozog’s life.

They are why she joined a convent of teaching nuns 61 years ago. They inspired her to earn a bachelor’s degree in mathematics with a dual minor in physics and chemistry from Madonna College and later a master’s degree in mathematics from the University of Notre Dame. They guided her as a math, science, and drafting teacher and later as a principal at Muskegon Catholic Central High School and St. Patrick Catholic School in Portland. And they guided her while at St. Pat’s to resign her job in protest when she discovered that lay teachers at her school were so poorly paid they had to survive on food stamps.

She found another job—as principal of St. Stephen Area High School in Saginaw—but convinced other nuns not to work at St. Pat’s until the school agreed to pay its lay teachers better.

While living in a duplex in Saginaw, Sister Ann heard a terrible series of loud noises coming from her next-door neighbor’s home. There was a knock at her door, and two little girls begged her to help their mother, whose boyfriend was savagely beating her.

That was Sister Ann’s introduction to domestic violence, and it put her on a new path—to become a lawyer. She taught at community colleges by day and attended Thomas M. Cooley Law School by night. After passing the bar in 1983, she devoted her legal career to working with Lakeshore Legal Aid before retiring in 2003.

Since her retirement, Sister Ann has traveled more than 30,000 miles to educate over 1,200 seniors about their legal rights at more than 50 community legal education events. She has also provided free legal services to nearly 1,800 needy clients.

“Ms. Ozog is a model of devotion, caring, and professionalism for all attorneys to emulate,” wrote William Knight in Ozog’s nomination.

Sister Ann quietly deflects such praise of her work.

“I’ve done everything because it’s what I was supposed to do,” she said. “Any ordinary person in my situation would have done the same.”

## Kimberly M. Cahill Bar Leadership Award

*This award is presented to a recognized local or affinity bar association, program, or leader for excellence in promoting the ideal of professionalism or equal justice for all, or in responding to a compelling legal need within the community during the past year or on an ongoing basis. The award was established in memory of Kimberly M. Cahill, president of the State Bar of Michigan in 2006–2007.*

### OCBA Pro Bono Mentor Match Program

*Kimberly M. Cahill Bar Leadership Award*



The Oakland County Bar Association gets it. As the economic downturn made it tougher for new lawyers to find jobs and the need for legal aid increased, the OCBA designed a program that helps both groups.

The OCBA's Pro Bono Mentor Match Program brought the two groups together by providing experienced attorneys as mentors to newer, less-experienced attorneys who volunteer to take pro bono cases. The cases come from the Legal Aid and Defender Association and Lakeshore Legal Aid, both of which provide case matching, support, and legal malpractice insurance coverage on a case-by-case basis. Between the mentor's oversight and legal aid support, the mentee is well-equipped to get his or her feet wet in the courtroom while providing help for those in need.

In an article about the launch of the program, OCBA Past President Jennifer M. Grieco (pictured above) said the program is a win-win.

"Mentoring influences the profession both ethically and educationally, and certainly the clients and our community will benefit from the mentors' years of experience," she said.

In the same article, Grieco quoted then-Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly, who said the program helps make pro bono work a top priority.

"Young lawyers learn many things from their mentors, and not only the nuts and bolts of practicing law," Kelly said. "They also learn what the legal culture does—or does not—value. The Pro Bono Mentor Program can certainly help new lawyers sharpen their skills and broaden their legal experience. Just as importantly, the mentors can teach lessons about integrity and service, so that we support a culture where pro bono is a regular part of practice."

Based on feedback from mentors and mentees who have gone through the program, Justice Kelly's and Grieco's vision was accurate.

Attorney Carlos Vicent, who graduated from law school in 2010, was quoted in an article as saying the program helped him personally and professionally.

"In addition to learning and working with my mentor on the case we were assigned, I have been able to call on my mentor in a multitude of situations from what kind of motion I should file in this case to how to prepare a proper brief," Vicent said.

Former OCBA President Kurt Schnelz, who serves as a mentor, summed up the program, saying, "It warms your heart to see lawyers doing what they should be doing, which is helping other people."

## Liberty Bell Award

*This award is presented each year by local bar associations in conjunction with Law Day to honor outstanding citizens within the local community. The award recognizes outstanding service performed by a nonlawyer citizen who has given his or her time and energy to strengthen the effectiveness of the American system of freedom under law in keeping with the spirit of our Constitution.*

### Sgt. Major David Dunckel

*Liberty Bell Award*



Army National Guard Sgt. Major David Dunckel knows firsthand the struggles our soldiers face when they return from war. He knows about combat and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He knows about mistakes and second chances. He knows success. And he knows tragedy.

Sgt. Major Dunckel is a decorated veteran who has served his country in the Army, Navy, and Michigan National Guard for more than 25 years. He served as a first sergeant in Iraq, where he was responsible for bringing his men home safe. He has helped countless soldiers survive their darkest days and has seen others break.

Today, Dunckel continues to serve his most afflicted men as a mentor for the Ingham County Veteran's Court, where he and East Lansing District Judge David Jordon work with veterans who have hit rock bottom and cannot get back up on their own. There, his heroic efforts have given many struggling soldiers a second chance, and many have made it all the way back. But, as in war, he's also seen some casualties, despite everyone's best efforts.

What was perhaps his most heroic effort ended in tragedy, when veteran soldier Brad Eifert—gripped by PTSD—could not pull himself together. Two years ago, Eifert snapped, holed up in a wooded area, and dared police officers to shoot him. Instead, they subdued and arrested him. He was charged with attempted murder and jailed for 270 days before being transferred to the Veteran's Court, where Judge Jordon agreed to accept him even though he was still on active duty and charged with serious crimes.

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**Liberty Bell Award** *(Continued)*

That's when Eifert met Dunckel and his life began to change. Eifert pleaded no contest to carrying a firearm with unlawful intent and was sentenced to two years probation and ordered to undergo treatment for alcohol abuse and therapy for PTSD. At that point, Eifert and Dunckel formed a bond that, according to John J. Wojcik, general counsel for Michigan National Guard Joint Force Headquarters, "only two soldiers can form." And, with that bond, Wojcik said, "they began the healing process together."

For a year, Eifert appeared to be on his way to a miraculous recovery. He maintained his sobriety and attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, received weekly counseling for his PTSD, volunteered at a Mason VFW post, and, most importantly, was there for his wife and stepchildren.

Then it happened. On September 4, 2012, Eifert was found dead in a Lansing motel. His miraculous recovery halted just like that. There was nothing anyone, including Dunckel, could do to stop it. But Dunckel says that, although Brad's life met a sad and confusing end, the court's intervention is still a positive thing.

"I have learned in my line of work that no matter how hard you try, sometimes we can't bring every soldier home," Dunckel said. "That is how I see this. Brad is a final casualty of his battle with PTSD."

Dunckel also sees this as both a sobering experience and an opportunity to learn.

"Although we may not win every battle, the loss of one like this hardens our resolve," he said. "Brad's life, and death, are a testament to the continual struggle our veterans face, the exact reason we need courts like Judge Jordon's."

And the reason we need men like Sgt. Major Dunckel.

## Representative Assembly Awards

The Representative Assembly's Michael Franck and Unsung Hero awards will be presented on Thursday, September 20 during the Assembly's general meeting.

### Michael Franck Award

*The Michael Franck Award is given annually to an attorney who has made an outstanding contribution to the improvement of the profession.*

**Hon. James H. Fisher**  
*Michael Franck Award*



King Midas would have been proud of Hon. James H. Fisher. Everything and everyone Fisher touches is affected in a positive and meaningful way.

"I can honestly say I do not know if I would have enjoyed the success in my career had it not been for the guidance and caring of Judge Fisher," said attorney Stephanie S. Fekkes, who has worked with Fisher in many capacities.

Fekkes is not alone.

As a prosecutor, private attorney, and judge, Fisher's passion for efficiency, fairness, and respect have earned him praise from lawyers on both sides of the aisle as well as from those in need and the indigent.

Fisher has always been known as a top-notch jurist and effective leader. As Barry County Circuit Court judge from 1995 to 2011, he transformed the court into a model for the state. He implemented the first unified trial court sanctioned by the Michigan Supreme Court, combining local trial courts with different jurisdictions under one administrative umbrella to share resources and increase efficiencies. His strong fiscal oversight and supervision of the court resulted in recognition from both the Supreme Court and the State Bar for management excellence.

Perhaps more importantly, Fisher has also been known for being fair, honest, and compassionate. His charitable work with the Kiwanis Club, Citizens for Quality Education, YMCA, and the Barry County Child Abuse Prevention Council has helped hundreds of adults and children in need. And his dedication to improving Michigan's indigent defense system has already changed the legal profession for the better.

In 2010, Gov. Rick Snyder appointed Fisher as chair of the Michigan Indigent Defense Advisory Commission (IDAC), and Fisher has not disappointed.

Chief Judge Thomas P. Boyd from the 55th District Court in Mason praised Fisher's leadership.

"Judge Fisher has been an exemplary leader as chair of the IDAC," Boyd said, noting that Fisher "has fostered an environment of respect and creativity."

Clearly, when Fisher gets involved, the results are as good as gold.

## Unsung Hero Award

*The Unsung Hero Award is given annually to an attorney who has exhibited the highest standards of practice and commitment for the benefit of others.*

### Judy B. Calton

*Unsung Hero Award*



With pro se bankruptcy filings increasing more than 500 percent since 2000 and many debtors unable to afford a lawyer to handle these often complex cases, something had to be done. That's when Honigman attorney Judy B. Calton came to the rescue.

Calton, a Michigan Super Lawyer every year since 2006, showed just why she's so super when she came up with the novel idea of creating a nonprofit fund to subsidize attorneys representing debtors who could not otherwise afford a lawyer.

Calton said her motivation for starting the program was twofold: it's "heartbreaking" to see a debtor who should obtain bankruptcy status but does not because he or she can't afford a lawyer; and Detroit bankruptcy court is the second largest in the country, and unrepresented clients can bog down the process.

As a result, Calton spearheaded the heroic effort for which there was no model, meaning she had to make her vision a reality through creativity and hard work. With a big assist from Dickinson Wright attorney James A. Plemmons, she set up the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Access to Bankruptcy Court, worked with the State Bar of Michigan to add the program to the list of Access to Justice Fund partner programs, and created a board, of which she is the chair. But then came the tough part—funding.

Again, Calton got creative. After obtaining a \$10,000 grant for start-up costs, she hit the fundraising trail leading to a significant fundraiser in September 2011. Through her diligent efforts she was able to obtain many valuable items for the event's silent auction. But perhaps more impressively, she even donated approximately 50 bottles of wine from her own private collection. These donations generated nearly \$5,000 in proceeds for Access to Bankruptcy Court.

Calton's hard work is clearly paying off. As a result of the program, several individuals have been rescued from horrible financial circumstances and then some. One man, Calton said, was living in his truck and contemplating suicide because debt collectors kept hounding him even though he was destitute.

"He told his lawyer he was contemplating suicide before, but now felt like he could get a fresh start," she said.

In nominating Calton for the Unsung Hero Award, the board said: "Ms. Calton is unquestionably one of the finest bankruptcy and creditors' rights attorneys in the state of Michigan. However, it is her willingness to use her talents to improve the lives of those less fortunate than herself that makes her an unsung hero."

### Jeffrey S. Kopp

*Unsung Hero Award*



Jeffrey S. Kopp is far more than just a partner with Foley & Lardner. In fact, he is so immersed in his efforts to protect human rights, his country, and the public good that one has to wonder whether he has figured out a way to clone himself.

By day, Kopp is a highly successful commercial litigator. At every other time, he is a superhero advocate who has helped hundreds of people who otherwise may have been left in the dark.

A graduate of West Point and Notre Dame Law School, Kopp spent three years on active duty with the Army, then entered the Army Reserves and became a member of the Judge Advocate General Corps. While on assignment in Iraq, Kopp safeguarded the rights of detainees and worked with Red Cross officials to assure that captives were receiving humane treatment under the Geneva Convention. In an interview in 2009, Kopp called his work for the detainees "a conscience issue of 'What can I do to try to help this person without really being an advocate for them?'"

Foley & Lardner Managing Partner Daljit Doogal said Kopp's work for the detainees "helped erase the stain of Abu Ghraib."

Doogal also said that Kopp's advancement of the profession encompasses far more than his work in Iraq. And he's right. Following his return from Iraq, Kopp has been even more active in his pro bono work, and volunteers more than 100 hours a year. He is now JAG Corps Legal Services director, heading up a program serving reserve members and their families in Michigan and Ohio. He is also a volunteer lawyer for Project Salute, a pro bono program of the University of Detroit Mercy Law School that travels throughout Michigan offering free legal advice to low-income veterans on federal veterans' disability and pension benefits claims. In his "spare time," Kopp volunteers with the Detroit Legal Services Clinic; Arkay, Inc., which provides job opportunities and training for people with mental disabilities; and the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association, where he is currently finishing a very effective and successful term as president.

Of his pro bono philosophy, Kopp says, "When you represent someone pro bono and take out the financial interest, the entire process becomes more pure."

Spoken like a true superhero.

## Respected Advocate Awards

*The Respected Advocate Awards are presented annually by the Michigan Association for Justice and the Michigan Defense Trial Counsel to attorneys who have a "history of success in civil litigation matters, unfailing adherence to the highest standards of ethics and candor in dealing with the court and with counsel, and the respect and admiration of counsel on the opposite side of the bar."*

### Katherine Smith Kennedy

*Respected Advocate Award*



**Katherine Smith Kennedy's** practice is concentrated in employment law and labor relations. Her litigation specialties are FLSA/wage and hour claims (unpaid overtime wages), wrongful discharge discrimination, and retaliation claims. She also counsels employees regarding their employment and termination situations. In addition, she represents labor unions in arbitration and collective bargaining. Kennedy graduated from the University of Michigan with a bachelor of fine arts degree and received her JD from Southern Illinois University. She is AV-rated by Martindale-Hubbell and is listed in *Best Lawyers in America* and *Michigan Super Lawyers*.

Kennedy is a member of several labor and employment organizations and a former chair of the Grand Rapids Bar Association's Labor and Employment Section. She was elected president of the

Federal Bar Association of the Western District of Michigan for the 2010–2011 term and, as immediate past president, remains on its executive board and serves on several subcommittees.

Kennedy is also on the Steering Committee for the prestigious Hillman Trial Advocacy Program and is a member of the program's faculty. She has served two three-year terms on the State Bar of Michigan's District Character and Fitness Committee, is a member of Thomas M. Cooley Law School's Professionalism Advisory Committee, and serves on several other community boards and committees.

### Laurel F. McGiffert

*Respected Advocate Award*



**Laurel F. McGiffert** is the MAJ's choice for its 2012 Respected Advocate Award. She is a partner at Plunkett Cooney, a well-established defense firm that will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2013. McGiffert has practiced at Plunkett Cooney since 1989 concentrating in medical malpractice, employment law, and municipal law. She serves on the firm's board of directors. She obtained her undergraduate degree from Vassar College and her JD from Wayne State University. She is involved in community and charitable activities and is a consistent fundraiser for the American Heart Association.

## Michigan State Bar Foundation Access to Justice Award

*The Michigan State Bar Foundation Access to Justice Award honors individuals who have significantly advanced access to justice for the poor in Michigan. The MSBF provides leadership and grants to improve access for all to the justice system.*

### Candace A. Crowley

*Access to Justice Award*



Candace Crowley is director of external development for the State Bar of Michigan. Her duties include providing support for the Committee on Justice Initiatives, the annual Justice Initiatives Summit, and the yearly Bar Leadership Forum. She was also liaison to the Access to Justice Committee of the Judicial Crossroads Task Force. Her previous roles at the State Bar included assistant executive director for Access to Justice fundraising and managing attorney of the Justice Initiatives Division.

As executive director of Lakeshore Legal Aid, Crowley pioneered telephone hotline services, a model now used throughout the state. She has been a managing and staff attorney at Wayne County Neighborhood Legal Services, editor of *Michigan Residential Landlord-Tenant Law*, an ICLE presenter on summary proceedings and a presenter on ethical fundraising at a national conference, and trainer of legal aid advocates on basic trial skills. She has successfully represented countless legal aid clients in federal housing rights issues, public benefits, and consumer matters.

Crowley is a member of the State Planning Body, Michigan Association of Bar Executives, and a Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation. She is also a member of the Michigan Poverty Law Program Advisory Board and the education workgroup for the Solutions on Self-Help Task Force. She is a certified fundraising executive and received her BA and JD from Wayne State University.

"Candace Crowley represents the highest traditions of the legal profession through her dedication to ensuring access to justice for those in need," said Michigan State Bar Foundation President Margaret Nichols.

## SBM Litigation Section Donates Funds to Mock Trial Tournament



Photo by Tammy Allen

Jeff May (far left), director of the MCCE Mock Trial Tournament, looks on as SBM Litigation Section Secretary Steve Fox (center, left) presents a \$5,000 check to Don Fulkerson, MCCE board president, and Linda Start, MCCE executive director.

The State Bar of Michigan Litigation Section recently presented a \$5,000 check to the Michigan Center for Civic Education to support the 2012–2013 Michigan High School Mock Trial Tournament. The MCCE has conducted this event since the early 1980s. In the tournament, high school students reenact what happens in court. Students work as teams representing their schools, and take on the roles of attorneys and witnesses. There is no script, and teams must strategize to win.

The SBM Litigation Section has contributed \$32,000 to the mock trial tournament since 2003 and encourages other SBM sections to step up and serve as benefactors or volunteer their time by mentoring the students involved or judging the event. For more information about the tournament, visit <http://www.miciviced.org/mock-trial>. ■

## Cooley Launches Professional Advisory Committee

Thomas M. Cooley Law School held the first meeting of its Professionalism Advisory Committee on July 13 at the Henry Ford Museum's Lovett Hall in Dearborn. The committee will identify professional issues affecting the practice of law and higher education and create a dialogue about improving and promoting professionalism in legal education. ■



Photo courtesy of Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Left to right: Dennis Archer, former Detroit mayor and former Michigan Supreme Court justice; Edward Pappas, Dickinson Wright PLLC attorney, former State Bar of Michigan president, and current Professionalism Advisory Committee chair; Cheryl Niro, principal, Robinson Niro PC; Don LeDuc, Cooley president and dean; Melvin Wright Jr., director, North Carolina Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism and former chair of the ABA Committee on Professionalism; Amy Timmer, Cooley assistant dean of students and professionalism; and John Berry, director, Florida Bar Association Legal Division and former State Bar of Michigan executive director.