

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
SECTION ANNUAL REPORT**

Bar Year: 2011-2012

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 and Council Members:

Officer	Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Chair	Connie Thacker P-49784	Rhodes McKee 161 Ottawa Ave. NW, #600 Grand Rapids, MI 49503	(616) 235-3500	cthacker@rhodesmckee.com
Chair-Elect	Traci Rink P-45214	Oakland County FOC 230 Elizabeth Lake Rd., Pontiac, MI 48341	(248) 858-1840	rinkt@oakgov.com
Correspondence Secretary	Rebecca Shiemke P-37160	Michigan Poverty Law Program 220 E. Huron St., Ste. 600A, Ann Arbor, MI 48104	(734) 998-6100	rshiemke@lsscm.org
Recording Secretary	Carol Breitmeyer P-35075	Breitmeyer Cushman 607 Shelby St. Ste 550 Detroit, MI 48226	(313) 962-4200	breitmeyer@bcfamlaw.com
Treasurer	James J. Harrington, III P-23198	23875 Novi Road, Novi, MI 48375	(248) 347-9620	jjh@jjharringtonlaw.com

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Member	Term	Member	Term
45214 Traci L. Rink, Pontiac	9/30/2012	Anne Argiroff, Farmington Hills	9/30/2012
12080 Neil Colman, Sterling Heights	9/30/2012	69624 Christopher Harrington, Novi	9/30/2012
67570 Elizabeth Kitchen-Troop, Ann Arbor	9/30/2012	56418 Kristen Robinson, Troy	9/30/2012
30891 Kent Weichmann, Ann Arbor	9/30/2012	38364 Elizabeth Bransdorfer, Grand Rapids	9/30/2012
23198 James Harrington, Novi	9/30/2013	39425 Donna Mobilia, Grand Rapids	9/30/2013
36474 Antoinette Raheem , Bloomfield Hills	9/30/2013	60154 Erika Leuffen Salerno, Kalamazoo	9/30/2013
61498 Gail Towne, Kalamazoo	9/30/2013	62697 Stacy Van Dyken, Grand Rapids	9/30/2013
25664 Hon. Richard Halloran, Detroit	9/30/2014	45391 Matthew Kobliska, Farmington Hills	9/30/2014
45407 Steven Reinheimer, Bloomfield Hills	9/30/2014	20888 Ross Stancati, Kalamazoo	9/30/2014
35075 Carol Breitmeyer, Detroit	9/30/2014	37160 Rebecca Shiemke, Ann Arbor	9/30/2014

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	9/15/2011	Dearborn Hyatt Regency, Dearborn
Council Meeting	10/1/2011	Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids
Council Meeting	11/5/2011	Weber's Inn Ann Arbor
Council Meeting	12/3/2011	DoubleTree Hotel, Novi
Council Meeting	1/28/2012	University Club, Lansing
Council Meeting	3/3/2012	Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids
Council Meeting	4/14/2012	University Club, Lansing
Council Meeting	5/5/2012	DoubleTree Hotel, Novi

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.

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Events and/or Seminars:

Please attach any additional information needed regarding events and/or seminars as an addendum.

Event or Seminar Title	Date	Location
Family Court Forum	June 15, 2012	Travis Point Country Club
Family Law Institute in cooperation with ICLE	November 10 th and 11 th , 2011	St. John Conference Center, Plymouth
Mid-Winter Seminar	February 4-11, 2012	St. Martin
Mid-Summer Seminar	July 19-22, 2012	The Homestead, Glen Arbor

Legislative issues: The Family Law Council reviews all legislation affecting the practice of family law. We continued to retain the services of Bill Kandler at Cusmano, Kandler & Reed, and he effectively assisted us with advocating our policy positions. During the 2011-2012 Council Term, with Bill Kandler's expert assistance, the Family Law Council mobilized quickly and effectively to keep a highly restrictive property division law from being passed. Thanks to swift and forceful opposition to the bill, it appears that the sponsor is unlikely to reintroduce this bill that the Council was unanimously in opposing. In addition, a long-awaited revocation of paternity bill has passed both houses of the Michigan Legislature that includes significant input by the tireless efforts of the Council (Kent Weichmann in particular) and Bill Kandler.

Recommendations for next Council: To stay mobilized to quickly and effectively respond to Family Law issues raised in legislative initiatives. Further, to take the lead in bringing important issues to the legislature rather than waiting to respond to introduced legislation.

Committee Reports:

Reports must be submitted before May 31, 2012 to:

Jennifer Williams
Administrative Assistant
306 Townsend Street, Lansing MI 48933
Email: jwilliams@mail.michbar.org
Phone 517-367-6421 Fax: 517-372-1139

2012 FAMILY LAW SECTION COMMITTEE REPORTS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMITTEE

The Domestic Violence Committee worked with the Legislation Committee to draft additional language to the Uniform Child Abduction Prevention bill to offer protections to domestic violence victims who may need to flee with their children for safety purposes. We also worked with the Legislation Committee to draft a position in support of the Federal Violence Against Women Act, which was support by the full Council.

PARENT COORDINATION COMMITTEE

During the period September 1, 2011 and June 4, 2012 the Parenting Coordinator Subcommittee sought to develop various strategies to build support for the proposed legislation. The committee also began the process of seeking legislative sponsors for the legislation.

Richard Halloran, Co-chair

ANNUAL REPORT OF FAMILY LAW PAC:

As chair of this committee, I keep track of contributions received between Annual State Bar Conventions (September to September). I am happy to report that the FAMILY LAW PAC has received contributions of \$4050.00 from 39 Section members between September 16, 2011 and June 4, 2012. Unfortunately, the contributions for a number of years have been from a core group of about 20 to 25 Section members. FAMILY LAW PAC continues to support legislative candidates whose decisions greatly impact families and the practice of Family Law.

FAMILY COURT FORUM

The Family Court Forum is a conference designed to foster communication and knowledge sharing across the various professional disciplines involved in family court cases. To that end approximately 200 judges, therapists, lawyers and mediators meet for a daylong program on topics of interest to all. In the past the Forum has covered change of domicile cases, handling the high conflict divorce, the latest research on parenting plans and psychological evaluations in custody cases to name a few of the topics.

The thirteenth annual Family Court Forum was held in Ann Arbor Michigan on June 15, 2012. Once again Justice Marilyn J. Kelly opened the Forum. The topic was the intersection of family law and abuse and neglect cases. Dr. Daniel Swerdlow-Freed, Judge Paul Denefeld, attorneys Shannon Schlegel, Julie McMurtry, spoke at the Forum and participated in the panel discussion. Once again, the evaluations were excellent.

The Forum is funded by donations from several professional organizations, including the Family Law Section, and various private law firms, accountants, mediators and therapists. The success of the Forum in the past has made securing donations a relatively easy task.