

WHAT IS THE INGHAM COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION?

By: David Lick

The Ingham County Bar Foundation was established in 2002 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable corporation dedicated to promoting access to justice, expanding the availability of legal services, supporting charitable organizations, promoting legal education, and fostering the honor and integrity of the legal profession. While lawyers have long recognized their individual commitment to the community, the Foundation has provided a collective means for lawyers to have a greater impact of commitment to the community and to promote legal education.

Since its founding, the Foundation has made grants in the tens of thousands of dollars to the Veterans Treatment Court Foundation, Ingham County Sobriety Court Foundation, Legal Services of South-Central Michigan, the annual memorial observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Bench Bar Conference, and Ingham County Access to Justice Center.

The Ingham County Bar Foundation is a membership corporation whose members select the Board of Directors. There are 15 members on the Board of Directors, including four officers. The Foundation charter is an open membership and is not restricted to members of the legal profession. Recently, the ICBF has added affiliate bar organizations of the Ingham County Bar Association (ICBA), the Young Lawyers Section (YLS), the Davis-Dunnings Bar Association, and the Women's Lawyer Association of Michigan (WLAM). The collaborative efforts of the ICBF and the affiliate members has expanded with new programs benefitting the community and legal education. In addition, ICBF with the Ingham County Bar Association has revived the "Lawyer's Table" to promote collegiality among lawyers and present current topics of interest.

ICBF's accomplishments have in part occurred through its renewed efforts to publicize its events and those events of the affiliate members extolling the benefits of community commitment. The publications of the ICBF have encouraged attorneys to establish memorials in honor of individuals; or to establish an endowment. The two largest fundraisers are the Ingham County Bar Foundation Memorial Golf Classic and recognition dinners (that occur approximately every-other year) of judges who have recently retired.

To honor those attorneys in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties who have demonstrated the necessary experience, leadership, integrity, professionalism, and character the ICBF has established a prestigious ICBF Fellows award. Fellows are limited to 5% of the attorneys in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties and nominated on an annual basis.

Involvement with the Ingham County Bar Foundation signifies one's deep-seated commitment to the community and pride in honoring the legal profession. To grant recipients and many others, the Ingham County Bar Foundation is the benevolent face of the legal profession.