

# STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN ANIMAL LAW SECTION NEWSLETTER

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## An Inspiring Weekend with Major Shout-Outs to Michigan: The 33rd Animal Law Conference

By Kelly Stabler

The Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) and the Lewis and Clark Law School Center for Animal Law Studies hosted its 33rd Animal Law Conference from October 17-19, 2025 in Chicago, leaving attendees more knowledgeable, hopeful, and most importantly, more inspired about the future of animal law.

This was my first time attending the conference and after working as Attorneys for Animals' Legal Intern this past summer, I was eager to meet many people who I had either met on Zoom or heard about through their work. I am in my second year at Detroit Mercy Law so I am just in the beginning phases of my career, but the conference reaffirmed my passion and excitement for animal law.

The conference began with the Student Convention on Friday, where panelists shared insight on how to begin a career in animal law, stemming from non-profit work to committing pro bono time to animal protection issues while working in private practice. In a networking focused presentation, ALDF's Chief People Officer Beth Naccarato made networking

a little less daunting for students, so that the many connections to be made that weekend were more meaningful.

The conference itself was Saturday and Sunday. One of the standout panels was "Legislating for Animals at Every Level" during which Ledy VanKavage (Senior Legislative Attorney, Best Friends Animal Society) emphasized the power attorneys have to effect change locally by meeting with municipal officials to secure pro-animal ordinances or by bringing local animal protection issues to policymakers' attention.

Our neighbors to the north face similar legislative challenges, as Camille Labchuk (Executive Director, Animal Justice) described. Despite the obstacles, her organization has achieved remarkable victories, including ending toxicity testing on animals and closing nearly every aquarium in Canada. Jaime Olin (Vice President and Legislative Chair, Texas Humane Legislation Network) added that finding common ground with legislators through shared compassion for companion animals can help build the rapport necessary to pass meaningful animal protection laws.

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### Newsletter Co-Editors

Donald R. Garlit  
(734) 451-9950  
donaldgarlit@yahoo.com

Margaret Sadoff  
(734) 730-8574  
maggiesadoff@gmail.com

## Co-Editor's Note

Welcome to the 2025 issue of the Newsletter. We are now ending our 30th year as a section. The Section had its initial official meeting at the 1995 State Bar of Michigan Annual Meeting. Our Section is the first state-wide animal law section in the United States; something that we can all take pride in. There is a short article about the history of the Section in the Newsletter.

Our lead article is about the 33rd Animal Law Conference held in Chicago recently. Kelly Stabler who is a 2L at Detroit Mercy Law School is the author. You will get an excellent view of what happened at the conference including the involvement of many law students and young attorneys. Michigan was well represented and acknowledged. Be sure to read the article for the details.

We have detailed news about the work and backgrounds of one of the co-recipients of last year's Wanda Nash Awards, Eli Massey, as well as recipient of this year's Wanda Nash Award, Kaitlyn Basel. We have an article about State Senator Dayna Polehanki who was the recipient of the 2023 Brandi Award. Yes, we are behind on reporting of awards.

Other articles include Recent Animal Law News from Michigan, the USA, and around the world, the Section's financial reports for the last two years, this year's Nominating Committee report, a report from the courtroom on the recent habeas corpus petition argument at the Michigan Court of Appeals for chimpanzees (**be sure to read words from the Declaration in support of the petition written by Dr. Jane Goodall**), and an animal rescue story involving Section members.

The appearance of the Newsletter has changed for variety and to create a more updated look. We continue to print the issue in all color including photographs and graphics. Some of our photos in these issues come from public access photos from the Smithsonian and provide a more varied look to the Newsletter.

I recently counted the pages and issues published by the Section since we were founded in 1995. Our first Newsletter was in 1997. Since that time, we have published 49 issues of the Newsletter (this issue is number 49). We have been the featured section in three issues of the SBM's Michigan Bar Journal in 2013, 2018 and this year for the July/August 2025 issue. Special thanks to authors Margaret Marshall, Angie Vega, and David Favre for making the recent Animal Law Section theme issue a success. We have published over 700 pages of content over the years!

As always, I will make my standard request, please remember that this is your newsletter, too. Helpful articles are always needed. In fact, if we can get one good main article for each issue, we can do the rest. Book reviews are needed and a possible book to review is *Pierson v. Post: the Hunt for the Fox* from 2018.

Co-Editor Maggie Sadoff and I welcome new authors and articles. Please consider writing an article that will be of interest to your fellow Section members. We only ask that you talk with us first so that we can discuss general article parameters and publication timing.

*Donald Garlit*  
Newsletter Co-Editor  
donaldgarlit@yahoo.com

The conference concluded with a thought-provoking discussion led by Matthew Liebman (Associate Professor & Chair of the Justice for Animals Program, University of San Francisco School of Law) and MSU College of Law Graduate and 2018 Wanda Nash Award Recipient Taylor Waters (Farm Animal Advocacy Staff Attorney, Vermont Law & Graduate School). Their panel explored the ethical considerations attorneys face when representing animal clients or engaging in pro bono work for advocacy organizations. The conversation provided both a refresher on the rules of professional conduct and a reflection on the responsibilities that come with pioneering work in the evolving field of animal law.

This year's conference also held special significance for Michigan attendees. Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel delivered a powerful keynote address, highlighting her office's work on animal cruelty prosecutions, her involvement in *National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) v. Ross*, and her interest in the Nonhuman Rights Project's (NhRP) habeas corpus petition on behalf of seven chimpanzees.

In *NPPC v. Ross*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld California's Proposition 12, which prohibited the sale of products from pigs whose confinement conditions did not meet California's elevated standards for animal welfare, i.e., minimum space requirements for egg-laying hens, breeding pigs, and calves. Nessel joined with other State Attorneys and Solicitors General to file an amicus brief in support of California's Proposition 12, which NPPC argued violated the Dormant Commerce Clause.

Nessel also addressed the recent Michigan Court of Appeals argument by the NhRP, who recently argued

on behalf of seven chimpanzees being held in an Upper Peninsula roadside zoo. Despite the Court of Appeals ruling against NhRP, they plan to appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court and the case will hopefully remain on Nessel's radar.

While speaking with Nessel before her keynote presentation, she emphasized the need for more prosecutors in Michigan, noting that her office recently had to work with Luce County to assist with prosecutorial duties after its prosecutor left the position.

The celebration of Michigan's influence continued as Professor David Favre (Michigan State University College of Law) received ALDF's Lifetime Achievement Award, honoring his decades of scholarship, advocacy, and his creation of the Animal Legal and Historical Web Center at MSU Law. Favre was a founding board member of the Animal Legal Defense Fund and of the ABA Animal Law Committee, consistently being involved in ALDF's expansion and valuable advances in animal law.

Ultimately, the weekend served as an energizing reminder that animal law is expanding with new voices consisting of plaintiffs, defendants, and advocates committed to advancing the protection of animals across every level of the legal system. Between the panels and conversations with other attendees, the conference was filled with inspiring discussions, incredible networking opportunities, and an abundance of delicious vegan food, providing for a joyful gathering of over 400 compassionate minds, hailing from as far as China, Bhutan, the United Kingdom, Hawaii, and Uganda among other countries and locations! 🐾







# Check for the Cat's Meow: An Animal Law Section Rescue Story

By Heather Sillcott

**Co-editor's note:** Heather Sillcott is a Section member and Wanda Nash Award Recipient. She writes about an animal rescue that involved other Section members, too. Heather rescued a kitten and saved a life. Read on as the story is positive and not sad.

*I would like to have more stories like this in the Newsletter. If we all do something for animals, great things will happen. If you have a rescue story, consider writing it up for the Newsletter.*

*About the kitten's name, there is a 4-year old daughter in Heather's sister-in-law's family and the daughter was asked to name the kitten!*

As the weather starts to get colder, cats will try to seek warm shelter. One spot cats love to hide in is your car's engine bay. This area is warm, and there are several areas for cats to crawl up and lie down.

Meet Princess Donut. Princess Donut is a kitten who made her way into the engine bay of my mother-in-law's car. On November 7th, my father-in-law heard what sounded like a cat meowing. He searched the entire house, thinking a cat had gotten in. Finally, he heard the noise coming from the garage. He searched the garage but couldn't find any cats.

He went back inside, and the meowing started up again. He went back into the garage and opened the hood of the car in case the cat was stuck and trying to get out of the engine bay. When he went back to check on the car, Princess Donut was sitting on top of the engine bay, and

she got scared, so she ran back under the car to hide. My father-in-law placed a can of fish on the ground to try to lure the cat in. My mother-in-law had to work that morning, but knew she couldn't drive her car because of Princess Donut.

My husband and I were headed Up-North, when we got the call about the kitten. I immediately started to call every rescue I could find. Unable to find help, I reached out to Section member Bee Friedlander. She was very helpful on what to do once the kitten was safely out of the engine bay. Bee noted that I should first find out who handles animal control. Then, once the kitten is out, check if the kitten has a collar. If not, check Next Door to see if there's a missing notice.

My biggest concern was the safety of the kitten and where the kitten would end up if Animal Control took her. Bee was able to put me in contact with Section member Ann Griffin of Michigan Humane. Ann noted that Waterford is within Oakland County Animal Control's service area. Although Ann was unable to predict the kitten's outcome, she said, "[I]f the kitten is healthy (and stays healthy) and is old enough to eat on her own, generally speaking, kittens are very adoptable." This was all great news to hear.

After hours of trying to get the kitten out, my sister-in-law's husband came to the rescue. He came over, removed the air filter box, and there was little Princess Donut. Thankfully, my sister-in-law and her husband were able to take Princess Donut in. Princess Donut is a healthy six week old kitten. She now has a warm home and another cat to play with.

If you are ever faced with a similar situation, remember to stay calm. The animal is probably scared and cold and just trying to keep warm. So, as a reminder, always check for the cat's meow! 🐾



Princess Donut (Photos courtesy of Heather Sillcott)



Princess Donut, who wears her heart on her back.

# Animal Law Section Turns 30: A Brief History

By Donald Garlit



It all started in 1992 when a small classified ad appeared in the Michigan Bar Journal: Attorneys interested in Animal Law, contact Wanda Nash, Marshall, Michigan. Wanda went to law school in the early 1980's with the intent of helping animals through the law. She was

ahead of her time. Her plan was to establish an interest group called Attorneys for Animals and use the group as a platform to establish an Animal Law Section in the State Bar of Michigan once it met a critical mass.

Fast forward to 1995 and the critical membership numbers were achieved. The group presented proposed bylaws in Grand Rapids at the State Bar of Michigan annual meeting. The Animal Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan was established. It was the first state-wide bar association section in the United States. Michigan led the way. Now the work could begin.

What follows is a summary of what the Section has accomplished over the years.

We have testified numerous times before committees of the Michigan State legislature and agencies. We have taken positions on many proposed bills which have all been documented on our portion of the michbar.org website. We have supported and co-signed many declarations, letters, and positions regarding animal-related issues. We have provided educational updates to state legislators as needed. The Section has filed Amicus briefs many times.

The Section has three major awards and the related ceremonies are special occasions of celebration. The Brandi Award was established in 2000 for people in the legal or legislative profession who do something remarkable for animals. Brandi was a dog who died while under someone's care and Judge Kaye Tertzag allowed her guardians' case for non-economic damages to proceed. Judge Tertzag was the first recipient and gave a memorable acceptance speech which included yo-yo tricks!

The Sadie Award was established in 2001 for people or groups not in the legal or legislative field who have done

something remarkable for animals. Sadie was a beloved family dog who died as a result of cruelty.

The Wanda Nash Award was established in 2006 to honor our Section's founder. It is awarded to a graduating law student in Michigan who demonstrates important commitment and achievement in the field of animal law. Wanda knew that young people interested in the field were needed to continue animal law work. Wanda was present for the ceremony for the first recipient of the Award, Liz Livorine of Wayne State University Law School, in 2007. Sadly, Wanda passed away in 2008. The Nash family has always been supportive of the award with family members usually attending the Award ceremony.

We conduct educational efforts for lawyers and others. The Section has held several seminars and conferences over the years with the last one being a series of virtual presentations on the issues of practicing law during a pandemic.

We have discovered that having animals at a meeting often upstages the speaker even if the animal is with the speaker. We had a memorable conference in 2012 and Roscoe the veterans court dog was given a State Bar name tag for the day. We have had presentations to younger students on Law Day, too.

We have published 49 issues of the Animal Law Section Newsletter and been the subject of three themed issues of the SBM's Michigan Bar Journal in 2013, 2018, and 2025. All of the Newsletters and our portion of the special issues are posted on the Animal Law Section pages of the michbar.org website. These total over 700 pages of content.

We now been active for 30 years. We have shown that Animal Law is an important field within the law. The jokes and comments about it that we faced at the beginning have long since ended. We are active, have a solid membership, are financially viable, and prepared for the future. Younger law students and lawyers are very interested in the field. The State Bar of Michigan is aware of our voluntary Section and supports our work.

Wanda would be extremely pleased and proud to know that the Section continues her dedication to animal law after 30 years. (Attorneys for Animals (AfA) is active after 33 years.) I am sure she would say her famous phrase to us regarding both organizations: Fantastic! 🐾

*End Note: Please consider contributing to our history. First, if you are an early member (prior to 2000) of the Section, email me at donaldgarlit@yahoo.com. I will ask SBM if they have historic records, too. Second, if you have special memories of Wanda or Section activities, please send them to me. We'd like to include this information in a future article.*



## The Nonhuman Rights Project's Ongoing Mission to Achieve Recognition of Personhood for Nonhuman Animals – 2025 Updates

By Maggie Sadoff

On January 21, 2025, the Colorado Supreme Court affirmed the El Paso County District Court's decision to dismiss a habeas corpus proceeding filed by the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP) on behalf of five African elephants - Missy, Kimba, Lucky, LouLou, and Jambo – confined at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo (on appeal in the matter of *The Nonhuman Rights Project, Inc., vs. Cheyenne Mountain Zoological Society and Bob Chastain*). The NhRP sought transfer of the elephants from a zoo to an elephant sanctuary arguing that the elephants had a right to bodily liberty and were unlawfully confined. The district court concluded that the elephants lacked standing to petition for writ of habeas corpus and, furthermore, were not unlawfully confined. In addition, the district court found that NhRP lacked "next friend status" to bring the petition on behalf of the elephants. In affirming the district court's dismissal, the Colorado Supreme Court reasoned that the statutory intent and plain meaning of the term "person" was intended to limit the reach of habeas corpus to human beings. The Colorado Supreme Court added that no U.S. court had ever recognized the legal personhood of nonhuman species.

On January 30, 2025, NhRP filed a lawsuit against the State of Utah to challenge the constitutionality of Utah House Bill 249 of 2024. The bill, which became law in May 2024, prohibits a governmental entity from granting or recognizing legal personhood for certain enumerated Nonhuman entities, including nonhuman animals. The crux of NhRP's argument is that the Utah legislature unlawfully violated the separation of powers clause by removing the judiciary's power to make decisions based on common law. In addition, NhRP argued that the law effectively eliminates causes of action for enforcement of pet trusts in that nonhuman animal trust beneficiaries are necessarily legal persons. This case was still pending as of November 2025.

You can find updates on NhRP's legislative, litigation, and educational efforts at:

<https://www.nonhumanrights.org/> 🐾

## Michigan Law Student Presented with Coveted Wanda Nash Award in 2024

By Sheila Pursglove, Legal News

**Co-editor's note:** *This article is courtesy of reporter Sheila Pursglove and the Legal News. Sheila has always been a great friend of the Section and has written many excellent articles about our members and activities. She cares about animals as do we.*

2024 Michigan Law graduate Eli Massey notes that in most American animal law cases, animals are treated and described as property or things.

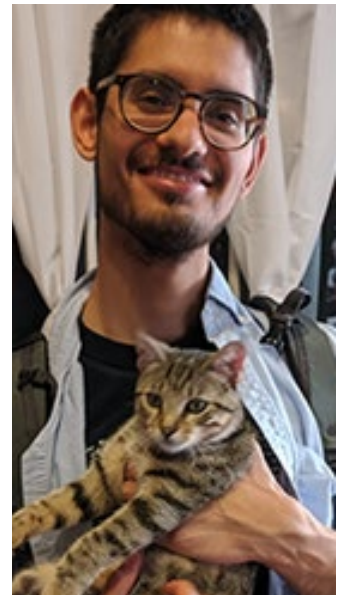


Photo courtesy of Eli Massey

"But if you asked most people about their cat or dog, they'd say, 'They're a member of the family, not property.' We all recognize animals are conscious creatures capable of experiencing pleasure and pain," Massey says. "I think the law should recognize that too and not treat animals as property."

In order to bring a lawsuit, he adds, you need standing, meaning a court recognizes you are a proper party to file a lawsuit. Massey cites the 1972 *Sierra Club v. Morton* case, in which Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas wrote a famous dissent raising the possibility lawsuits can be filed on behalf of nature.

"At first blush, this suggestion seems silly. But corporations are considered legal persons, with constitutional and other rights, and can file lawsuits," Massey says. "Ships are said to have legal personhood. Infants, who lack the cognitive capacity to consent to or understand legal proceedings can have lawsuits filed on their behalf. Even decedents can have lawsuits brought on their behalf, or on behalf of their estates."

"Animal standing doesn't necessarily have to operate in the exact same way as a human standing. But when you survey the full spectrum of legal personhood and standing, it seems way less outrageous that animals should be entitled to legal protections and even rights vindicated throughout lawsuits brought on their behalf."



Nominated by Michigan Law Professor Nicolas Cornell, Massey is one of two recipients of the annual Wanda A. Nash Award, named after the founder of the State Bar of Michigan's Animal Law Section and recognizing a 3L law student at a Michigan law school for substantial contributions to animal law. The co-recipient is Lauren Duguid from Michigan State University College of Law.

"I'm extremely honored and grateful to the State Bar of Michigan Animal Law Section for this recognition," Massey says. "By all accounts, Wanda Nash was an incredibly warm and loving person who was very passionate about animal rights. Furthermore, she was a visionary in pursuing animal law so many years ago and chairing the first animal law section of a state bar organization in the country."

Prior to law school, Massey was an activist and a journalist, earning an undergrad degree in English from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wis. His work has been published in *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Chicago Reader*, *Jacobin*, *Current Affairs*, *the Progressive*, *Mondoweiss*, *In These Times*, and elsewhere. He was inspired to study law after reading autobiographies of several radical lawyers from the 1960s.

"They showed me the legal system could be used to support the causes and movements I care about," he says.

Massey says he has thoroughly enjoyed his three years at Michigan Law in Ann Arbor.

"There are a lot of things I've really loved—the stellar professors, many of whom are leading experts in their respective areas of law, the intellectual rigor, and the collegial environment," he says. "And I've especially enjoyed having the opportunity to delve deeply into the subject matter I'm most passionate about including animal law, criminal procedure, Indian law, prison law, civil liberties, and civil rights."

According to Massey, animal liberation is one of the defining issues of our time.

"Billions of animals are killed each year for food in the United States alone, frequently in the most cruel and depraved ways you can imagine. If the scale of that suffering wasn't already difficult enough to wrap your brain around, many more animals are tortured and subjected to a dizzying variety of — often — legalized barbarism in labs, farms, and elsewhere," he says.

"In the face of this system of mass industrial slaughter, built on the suffering and death of billions of creatures, most people go about their lives as if there weren't unfathomable atrocities unfolding every day. It can

sometimes make me feel like I'm crazy. But there are many instances of societies perpetrating horrible crimes then years later concluding that what they did was wrong.

"I think my passion for animal liberation is rooted in this fundamental sense that what we do to animals is indefensible and morally wrong, and, at the same time, most of the world is either indifferent to animal suffering or believes it's justifiable."

Massey also says that generally there tends to be too much emphasis on individual consumptive habits and not enough on the systems, companies, farms, and slaughterhouses.

"The decisions of individual consumers obviously matter—I wouldn't be a vegan if I thought they didn't—but I try to spend way more time thinking strategically about how the animal liberation movement can most effectively challenge animal agriculture, for example," he says.

He notes the dearth of federal laws regulating the living conditions of farmed animals, adding that the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), for example—which based on the name sounds like a broad, general law that covers all animals—doesn't apply to farmed animals that constitute approximately 98 percent of the animals that humans interact with in the United States. The AWA applies to less than 2 percent of animals in the United States, and also exempts rats, birds, and mice, that make up 99 percent of animals used in research.

"The ridiculously named Humane Methods of Slaughter Act exempts birds or poultry, which make up over 90 percent of land animals farmed in the United States. The modest 28-Hour Law requires that when animals are being transported across state lines for more than 28 hours, they need to be given a few hours for rest, water, and food. But it also exempts birds and contains other significant exemptions," he says.

"Congress has practically given farms and slaughterhouses carte blanche to treat animals in whatever grisly and gruesome way they want," he adds. "This means it's perfectly legal to keep animals in gestation crates so small they cannot move, castrate them while they're unanesthetized, electrocute them while they're dunked into vats of water, and even kill them in gas chambers.

"While Congress has effectively abdicated its role in regulating the living conditions of farmed animals, it has simultaneously passed laws like the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, which brands animal activists as terrorists for interfering with animal enterprises. That's what happened, for example, to a guy who freed some minks.

"States similarly often exempt farmed animals from coverage



under their animal cruelty statutes and have attempted to pass Agricultural-Gag—Ag-Gag—laws that criminalize the exposure of conditions to the public, though those laws have often been found to violate the First Amendment. In short, we need Congress to step up, do its job, and regulate this industry that has for far too long gotten away with murder.”

Last summer, Massey interned as a law clerk at the Civil Liberties Defense Center in Eugene, Ore., drawn to working there because of its long history of representing animal liberation and climate justice activists, and in particular their work in support of Green Scare defendants where the U.S. government brought legal action against the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), and others.

“I loved getting to work on cases for George Floyd protesters, Atlanta Forest Defenders, Food Not Bombs, pro-choice activists, antifascists, and others,” he says. “Every morning, I woke up excited to get to work.”

Massey has been active for years with Food Not Bombs, an organization that cooks vegan food and serves it to the public for free.

“The idea behind Food Not Bombs is that it makes no sense that in the wealthiest country in the history of the world, we still have people going hungry,” he says. “This country always seems to have money for war and the military but can’t ensure people have three nutritious meals a day. Food Not Bombs is about creating a society where members of the community can come together to share a cruelty-free meal.”

On a related note, he believes it is important that animal liberation activists not get siloed, that building cross-movement solidarity is critical.

“Organizing is not about preaching to the choir—it’s about reaching and persuading people who don’t already agree with us,” he says. “An effective way to

start that process is by building goodwill with people working on other causes through solidarity.”

A Chicago native who enjoys music, movies, travel, improving his Arabic, eating good vegan food, weightlifting, and going for runs, Massey is heading to the Big Apple this fall.

“I’m thrilled to be starting my career as a public defender in New York City,” he says. “One day I would love to represent activists in criminal defense and civil rights cases.”

Massey grew up with cats, and hopes to adopt or foster a companion animal once he is a bit more settled post-law school.

“My sister has a pit bull, Roxy, whom I adore, and she refers to me as Ammo Eli—Arabic for uncle—whenever she’s discussing me with Roxy, so I still have companion animals in my life that I love even though none are living with me at the moment.”

Vegetarian at the age of 12, Massey went vegan as an adult. At the Wanda Nash Award ceremony in April, his twin sister shared how she was inspired by her brother to become a vegetarian.

“A few years after she joined me, my mom joined us,” Massey says. “It may seem obvious in retrospect, but I don’t think I realized I’d inspired them and it was cool to hear I had had that effect.

“I understand it’s not always easy to make the transition, but any steps people can take in reducing their consumption of animal products is a shift in the right direction, even if going completely vegetarian or vegan feels initially too daunting.” 🐾



*Representatives from the State Bar of Michigan presented the 2024 Wanda Nash Award to 3L Eli Massey during a recent ceremony at the Law School. Pictured from left to right: Ravil Ashirov (3L), Stijn van Osch (‘12), Omar Seifeldin (3L), Bee Friedlander (founding member of the State Bar of Michigan Animal Law Section), Eli Massey (3L), Don Garlit (founding member of the State Bar of Michigan Animal Law Section), Professor Nicolas Cornell, Luke Beyer (3L), and Hannah Lefton (3L). (Courtesy of photographer Dustin Johnston and Michigan Law School.)*



# Michigan Chimpanzee Case Could Bring Fundamental Change to Animals' Legal Status

By Kelly Stabler and Bee Friedlander

**Co-editor's note:** Noted primatologist and United Nations Messenger of Peace Jane Goodall passed away in October 2025. Her work was known and respected throughout the world. Be sure to read words from her Declaration in support of the habeas corpus petition for the chimpanzees.

## *NhRP v. DeYoung Family Zoo*, Court of Appeals Case No. 369247

An oral argument before the Michigan Court of Appeals in mid-October drew Animal Law Section members, law school students and professors, and animal advocates to Lansing. Others joined via the court's livestream.

The Nonhuman Rights Project ("NhRP") seeks to use the common law writ of habeas corpus to challenge the confinement of Nonhuman animals. *NhRP v DeYoung* is the first case the organization has filed in Michigan.

In late 2023, NhRP filed a Complaint for Writ of Habeas Corpus against the privately owned De Young Family Zoo in the Upper Peninsula seeking release of seven chimpanzees and their transfer to an accredited sanctuary. Judge Mary B. Bargland, 41st Circuit Court in Menominee County summarily dismissed the case. NhRP appealed.

The three appellate judges were interested, engaged with the arguments, took the case seriously but expressed concerns. Ultimately, the court refused to extend the law to nonhuman animals, noting that in common law "the category of 'persons' was confined to human beings, and the law separately addressed the status of animals."

The Animal Law Section has played a role in the case from the beginning. Ginny Mikita, long-time Section member, was local council. The Section, along with Attorneys for Animals and MSU College of Law Professor David Favre and Fellow Angie Vega, filed an amicus curie brief. Barbara Goldman, Section founding member and appellate attorney, drafted the brief.

The NhRP's Complaint details the remarkable capabilities of chimpanzees. "Chimpanzees have complex physical, psychological, and social needs, and the failure to meet those needs in captivity is physically and psychologically harmful ... The DeYoung Family Zoo is a completely

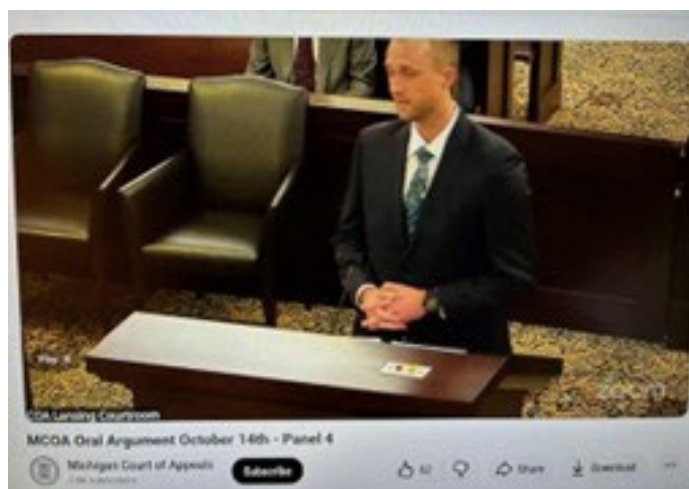


MCOA Oral Argument October 14th - Panel 4

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Judges Matthew Ackerman, Brock Swartzle (Presiding Judge), and Christopher Trebilcock



Jake Davis, NhRP attorney

Michigan Court of Appeals, Lansing, MI, Oct. 14, 2025 (screenshot from COA YouTube Channel, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6khy8\\_Hi9VA&t=146s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6khy8_Hi9VA&t=146s))

unacceptable place for chimpanzees because it cannot meet their complex needs and prevents them from exercising their autonomy."<sup>1</sup>

## The late Dr. Jane Goodall submitted a declaration in support of the Complaint:

During this period of continuous study my colleagues and I have learned much of enormous significance about chimpanzee behavior, their personalities, intelligence and emotions. Theirs is a highly complex society. Their life in the wild provides them with a continually changing environment, both socially and physically, and they are confronted by many challenges, including finding food and maintaining or improving their position in their community. There



is ample proof from studies of chimpanzee behavior, both in the wild and in captivity, that chimpanzees are autonomous beings with a highly complex cognitive nature, which can be illustrated by their ability to perform complex tasks.<sup>2</sup>

On appeal, NhRP senior attorney Jake Davis asked the court to order that the writ be issued. Then a hearing could be scheduled to test whether Nonhuman animals are “persons” entitled to habeas relief.

NhRP argues that they are “persons” under the law for purposes of common law habeas corpus. NhRP does not argue that chimpanzees should have the same rights as humans, but rather that they should have the basic right not to be unlawfully confined.

NhRP points to ample scientific evidence showing chimpanzees’ self-awareness, emotional depth, and autonomy—which is defined as “self-determined behavior that is based on freedom of choice.” They argue that the law must evolve to reflect what science has already confirmed and that common law habeas corpus is flexible and thus the appropriate remedy upon which to grant relief in this case.

Attorney Davis began his argument with a story about Tommy, the chimpanzee who was at the center of NhRP’s first habeas case in 2013. Tommy disappeared and efforts to find him led to the DeYoung Zoo. But USDA records reveal that Tommy died there in 2022.

NhRP plans an appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court. Although the Michigan Court of Appeals failed to recognize these chimpanzees as “persons”, the case has pushed the conversation about animal rights further into mainstream legal and public discourse. Their efforts are propelled by the memory of Tommy, the work of Jane Goodall, and the animals who remain in captivity.

The Animal Law Section will continue to offer its support. 🐾

## Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.nonhumanrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Michigan-Habeas-Corpus-Complaint-FINAL-12.4.pdf> at page 3
- 2 <https://bridgemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Scientific-declarations-filed-December-2023.pdf>, page 5, paragraphs 15, 16



# A Voice for the Voiceless: Student Receives Award for Work in Animal Law for 2025

By Sheila Pursglove, Legal News

**Co-editor's note:** This article is courtesy of reporter Sheila Pursglove and the Legal News. Sheila has always been a great friend of the Section and has written many excellent articles about our members and activities. She cares about animals as do we.



Kaitlyn Basel (center) is pictured at the award ceremony with (left to right) her boyfriend Charlie, her mother Amy, her brother Tyler, and her father Scott.

Animals have been a passion for Kaitlyn Basel since childhood.

“As a child, I would ask to pet every dog I saw pass by,” she says. “I would beg my parents to take me to the zoo or the library to check out books with information about animals.”

In high school, Basel volunteered at the Potter Park Zoo in Lansing; and became involved in the fight for environmental preservation and protection of endangered species. During undergrad, she was on a research team that spent a year observing the behavioral development of juvenile elephants at the Indianapolis Zoo; the research was published and presented as part of an undergraduate research conference.

So, it’s no surprise that Basel chose Michigan State for law school, because of the Animal Law program—and where she is the recipient of this year’s Wanda A. Nash Award from the State Bar of Michigan Animal Law Section, and named after the founder of the section. The annual award, that Basel received on April 11, recognizes a 3L law student at a Michigan law school for substantial contributions to animal law.

“Not many law schools have classes, let alone publications, dedicated to Animal Law, and I wanted the opportunity to study that specific field,” says Basel, who was nominated

by Professor David Favre and Animal Law Fellow Angie Vega. “I’ve been able to take classes in both Animal and Wildlife Law, as well as be part of student organizations that allow me to explore that interest.”

A graduate of Lansing Catholic High School, with an undergrad degree in criminology from Butler University, Basel has dreamed of entering the legal field for as long as she can remember.

“My father and grandfather were both lawyers, and I never really considered any other career paths,” she says. “I remember watching old episodes of ‘Law & Order’ with my mom, and I always wanted to be like the prosecutors in that show. They seemed so dedicated and passionate about their jobs, and fought so hard to get justice for crime victims. I wanted to be just like them, fighting to make the world a safer place.”

As she grew up, Basel says several of her personal experiences led to a growing passion for criminal justice. As young child, she became a victim of sexual assault at the hands of Larry Nassar, the former MSU sports-medicine and USA Gymnastics doctor who sexually abused girls and young women for decades under the guise of medical treatment.

“It was almost a decade before he was brought to justice,” says Basel, a dancer who was first abused by Nassar at the age of 12. “I gave my victim impact statement at his sentencing trial, along with dozens of other survivors, and publicly advocated for change at Michigan State.”

She was invited to the ESPY awards in 2018 to receive the Arthur Ashe Courage Award with her fellow survivors; and became involved of the Army of Survivors, a nonprofit started by fellow survivors of Nassar, dedicated to ending sexual violence in sports.

“Finding strength and courage in my fellow survivors, I was inspired to do whatever I could to make sure what happened to me wouldn’t happen to anyone else,” she says. “I’d always wanted to go to law school, but after this experience I had a more specific goal in mind—becoming a prosecutor of cases involving special victims and advocating for victim’s rights.”

Nassar’s abuse led Basel to suffer Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and around the time she began law school, she looked into getting a service dog to help with her PTSD. She worked with a service dog trainer to figure out the best type of dog for her needs, and to develop a training plan.

In the spring of her 1L year, Basel brought home Major, a black Labrador Retriever, and began training her to be her service dog. Two years later, Major has been trained to perform a variety of tasks to assist Basel with the management of her PTSD.

When Basel began law school, she combined her passion for animals with her passion for the law. As part of a research class, she wrote a paper about the legal protections around service dogs, and the difference between service dogs and other types of assistance animals in the eyes of the law. Basel and Major share their lives with Chevy, a pitbull-mix Basel adopted at 18 when she moved out of her parents’ house.

“I’ve had him for eight years now, and he’s the reason I’m such a strong advocate against pitbull discrimination and misinformation,” she says.

During Basel’s 2L year, she learned Grosse Pointe enacted a city-wide ban on pitbulls.

“Since this issue was incredibly close to my heart, as part of my Animal Law class with Professor David Favre, I wrote a research paper about the overall effectiveness of breed-specific bans, their pitfalls and inadequacies, and proposed alternative ways to use legislation to prevent instances of dog-related violence,” she says. “Grosse Pointe has since revoked their pitbull ban, and the Michigan House of Representatives is currently considering a bill that would prevent any cities or municipalities from imposing breed-specific legislation.”

Basel has enjoyed serving as vice president of the Student



*MSU Law student Kaitlyn Basel, recipient of this year’s Wanda Nash Award for animal law, with her canine companions, a pitbull named Chevy and her service dog Major, a black Labrador Retriever.*





Animal Legal Defense Fund, as a way to continue advocating for animals while also getting involved with other students at the law school. The organization hosted several informational events to keep MSU law students educated about Animal Law issues, including Speak Out for Farm Animals month, a Halloween event for Happy Feet Pet Rescue, and a Companion Animal Estate Planning event; and raised money for the Capital Area Humane Society through fundraisers, including a Valentine's Day Teddy Bear-Grams.

"SALDF is a community of hardworking and passionate people, who care deeply about animal law issues and animal welfare," she says. "I want to be able to continue advocating for animal welfare my entire career, and being a part of SALDF has helped me realize there are many different ways to do that with my law degree."

Basel, who received a Dean's Fellowship in Leadership, has enjoyed several wonderful experiences doing legal internships. Her 1L summer, she worked in the Ionia County Prosecutor's Office, and after her 2L year was selected to participate in PAAM's summer internship program.

"These internships were great ways for me to get experience working as a prosecutor and gain an understanding of the way the court system works from the inside," she says. "I also had the opportunity to act as the lead prosecutor in jury trials in both District and Circuit Court."

As secretary of the Public Interest Society, she enjoyed working with other students interested in working in the

public sector, and for the opportunity to meet attorneys working in public interest jobs.

"I went to law school so I could make a difference for the people in my community, and I feel an understanding and passion for public service is an important part of that," she says.

After graduation, Basel's goal is to begin a career in prosecution, working with cases involving sexual abuse and special victims—and one day to become a trial court judge. She also plans to continue advocating for animal welfare and the protection of animal rights.

"I intend to remain a dedicated supporter and volunteer at local animal shelters and humane societies, and hope that I'll be able to use my law degree to make the world a better place for all living creatures," she says.

Basel has lived in East Lansing for most of her life, with her parents, Amy and Scott, and her younger brother, Tyler. The family originally hails from Petoskey, and still spends a significant amount of time up there. In her free time, Basel likes to go out on the lake, hike with her dogs, and read outside.

But Basel is now making the Motor City her home, having bought a house there with her partner.

"We're very excited to begin the next chapter of our lives there," she says. 🐾

(Photos courtesy of Kaitlyn Basel)



*During undergrad, Kaitlyn Basel (left) and another student researcher worked at the elephant exhibit in the Indianapolis Zoo with Sophi.*

## Senator Dayna Polehanki, Michigan Senate, Received the Section's 2023 Brandi Award

By Bee Friedlander

The Animal Law Section recognized Senator Polehanki for the stand she's taken for animals both in the legislature and in the community. Senator Polehanki took a lead to advocate for dogs trapped in laboratories. Not afraid to be on the frontlines, she stood in the cold and protested the cruel treatment of dogs in labs at Wayne State University. In the summer of 2022, roughly 4,000 beagles were removed from a Virginia breeding facility due to multiple Animal Welfare Act violations. These dogs were placed in shelters across the United States, including some at the Humane Society of Huron Valley (HSHV). When the dogs arrived at HSHV, Senator Polehanki was there to greet the animals and to raise awareness about the cruelty involved in breeding animals for testing.

As part of the Brandi Award, the Section makes a \$250 donation to a Michigan-based animal charity designated by the award recipient. Senator Polehanki has designated Panda Paws Rescue (<https://pandapawsrescue.org/>) in Traverse City to receive this donation. The organization's goal is to end the homelessness, abuse and neglect of all animals, and to nurture and find loving forever homes for them. It was founded by Amanda Giese, who starred in Animal Planet's *Amanda to the Rescue* in 2018-19.

The Brandi Award was established by the Animal Law Section in 2000. It was first awarded to the Hon. Kaye Tertzag, Wayne County Circuit Court, who ruled in 1997 that a case seeking non-economic damages for the death of Brandi, a companion dog, should proceed. The award recognizes a person in the legal or legislative profession whose work has accomplished significant benefits for animals. It has been awarded to prosecutors, judges, attorneys and legislators. 🐾



State Senator Polehanki with with Brandi Award certificate and Section members



State Senator Polehanki at Brandi Award ceremony with special guest





## Recent Animal Law News

By Donald Garlit

**Co-editor's note:** The news below includes brief summaries of important and newsworthy items of interest. We chose these as being of most interest to our members. Many items are now appearing in the legal, national, and world press and not all can be included.

You will see that some items cover situations in countries other than the United States. Improving conditions for animals is achieving worldwide interest.

Normally we only cover cases that have been fully adjudicated or legislation that has been signed into law. We are not always following those approaches in all updates as there are several situations in the early stages that present interesting legal or legislative approaches that may be discussed below.

Additionally, we will continue to discuss recent cases which have involved dog attacks and animal cruelty which have resulted in serious charges against the owner/guardian. It appears that prosecutors are taking these situations much more seriously especially when there is a past pattern of dog aggression or animal cruelty.

### Greyhound Racing Continues to Decline in US – Is the End Near?

We have reported over the years about the decline in greyhound racing in the United States (last report was Fall 2023, Issue 47). The decline is attributable to several factors including legislation, declining public interest, media information about dog deaths and injuries while training and racing, poor vet care and related negative publicity, media attention to substandard food fed to dogs, COVID pandemic resulting in lower track attendance, etc.

Some information about the state of racing follows.

Greyhound racing has been outlawed in 44 states. While legal in six states, only West Virginia has the last 2 operating tracks in the United States.



The biggest single decline occurred after Florida voters passed a constitutional referendum in 2018 banning greyhound racing after 2020. At least 10+ tracks closed as a result of the referendum, some even well before the end of 2020.

The group Grey2K states 47 dog tracks have stopped racing events since 2000.

Sources are Grey2K at: [https://files.grey2kusa.org/pdf/GREY2K\\_USA\\_National\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://files.grey2kusa.org/pdf/GREY2K_USA_National_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

and

Wikipedia at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greyhound\\_racing\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greyhound_racing_in_the_United_States)

### Dog Attack Victim Settles for \$21.5 Million Primarily from King County, Washington

Gyongyi Bazso Maas, her husband Mike, and their children settled with King County, Washington in August 2025 after a dog attack in 2022 left her severely injured. She was jogging when two dogs ran out of a house and attacked her. She was left with severe injuries and broken bones.

The dog owners were apparently squatters. Neighbors had made 75 calls to various King County departments complaining of and reporting the dangerous situation with the dogs.

This is the largest settlement and/or judgment ever against a US city or county for a dog attack. In fact, the settlement is about 310 times the average 2024 dog attack payout of about \$69,000 according to the Insurance Information Center.

Washington State has joint and liability. The collectability from the other parties may be limited especially the squatters. Nonetheless, the squatters could still be criminally charged.

Source is Animals 24-7 at: <https://www.animals24-7.org/2025/08/29/21-5-million-settlement-from-negligent-county-to-jogger-mauled-by-pit-bull/>

### Animal “Crush” Videos Criminalized in Oregon

Governor Tina Kotek signed HB 4145 into law in March 2024 with effective date of January 1, 2025. The law prohibits “the visual recording of animals being intentionally injured or killed. The new law also prohibits people from encouraging the torture or killing of animals on camera. Sharing, copying, or funding animal crush videos is now a misdemeanor in Oregon thanks to the new law.”



There is a similar law at the Federal level. The impetus for the Oregon law was a guilty plea to making “crush” videos by an Oregon man in Federal court. Oregon prosecutors were unable to charge him as no such law existed in Oregon.

Source is Lady Freethinker at: <https://ladyfreethinker.org/petition-update-victory-animal-torture-videos-outlawed-in-oregon/>

### **Washington State Becomes 12<sup>th</sup> State to Enact a Ban on Large Animals in Circuses and Other Traveling Shows**

The ban covers elephants, big cats, nonhuman primates, and bears. The bill was signed by Governor Bob Ferguson in April 2025 and took effect in late July. Nearly 200 US municipalities have similar bans.

These types of bans are being enacted around the world. They are especially prevalent in Central and South America.

We have reported on these laws and changes to the circus over the years. Of course, one of the most newsworthy of circus changes was the elimination of animal acts and the beginning of a new national tour by Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus (AKA “The Greatest Show on Earth”) in 2023.

The source below goes into detail about the issues and problems of wild animals in traveling shows and exhibitions.

Source is Humane World for Animals at: <https://www.humaneworld.org/en/blog/washington-restricts-wild-animals-circuses-traveling-shows>

### **Brazil Bans Use of Animals for Cosmetic Testing**

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva approved on July 30, 2025 a law banning the use of vertebrate animals in laboratory tests for the development of personal care products, cosmetics, and perfumes. The law has a two-year phase-in period.

President da Silva described the legislation as a law that “protects animal sovereignty.”

This makes Brazil one of 45 countries to have such a ban. Twelve US states have such a ban.

What is not covered is somewhat murky from the articles on the legislation. The law is prospective. Cosmetics previously tested on animals can still be sold although not allowed the cruelty-free designation. Cosmetics tested on animals as a requirement in other countries can still be sold in Brazil. What is clear is that cosmetic testing on animals will soon end in Brazil.

Sources are Humane World for Animals at: <https://www.humaneworld.org/en/blog/brazil-bans-sale-animal-tested-cosmetics>

and

agenciaBrasil at: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/politica/noticia/2025-07/brazil-bans-use-animals-cosmetic-testing>

and

Law firm Souto Correa at: <https://www.soutocorrea.com.br/en/client-alerts/new-law-no-15183-2025-banning-animal-testing-for-cosmetics-perfumes-and-personal-care-products/>

### **Mexico City Again Bans Traditional Bullfights**

Mexico City Judge Jonathan Bass banned bullfights in the city in June 2022 stating that bullfights violated the rights of residents to a “healthy environment free from violence.” However the decision was overturned without comment by the Mexican Supreme Court of Justice in December 2023.

Now the Congress of Mexico City voted in March 2025 to end violent bullfights in the city. A new style of bullfights will be allowed which is bloodless with the matadors only using capes to get the bulls to charge them.

The ban is still a compromise as many wanted a total ban. Those who want a total ban nevertheless see this as an important step to ending bullfighting by reducing interest. After all, what many fans want is to see violence and that will no longer occur. Those in favor of the old style cited job and revenue losses with the end of violent bullfighting which are probably overstated and is a common argument against change by those opposed to the change. These issues will be resolved over time.

The importance of the ban in Mexico City has many aspects. Mexico City is the largest city by population in North America. The Plaza de Toros Mexico has the largest seating capacity of any bullfighting ring in the world. Mexico City is a symbol of Mexico and is known around the world.





The end of violent bullfighting in Mexico's capital could be an important step to ending bullfighting elsewhere. Bullfighting is banned in most South American countries. Colombia banned bullfighting in mid-2024 with a transition period lasting until 2027.

Sources are CBS News at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mexico-city-ban-violent-bullfighting-back-bloodless-bullfights/>

and

Animals 24-7 at: <https://www.animals24-7.org/2025/03/23/mexico-city-again-bans-spanish-style-bullfights-now-by-public-demand/>

and

Our World in Data at: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/bullfighting-ban>

### **Shelter Worker in Texas Receives Consecutive Sentences Totaling 40 Years for Killing Kittens at Shelter**

Gabriel Caswell was a shelter worker at the Weatherford Parker County Animal Shelter. Parker County is about 25 miles west of Fort Worth. The shelter began to have a large number of kitten deaths after he began working there – some 80 in total which included 51 in June 2023. A video review was conducted after another worker saw him abusing kittens.

Caswell was arrested in 2023 and convicted of 3 counts of animal cruelty in 2024 resulting in a total 30-year sentence. He plead guilty in early 2025 to another count of animal cruelty from the deaths of another 12 kittens at the shelter. All sentences are to be served consecutively. He waived an appeal as part of his plea agreement.

He told a police detective that he took out his frustrations on the kittens. He said his frustrations were a result of an addiction to pornography and an infant who would not sleep.

Source is Local 12 News (Cincinnati) at: <https://local12.com/news/nation-world/abusing-killing-kittens-animal-shelter-40-years-prison-23-year-old-cats-pets-charged-worker-volunteer-addiction-infant-surveillance-footage-video-sleep-employee-innocent>

and

World Animal News at: <https://worldanimalnews.com/2025/04/02/texas-shelter-worker-sentenced-to-40-years-in-prison-for-brutally-killing-kittens/>

### **A Bit of History: Some of the World's Earliest Animal Welfare and Rights Edicts and Laws Originated in the Ottoman Empire in the 1500's**

Sultan Murad III issued an Imperial Edict in the late 1500's stating: "Just as we value human life, we must extend that same respect and care to animals, be it cats, dogs, birds, or any other creature." He also issued another Imperial Edict prohibiting loads or tasks for animals that were beyond their strength. This made immense sense in a world still dependent on animals for much work.

Earlier and subsequent Sultans issued Imperial Edicts or laws covering other animal situations. Sultan Suleiman issued a decree in 1550 to make sure that animals working on the Suleymanive Mosque were not to be overloaded. When army horses grew old funds were allocated for a retirement farm for them beginning in 1654.

There was a tradition in the empire of building bird houses on the sides of government buildings. These were decreed by Sultan Mehmed II in the 1400's. These bird houses still exist today.

Most of these actions would be seen as relatively modest by us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, they give a good idea what the various Sultans and their advisors were thinking at the time. One has to conclude that they were well ahead of their time and other parts of the world.

Note that the articles listed below are not comprehensive. They provide many examples of animal welfare and rights edits and laws in the Ottoman Empire. Note the article from *Turkiye Today* mentions the decree of Sultan Murad III as occurring in the 1600's, it actually was issued in the late 1500's.

Source is *Turkiye Today* at: <https://www.turkiyetoday.com/culture/did-you-know-ottoman-empire-issued-worlds-first-animal-rights-declaration-44199/>

and

Islamic Bridge at: <https://islamicbridge.com/2021/10/animal-rights-protection-in-the-ottoman-empire/>

and

MDPI (worldwide publisher of open-access academic journals) at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/11/10/538> 🐾

# Animal Law Section Newsletter: Publishing Approach and New Articles

By Donald Garlit

## Co-editor's note:

Please read this article  
as we are always  
looking for new  
authors and articles.

We are all used to the 24x7 news cycle and ubiquity of social media. The Animal Law Section Newsletter's approach is different. In this co-editor's note, we will explain our approach.

The Animal Law Section Newsletter is a mix of contemporaneous news, recounting of Section events, articles that memorialize important events that may not be covered elsewhere, obituaries (sometimes), and articles that may be of practical value to Section members as well as others including non-member attorneys and members of the public.

Many of the articles are thought-starters that show what is being done or might be done to help animals. Not all of the articles are about big issues. Some just recount how someone helped a single animal. **Much can be accomplished if we all do something to help animals.**

The Newsletter is more than just stories of recent events as it publishes articles with long-term impact, too. In many ways, it is a recounting of the Animal Law movement through the years in Michigan, the United States, and around the world.

## Typical Topics

I am often asked what kind of articles that we want to publish. I usually tell the questioner we are looking for well-written articles that 1) show or propose new trends in the law, 2) are of interest to judges and prosecutors, or 3) show attorneys how to make money and support their practice with animal law. Yet, these are not the only articles that we are willing to publish. I am open to considering just about any well written article which shows a nexus between animals and the law.

## Other Possibilities

Here are some thoughts on other possible articles for the Newsletter even though some articles covering these topics have already been published in the Newsletter.

- Animal Law cases worked on by members with details even if the outcome was not favorable – sometimes lessons can be learned from lost cases.
- Human/animal interest stories where members have helped an animal or a group of animals even if the help is a rescue and does not involve the legal system. Consider this category: Section members in action.
- Animal law practice areas or specialties that have turned into paying fee-based work – animal law work does not always have to be pro bono and it should not always be pro bono.

We are willing to publish articles recounting events of years ago if the article is relevant to today's animal law concepts. We published an article about Annie the dog in the Fall 2019 issue which was years after her victimizer was convicted of animal cruelty. Why? Simply because the judge allowed Annie's guardian to speak for her as her voice in the courtroom. I thought this should be memorialized. As an aside, Annie was a very sweet dog who was much loved and never should have suffered. She was adopted and lived many years with her guardians.

## And Finally -----

On a somewhat different note, I have even suggested that I would publish a well-written article that would show why we should not be empathetic and compassionate toward animal suffering. No one has ever taken me up on the issue. I think that says that people who are being cruel to animals have a very difficult time explaining their actions.

In general, we do not like unsolicited articles as the authors may have their own concepts of writing style, approach, quality, etc. which may not be consistent with the Newsletter's approach. We like copyrighted articles as they do not require editing. We are willing to discuss any proposed articles and suggest general parameters.

We are glad to publish any articles about the nexus of law and animals. I especially aim this comment at law students who may want an article published in the Newsletter of the first statewide animal law section in the United States and active since 1995! 🐾





## STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

## MEMORANDUM

**To: Section Members**

**From: Nominating Committee: Jennifer Pierce, Morgan Pattan and Bee Friedlander**

**Subject: 2025 Nominating Committee Report (for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026)**

**Dated: August 18, 2025**

Pursuant to Section bylaws (Article III, Sections 1-6), officers are to be elected for a two-year term, after which they are term-limited. The officer terms are expiring, and we have nominations for Chair-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer. (The current Chair-Elect becomes Chair).

Council terms are generally 3 years. Council members are elected for shorter terms if filling another person's unexpired term. Four full-term and one 2-year term are open this year.

**The annual meeting is September 24.**

**The committee is pleased to recommend the following slate:**

**Officers:**

**Chair-Elect:** Morgan Pattan (current Secretary, term expiring, term limited), P85688, Kalamazoo

**Secretary:** Rebecca Rene Sutton (current Council member, term expiring 2027), P87176, Grand Rapids

**Treasurer:** Ann M. Griffin (current Council member, term expiring 2025, term limited), P51329, Detroit

**Council Members:**

**Term expiring 2028:**

**John Reynolds,** P86789, Lansing (second Council term)

**Donald Garlit,** P28266, Canton (first Council term)

**Margaret Anne Marshall,** P85789, Cotati, CA (new to Council)

**Yara J. Khalil,** P88447, Lansing (new to Council)

**Term expiring 2027:**

**Stijn van Osch,** P86484, Washington, DC (new to Council, to fill unexpired term of Sutton who is nominated to be Secretary)

The Committee recognizes and thanks Erin Klug, who becomes Immediate Past Chair, and Kate Brindle, the current past chair; and Donald Garlit, Treasurer who is nominated as a Council member. Additional recognition and thanks go to Anna Scott and Jennifer Pierce who are completing their second full Council term, and Ann Griffin who is nominated to be Treasurer.

A nominee who has not served before is required to submit the following information:

1. Resume
2. Date admitted to the bar
3. Amount of time as an Animal Law Section member
4. List the involvement in animal advocacy activities, committee participation, authored articles both as an individual and as a member of the Animal Law Section
5. Short explanation of interest in the Council position (100 words maximum)

**Advisory Committee**

This committee was created several years ago, comprised of council members who were term limited, to act as mentor/advisors to Officers and Council members who had not served in Section leadership previously. This year the Committee will become active. Current members are:

**Tom Boven, Raj Prasad, Richard Angelo, Kieran Marion, Bee Friedlander**

Each Advisory Committee member will be assigned a new Council member and will be in contact with that person before the term starts and as needed throughout the year. 🐾

## Treasurer's Report – 2023-2024 FY (12 Months through September 2024)

This is a summary of the Animal Law Section's financial status as of September 30, 2024 (12 months of the Fiscal Year).

Paid membership is 243 and basically unchanged from the prior year. Graduating law students are allowed and encouraged to join for the first year after law school at no charge.

Revenue for the year was \$3,630. This is the third year of the attorney dues reduction to \$15 from \$25 where dues had been since the Section was formed in 1995.

Expenses for the year were \$4,477 which include one issue of the Newsletter (\$1,891), awards and honorariums related to the Brandi, Sadie, and Wanda Nash Awards (\$1,450), award ceremony expenses such as food and supplies (\$680), symposium speaker designated awards to animal-related groups (\$400), and credit card processing charges (\$56).

Net deficit for the year was \$847.

The funds balance at the end of September 2024 was \$18,785; a decrease of \$847 compared with the prior FY year-end balance of \$19,631 on September 30, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Garlit  
Treasurer  
October 2025

## Treasurer's Report – 2024-2025 FY (12 Months through September 2025)

This is a summary of the Animal Law Section's financial status as of September 30, 2025 (12 months of the Fiscal Year).

Paid membership is 231 and down 6% from the prior year's total of 243 members. Graduating law students are allowed and encouraged to join for the first year after law school at no charge.

Revenue for the year was \$4,506. This is the fourth year of the attorney dues reduction to \$15 from \$25 where dues had been since the Section was formed in 1995. Revenue includes \$1,071 for the Section's share of the October 2024 documentary movie screening at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor of "Dogs Are People Too: A Four-Legged Civil Rights Movement."

Expenses for the year were \$1,479 which includes partial expenses for one issue published at the end of the prior FY of the Newsletter (\$601), honorarium and recognition plaque related to the Wanda Nash Award (\$600), award ceremony expenses such as food and supplies (\$216), and credit card processing charges (\$62).

Net income for the year was \$3,027.

The funds balance at the end of September was \$21,812; an increase of \$3,027 compared with the prior FY year-end balance of \$18,785 on September 30, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Garlit  
Treasurer  
October 2025





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## CHIMPANZEE CASE UPDATE

Read about a ground-breaking animal case in Michigan on Page 9. The Nonhuman Rights Project brought a petition for habeas corpus on behalf of seven chimpanzees to challenge their conditions of confinement in an Upper Peninsula roadside zoo. The Animal Law Section, along with several others, submitted an amicus curiae brief supporting NhRP to the Michigan Court of Appeals, but the court denied the appeal. In early December, NhRP filed an application for leave to appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court. This positions Michigan's highest court to make a substantial contribution to jurisprudence by allowing the case to proceed. We will keep following this important case.

