



Chairperson's Report

by Brian Henry

The Real Property Law Section is comprised of great leaders who want the Section to flourish. In my final report as the Past Chairperson, I wish to share some reflections regarding our past and current leaders. They laid a foundation that has enabled us to grow and flourish because the strength of their original vision has supported many additional innovations.

The Foundation

Stephen A. Bromberg served as my Practice Group Leader when I arrived as an associate attorney with Butzel Long. Steve wholeheartedly encouraged me, Patrick Karbowski and Ron Reynolds to participate in Section activities. He approved our requests to attend seminars, conferences and networking events. Each of us increased our participation significantly and each subsequently served as a Chairperson for the Section. Steve's support of the Section was unmatched and I am very grateful for his guidance and support during the early stages of my career. Additionally, Pat and Ron were great resources for me when I served as Chair during last year.

While an associate attorney with Butzel Long, I attended several Summer and Winter Conferences, and was able to meet some of the other contributing leaders of the Section at that time: Maurice Binkow, Bill Dunn, Allen Schwartz, Gary Taback, Jack Shumate, Peter Nathan, Carl Hasselwander, Bob Wartell, Bob Berlow, Nyal Deems, Gail Anderson, Carol Ann Martinelli and Vicki Harding. They all served as role models and showed newer lawyers how to contribute as speakers, as authors and as seminar leaders.

These early leaders of the Section created a foundation and mission for the Section that is posted on our website today: to provide education and information about current real property issues through meetings, seminars, pro bono service programs, and quarterly publication of a journal. This mission supported the numerous enhancements to Section activities that were implemented by the next group of leaders.

The First Floor

When I attended the many conferences and Homeward Bound programs at the MSU Conference Center as an associate attorney, I became more familiar with other attorneys focused primarily on real estate: Kim Shierk, Jerry Pesick, Dave Charron, Mark Makower, Mark Krynski, Leslie Banas, Larry Dudek, David Pierson, Ron Reynolds, Pat Karbowski, Ronn Nadis and Larry Shoffner. Each of them were great sources of advice on topics and could be counted on if I needed a form or information about a pending deal. The Homeward Bound Program was held monthly and helped strengthen many great relationships which remain strong to this day.

These colleagues all became active in the Section and eventually assumed leadership roles. Each of them felt a responsibility to those who had laid the foundation for the Section. In their role as Chairperson, each made unique contributions consistent with the mission of the Section.

Their innovations were significant and stretch across number of areas.

The Summer Conference shifted from a large lecture format to smaller workshops and breakfast roundtables. *The Real Property Review* was modified from the "brown paper" format to the current, more pleasing "green and grey" layout. The Section introduced a monthly "eNewsletter" with shorter articles and electronic links to cases to provide more timely information. The Michigan Land Title Standards have been made available online to Section members, rather than only in print or disk format. Thus, more practitioners have easier access to tools that help them provide better service to clients.

The Council meetings changed. Originally scheduled on Saturdays in Novi, the meetings moved to Troy on Wednesdays during lunch. This scheduling change helped to avoid conflicts with family events and made it easier to invite outside speakers and guests. The focus of Council meetings shifted from a report presentation format to more discussion and problem solving. During one of those discussions, Council members decided to

formulate a Strategic Plan that has been implemented and subsequently revised and updated. This Strategic Plan has enabled the Section to constantly improve programming and implement improvements. It may be reviewed on the Section homepage.

Membership recruitment has improved. The Section has focused on making it easier for new members to meet others and grow into leadership roles. A mentorship program called the “Next Level” initiative was created so that newer members could take their involvement to the next level with the assistance of a seasoned lawyer. Facebook and Twitter are now used to promote conferences and events and other State Bar activities.

Our relationship with the State Bar of Michigan has been strengthened. The Section works more closely with the State Bar than ever before. At this year’s Summer Conference, Clay Thomas explained the new, enhanced features of “SBM Connect” on the State Bar website. Any lawyer may build out a customized profile page showing areas of concentration, published articles and other background information. In addition, the Section is now monitoring the recommendations from the 21st Century Task Force assembled by the State Bar. This Task Force examined several critical challenges facing the legal profession and a smaller workgroup is evaluating the “unbundling” of legal services. All these initiatives are more fully explained on the State Bar homepage under the “Future Law” tab at the top right corner. In the upcoming year, the Section will provide updates in the eNewsletter on these State Bar efforts.

The Next Level

To ensure a bright future, the Section continues to cultivate great ideas from newer members and continues to encourage additional involvement. The Section is currently led by a great group of lawyers who work tirelessly to fulfill our mission and who continue the tradition of innovation.

In July at the Summer Conference, Dave Nykanen began his term as Chairperson. Dave thinks “outside the box” and has many great ideas that he will explain in fu-

ture issues of the Review. One of the most exciting ideas is the creation of a “Real Estate Academy” that will provide foundational real estate education for newer practitioners. With Dave at the helm, the upcoming year will be filled with similar innovations.

Melissa Collar, Nick Scavone, Cathy Lamont and Lorri King join Dave Nykanen as your officers this year. Each of them have a demonstrated commitment to real property law and to the Section. They will join Leslee Lewis, Clay Thomas, Greg Gamalski, Melissa Papke, Meg Van Meter, Monica Labe, Leslee Lewis, Dawn Patterson, Tom Kabel and Jason Long as your Council. They need assistance with programs, articles, technology, legislation and writing amicus briefs. If you have any interest in becoming more involved with the Section, then please contact Leslee Lewis at llewis@dickinson-wright.com. Leslee leads our Membership Committee and will be happy to steer you in the right direction.

Congratulations and Thank You

I wish to again congratulate Mark Krynski who received the C. Robert Wartell Award at the Summer Conference. I was thrilled to present this award to Mark for his substantial contributions to the Section over many years. Bob Wartell was the “conscience” of the Section during its early days and was respected by all. Mark was a unanimous first ballot selection for the award which is similar to being unanimously elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Mark has served as Chairperson and has contributed to numerous programs, planning sessions, articles and social events. Bob would be very pleased to know that Mark was honored with the award.

I want to once again thank all those who made my year as Chairperson an unforgettable part of my professional life. I would like to thank in particular, Mark and Arlene Rubenstein and Karen and Bob Schwartz for all their support and assistance. I also want to thank David Pierson for his counsel when I served in various roles as an officer.

Mr. Chairperson, this concludes my report.

This issue spans Fall 2015 through Fall 2016. The *Michigan Real Property Review* is dependent upon the submission of articles from authors in order to publish a scholarly journal covering real property legal issues in Michigan. We welcome and encourage submissions of articles or suggestions of article topics.