

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN SECTION ANNUAL REPORT

Bar Year: 2010-2011

Section Name: Family Law Section

Mission Statement: The Family Law section of the State Bar of Michigan provides education, information and analysis about issues of concern through meetings, seminars, our website, public service programs, and publication of a newsletter. Membership in the Section is open to all members of the State Bar of Michigan. Statements made on behalf of the Section do not necessarily reflect the views of the State Bar of Michigan.

Officers:

Officer	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Chair	Amy Yu P53273	30300 Northwestern Hwy., Ste. 114 Farmington Hills, MI 48334	(248) 932-0100	ayu@ayulaw.com
Chair-Elect	Connie Thacker 49784	Rhoades McKee PC 161 Ottawa Ave NW Ste 600 Grand Rapids, MI 49503	(616) 235-3500	cthacker@rhoadesmckee.com
Correspondence Secretary	James J. Harrington, III 23198	23875 Novi Rd Novi, MI 48375	(248) 347-9620	jjh@jjharringtonlaw.com
Recording Secretary	Rebecca Shiemke 37160	220 E. Huron St Ste 600A Ann Arbor, MI 48104	(734) 998-6100 x 127	rshiemke@lsscm.org
Treasurer	Traci Rink 45214	Oakland County FOC 230 Elizabeth Lake Rd Pontiac, MI 48341	(248) 858-1840	rinkt@oakgov.com

Council Members:	Term	Member	Term
35075 Carol F. Breitmeyer, Detroit	9/30/2011	67570 Elizabeth Kitchen-Troop, Ann Arbor	9/30/2012
Hon. Richard B. Halloran, Jr., Detroit	9/30/2011	45214 Traci L. Rink, Pontiac	9/30/2012
38819 Philip Navare, Jackson	9/30/2011	56418 Kristen L. Robinson, Troy	9/30/2012
37160 Rebecca E. Shiemke, Ann Arbor	9/30/2011	30891 Kent L. Weichmann, Ann Arbor	9/30/2012
65728 Liisa Speaker, Lansing	9/30/2011	53273 Amy A. Yu, Farmington Hills	9/30/2012
49784 Connie R. Thacker, Grand Rapids	9/30/2011		
63873 Robert Charles Treat, Jr., Woodhaven	9/30/2011	38364 Elizabeth K. Bransdorfer, Grand Rapids	9/30/2013
37150 Anne L. Argiroff, Farmington Hills	9/30/2012	23198 James J. Harrington, III., Novi	9/30/2013
12080 Neil M. Colman, Sterling Heights	9/30/2012	39425 Donna Mobila, Grand Rapids	9/30/2013

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Council Members:	Term	Member	Term
36474 Antoinette Raheem, Bloomfield Hills	9/30/2013	62697 Stacy Van Dyken, Grand Rapids	9/30/2013
60154 Erika Leuffen Salerno, Kalamazoo	9/30/2013		
61498 Gail M. Towne, Kalamazoo	9/30/2013		

Council Meeting Schedule:

Regular council meetings are held monthly with breakfast served at 9:00 a.m. with the meeting following at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Type	Date	Location
Annual Meeting and Council Meeting	September 30, 2010	Amway Grand Hotel, Grand Rapids
Council Meeting	November 6, 2010	Doubletree Hotel, Novi
Council Meeting	December 4, 2010	University Club, East Lansing
Council Meeting	January 29, 2011	Weber's Inn, Ann Arbor
Council Meeting	March 5, 2011	Meijer Gardens, Grand Rapids
Council Meeting	April 2, 2011	Doubletree Hotel, Novi
Council Meeting	May 7, 2011	University Club, East Lansing
Council Meeting	June 4, 2011	Weber's Inn, Ann Arbor

General Budget Information: The Section's primary income is member dues, but in addition it earns income from advertising in the Family Law Journal, seminars and publications. The Section expenses include publication of the Family Law Journal, meetings, and lobbying activities. The Section has operated within its budget for the last several years and maintains a fund balance.

Events and/or Seminars:

Event or Seminar Title	Date	Location
Family Court Forum	June 10, 2011	Traverse Pointe Country Club
Family Law Institute in cooperation with ICLE	November 11, 2010	Plymouth, Michigan
Mid Winter Seminar	February 2011	St. Martin
Mid Summer Seminar	July 2011	Mission Pointe, Mackinaw Island

Legislative issues: The Family Law Council reviews all legislation affecting the practice of family law. We continued to retain the lobbying services of Bill Kandler, at Cusmano, Kandler & Reed, and he effectively assisted us with advocating our policy positions. He is assisting us in seeking a sponsor for revision to the Domestic Relations Arbitration Act.

The detailed statement of position on particular legislation is available on the Section's page of State Bar web site under Advocacy. The Legislature has been focused on budget issues, leading to less domestic relations legislation. We have supported the second parent adoption bill HB 4249, and several bills to allow standing in certain circumstances for biological fathers of children born during a marriage, HB 4067, SB 256.

We will consider HB 4414 and SB 257, requiring County Clerks to investigate the citizenship of people applying for marriage licenses. We will also review HB 4672 & 4673, codifying part of the law of marital property.

The Council has adopted the recommendations of the Legislative Committee.

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Committee Activity: The Section has many active committees, most of which meet by phone conference. The dates and times of Committee meetings are available on the Section calendar viewable from the Family Law web page on the State Bar web site. Some of the significant activity this year is as follows:

Alternative Dispute Resolution: Chaired by Antoinette Raheem. Conference calls are held at 8 a.m. on the last Monday of each month. The committee (along with the Legislative Committee) analyzed the Uniform Collaborative Practice Act (UCLA), suggested modifications to it appropriate for Michigan, and engaged the services of our lobbyist to promote adoption of the UCLA by the Michigan Legislature. The committee also helped to organize, financially supported and provided judges to the Midwest Regional Mediation Competition (which included participants from 5 states and 2 countries). The committee has organized focus groups to meet this summer in nine (9) regions of the state to bring family law section members together to identify key ADR issues on which our section should focus. The Chair of this committee is representing the Section on a Supreme Court Committee convened to propose changes in the State's Mediator Ethics or Standards of Conduct. The Committee recommendations adopted support of proposed Collaborative Practice Act; support of Regional Mediation Competition. Doug Van Epps (SCAO) is the key contact to communicate with Council, the State Bar or others. Ron Bookholder and Toni Raheem hold the committee minutes and documents. The Chair can be contacted if there are issues related to the Family Law ADR that need be addressed by committee or council.

Amicus: Chaired by Liisa Speaker. This past year, the amicus committee has submitted an amicus brief *In re Beck* (child support and termination of parenting rights case) and will be submitting an amicus brief *In re Mays* (single parent doctrine) before the end of the fiscal year. The amicus committee also took over writing the case summaries for the Family Law Journal.

Court Rules: Chaired by Anne Argiroff and James Harrington, III. The Court Rules Committee met on a monthly basis through-out the 2010 – 2011 year, discussing proposed amendments to court rules and recent amendments and issuing recommendations on proposed amendments to the Family Law Council. The Committee issued numerous recommendations, which were adopted by Council, and forwarded to the Supreme Court. The committee also worked on its own proposals related to domestic relations court rules and commented on other proposals, including those involving changes to the default judgment court rule.

Domestic Violence: Chaired by Rebecca Shiemke and Donna Mobilia. The Domestic Violence Committee met several times by teleconference. The committee reviewed and commented on proposed new SCAO forms for sexual assault PPOs and generally approved of the SCAO's plan to adopt and issue new forms. The committee posted two power points on the Section website. The first is a power point on the dynamics of domestic violence developed by the committee and the second a power point from the ICLE training in July 2010 on Domestic Violence in Child Custody Cases. Finally, the committee discussed possible legislative initiatives to strengthen protections for domestic violence victims and will investigate these over the next year.

Family Court Forum: Chaired by Barbara Kelly. The committee planned the 12th annual interdisciplinary seminar to be held on June 10, 2011. This year's seminar will focus on examining joint legal custody.

Family Law Journal: Chaired by Lorne Gold and Antoinette Raheem. The Section continues to explore the possibility of making the Journal available to members electronically as an alternative to a paper copy.

Family Law Pact: Chaired by Neil M. Colman. Between October 1, 2010 and May 9, 2011 FAMILY LAW PAC has received generous contributions from attorneys of the Family Law Section totaling \$3,300. FAMILY LAW PAC continues to support legislators who are instrumental in addressing the concerns through legislation which affect the practice of family law.

Legislation: Chaired by Kent Weichmann and Barb Kelly. This very active committee meets monthly by phone conference and reviews all legislation in this area of the law. The Legislative Committee meets on the Thursday immediately preceding each Council meeting. See comments above on legislation for more detail.

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QDRO/Taxation: Chaired by Joe Cunningham and Bob Treat. The committee has provided training to various legal aid attorneys throughout the State and members of the private bar who are willing to draft QDROs pro bono, providing a much needed service to the population of clients who cannot afford these critical orders.

Technology: Chaired by Liz Sadowski. Liz Sadowski continues to manage the Family Law ListServ, a very helpful online resource on family law issues.

Section Membership: Section membership increased this year, and it remains one of the largest Sections of the Bar with approximately 2,486 members. The Section continues to try to provide services to its members to assist in their practice and to that end held member forums with local associations seeking input.

Section Bylaws: Section 3.8 Council Vacancies was added to the Family Law Section Bylaws this year. Section 3.8 states “If a Council seat becomes vacant, after reasonable notice to Section members, the vacancy for that seat shall be filled by a majority vote of Council members at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting, until the next annual meeting. At the annual Council meeting there shall be a single election for all open Council seats. The highest vote recipients, in descending order from highest to lowest, shall be elected first to the open three (3) year seats, and thereafter open two (2) year seats and thereafter the open one (1) year seats. However, a Council member who has resigned or been removed from Council may only be elected to finish out the remaining term of that Council seat, and may not be elected to any other open Council seat at that election.”

Section 4.1 was amended to the Family Law Section Bylaws this year. Section 4.1 states “[e]xcept as provided in 4.3, the officers of the Section shall be elected by the Council from among its elected members *in the following order: (1) Recording Secretary (2) Corresponding Secretary (3) Treasurer (4) Chair-person Elect. No officer shall serve in their elected position for more than one full year or longer than the annual meeting*”.

Special Honors/Lifetime Achievement Award: Justice Marilyn J. Kelly is awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award. She will be honored at the annual dinner in September 2011.

Reports must be submitted before May 31, 2011 to:

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