

Ingham County Bar Association

# BRIEFS



December 2024

# Veterans



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**SAVE THE DATE**

**16th Annual Barristers**  
March 13, 2025  
U Club  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

**Shrimp Dinner**  
May 21st, 2025  
VFW Post 701  
5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

**BRIEFS**  
**Publication Schedule**

September  
December  
March  
June



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## ICBA Logo and Letterhead Policy

The ICBA has adopted a policy regarding the use of the ICBA logo and letterhead. If you are currently using or are planning to use the ICBA logo, we ask that you become familiar with and abide by the revised policy. You can read the full policy [here](#).

# About ICBA

*Founded in 1895, the Ingham County Bar Association continues its longstanding tradition of service to the legal profession and the greater Lansing community, bringing lawyers together to join in a strong organization that works to achieve objectives that transcend the individual.*



## INGHAM COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 66  
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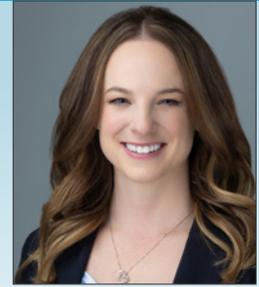
### **Wellness Committee**

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# President's Message



Lindsay Dangl,  
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[ldangl@mbspclaw.com](mailto:ldangl@mbspclaw.com)

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”  
- Winston Churchill

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Ingham County Bar Association Annual Dinner. The evening was filled with smiles, connection, and celebration of the accomplishments that define our legal community. Our wonderful emcees Judge Ward and Mr. Judge (Greg Ward), the committee, its chairs Alex Rusek and Jessica Zimbelman, and Madelyne Lawry and her team did an amazing job to make our 130<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner one to remember.

For me, one of the best parts of the Annual Dinner is the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and friends in person, especially in a time when remote work and virtual proceedings are so common. In-person events remind me of the human side of the legal profession, getting to know people as individuals and swapping stories.

I love attending events that leave me feeling more inspired than when I arrived, with a renewed drive to do better. Strangely enough and morbid as though it may be, I often experience this inspiration most profoundly at funerals. Listening to loved ones reflect on a person's life, their work, and the impact they had on those around them motivates me to strive for more.

This year's award recipients were incredibly deserving, and their stories

were the highlight of the evening for me. Hearing Chuck Barbieri, the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, reflect on his career and the relationships he's built was a powerful reminder of the value of community in our work. For those who may not know, the Lifetime Achievement Award isn't given out every year—it's reserved for someone truly deserving. Chuck's contributions to the law, his colleagues, and this Bar Association unquestionably make him a worthy recipient. I had the privilege of serving on the Bar Association Board during Chuck's presidency, and his guidance and genuine care were evident in everything he did.

Randy Kleiman inspired us by showing how hard work and dedication to the work you care about can elevate any average person to excellence. Brigadier General Michael McDaniel talked about his commitment to professionalism and civility and how he envisions this for future generations in the law, reinforcing the importance of the 110th Rule of Civility – to “Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.” I think we were all taken aback hearing the sheer passion and fury with which Nicole Matuscko cares about our community. It was equally moving to hear Monica Jahner talk about her time incarcerated and

how it inspired her to make lasting legal change in the community – becoming the first formerly incarcerated person to receive one of our Association's awards. Her story was a testament to resilience and the impact one person can make. And last but certainly not least, Raina Korbakis showed us the power of selflessness rising to meet a need, starting a family law clinic with no prior experience in the field simply because the community required it.

Leaving the Annual Dinner this year I felt a palpable sense of excitement for our community and about what lies ahead. All our very deserving award recipients this year have accomplished so much; it inspired me to want to do more and I hope it did the same for you. These award winners remind us of what's possible when passion, skill, and integrity come together. They set the bar high, and our community is better because of their efforts.

Now it's our turn. Each of us has something unique to offer our community—whether it's enhancing access to justice, supporting those in need, donating to local organizations, participating in one of Ingham County's specialty courts, mentoring a new attorney, or simply lending a listening ear.

*President's Message continued*

One of the most valuable lessons I've learned is to focus on areas where your passions align with your work. When you engage in efforts that genuinely matter to you, the impact is far greater than when done for external reasons alone. As one of my valued mentors told me, there's no point in joining an organization if you don't care about

the mission. Your heart won't be in it, and you won't do your best work. Our community thrives when each of us brings our best to the table.

I hope you all are as inspired as I was leaving this year's event and turn it into meaningful action. Don't wait for the next inspiring moment to pass you by—

be part of the change, the conversation, and the community. There is no shortage of opportunities to make a difference. Let's get started. And if you'd like to get started by serving on one of our committees or helping make one of these wonderful events possible, you can call me. We've got a spot for you!

## 2024 Past Presidents' Reception

September 26, 2024

*Thank you to our sponsors*



VIEW PHOTOS 

# Criminal Law Section Update

By Jessica Zimbelman, ICBA Vice-President  
Managing Attorney, State Appellate Defender Office

\* The criminal case law update will include Michigan Supreme Court decisions and substantive orders and published Court of Appeals decisions from the prior quarter. If there are specific topics a reader would like a deeper dive into, please email me at [jzimbelman@sado.org](mailto:jzimbelman@sado.org).



Jessica Zimbelman  
[jzimbelman@sado.org](mailto:jzimbelman@sado.org)

## Michigan Supreme Court

**Jeffrey Wimberly, Docket No. 165229, issued October 25, 2024:** After oral argument, the Court remanded to the trial court to amend the judgment to impose concurrent rather than consecutive sentences, as consecutive sentencing was imposed in violation of the ex post facto clause.

## Published Court of Appeals decisions

**James Mason, Jr., Docket No. 367687, issued August 22, 2024:** The Court defined when “reasonable grounds” exist to sentence a person convicted of non-serious misdemeanors to jail; the Court also analyzed a local sentencing policy in Oakland County.

**Mario Jackson, Docket No. 366078, issued August 29, 2024:** The Court remanded for resentencing based on improperly scored guidelines under *McGraw* and *Beck*.

**Allen Sherrill, Docket No. 360133, issued September 12, 2024:** sufficiency of the evidence for involuntary manslaughter; Covid courtroom closure and public trial; ineffective assistance of counsel for failure to object to officer statements during interrogation; acquitted conduct and sentencing and proportionality of departure sentence.

**Isaac Knepper, Docket No. 363191, issued September 23, 2024:** CSC-1 conviction not against the great weight of the evidence; acquitted conduct in PSIR.

**Al-Hassan Aiyash, Docket No. 369689, issued September 25, 2024:** abuse of discretion to bind over; no proximate cause for the charges of involuntary manslaughter.

**Andrew Lafey, Docket No. 361936, issued September 27, 2024:** waiver of jury trial; admission of inculpatory statements made without *Miranda*; improper order by the trial court at sentencing that Mr. Lafey could have no contact with anyone but lawyers while in the MDOC.

**Julia Soto, Docket No. 370138, issued October 7, 2024:** The Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act does not prevent a person from being prosecuted for possession with intent to distribute.

**Bobby Smith, Docket No. 369679, issued October 8, 2024:** technical v. nontechnical violation of probation when violating a no contact order.

**Jimmie Kilgore, Docket No. 365881, issued October 16, 2024:** it was ineffective assistance of counsel to fail to request self-defense/defense-of-others jury instruction for felony-firearm.

**Janelle Vaness, Docket No. 369132, issued October 17, 2024:** authority of magistrate to take a plea.

**Bradley Berklund, Docket No. 367568, issued October 23, 2024:** Admissibility of other acts of sexual assault when charged with acts of domestic violence.

**Danielle Hess, Docket No. 366148, issued October 24, 2024:** A condition of probation that prohibits use of marijuana that is compliant with Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act is enforceable.

**Colby Skippergosh, Docket No. 364127, issued October 28, 2024:** admissibility of other acts of domestic violence; sufficiency of the evidence;

prosecutorial vouching; acquitted conduct at sentencing.

**David Kiczenski, Docket No. 364957, issued October 28, 2024:** 2021 SORA is not punishment.

**Jayneel Jade, Docket No. 365951, issued October 28, 2024:** plea appeal; entrapment for police sting online.

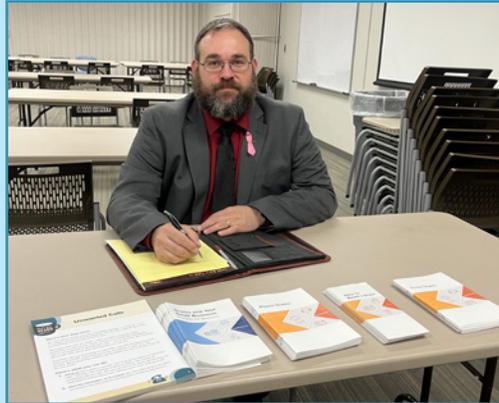
**Matthew Lewinski, Docket No. 365350, issued October 28, 2024:** interlocutory appeal; the Court reversed the trial court's suppression of statements made to the police.

**Troy Jones, Jr., Docket No. 365590, issued October 28, 2024:** speedy trial rights; courts costs are a tax but not unconstitutional.

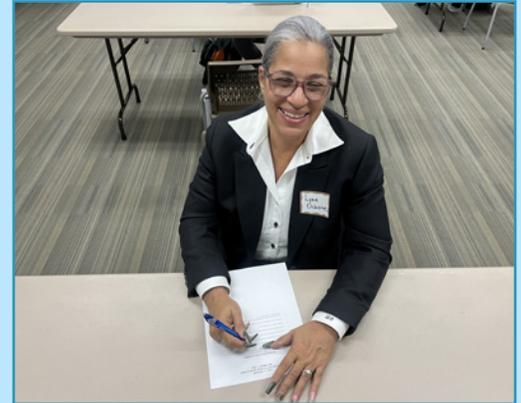
## Ask A Lawyer 2024

We had an incredible turnout at our recent Ask a Lawyer event! Community members received valuable 30-minute legal consultations on a wide range of issues. Thank you to all the attorneys and Cooley Law School students who volunteered their time and expertise.

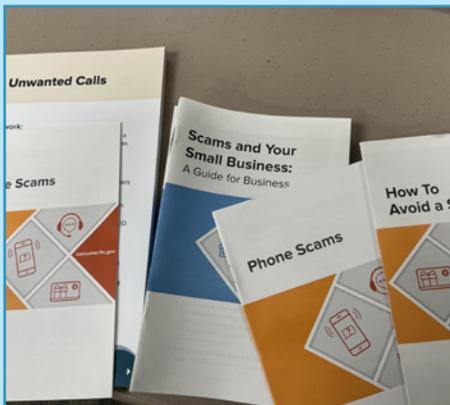
Special thank you to Attorney Raymond Harris, Elder Law and Estate Planning, for his countless years dedicated to this event. You are an outstanding volunteer, and we appreciate all you do for the ICBA.



Joshua S. Goodrich, J.D., LL.M. was available to handle inquiries related to consumer rights violations, especially those pertaining to scam-related phone calls. He brought brochures to hand out to attendees.



Attorney Lynn Osborne volunteered at our Ask a Lawyer event, providing guidance on bankruptcy. "It's rewarding to use my skills to help the community. When you file for bankruptcy, you do not lose everything," she said.



Materials shared with attendees on behalf of Joshua S. Goodrich, J.D., LL.M.



Raymond Harris with Cooley Law School student Alesha Postlewait.



Raymond Harris gives instructions to Alesha Postlewait. Alesha is from Pennsylvania and is in her first term at Cooley Law School. She volunteered to meet new people and get to know Michigan better.

# “A General for Justice: Harriet Tubman’s Enduring Impact on Freedom and Social Change”

By MAJ Rasheed Rhodes



MAJ Rasheed Rhodes

Throughout American history, few figures exemplify resilience, courage, and an unyielding dedication to justice as powerfully as Harriet Tubman. While she is widely celebrated for her work on the Underground Railroad, Tubman’s legacy reaches far beyond her role as a conductor. During the Civil War, she served as a scout, spy, and even military leader—remarkable positions for any woman, especially an African American woman, in the 19th century. Her most notable military achievement, the Combahee Ferry Raid, freed over 700 enslaved individuals and struck a crucial blow to Confederate resources. Tubman’s actions not only supported the Union’s military objectives but also strengthened the abolitionist movement and highlighted the vital role of African American soldiers. Her contributions went beyond battlefield victories; they actively reshaped the nation’s journey toward emancipation, challenged societal norms, and laid the groundwork for lasting social change.

I would like to review three critical aspects of her legacy that reveal why her posthumous promotion to the rank of one-star general—more than 150 years after her service in the Union Army—is both significant and overdue. These areas include her profound influence on the abolitionist movement, her trailblazing role in paving the way for African American soldiers, and her enduring impact on the broader movement for social justice in America. Through these contributions, Tubman not only strengthened the Union’s cause but inspired generations to carry forward her fight for justice and equality.

Often called “Moses” or “General Tubman,” but her journey began under much humbler circumstances. Born as Araminta Ross sometime between 1815 and 1822, Tubman was one of nine children of Harriet “Rit” and Ben Ross, both of whom were enslaved on separate plantations on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

Harriet Tubman’s Civil War contributions amplified her role as a champion of the abolitionist movement, turning her into a living embodiment of its values of justice and equal rights. Years before the war, Tubman had established herself as a formidable force within the abolitionist circles. Through her work on the Underground Railroad, she led over 70 enslaved individuals to freedom, solidifying her reputation as a symbol of hope and resilience. Prominent abolitionists like Frederick

Douglass praised her bravery and credited her with inspiring others to take active roles in dismantling slavery.

When the Civil War erupted, Tubman took her abolitionist convictions to the front lines, where she continued fighting for freedom and justice. In the Combahee Ferry Raid, she collaborated with Colonel James Montgomery to orchestrate a strategic strike that liberated over 700 enslaved individuals and struck a critical blow against the Confederacy. Her success in this mission demonstrated the power of abolitionist ideals in practice, galvanizing supporters and providing a concrete example of what organized efforts against slavery could accomplish. Tubman’s actions helped reinforce the abolitionist message, proving that resistance to slavery could—and would—be successful.

In addition to advancing the abolitionist cause, Tubman’s involvement in the Civil War elevated the role of African Americans in the Union’s military efforts, setting a precedent for their engagement in combat. During the Combahee Ferry Raid, Tubman’s leadership not only liberated hundreds but also showcased the strategic potential of African American troops. Tubman worked directly with Black regiments, including the 2nd South Carolina Volunteers Infantry Regiment, in the planning and execution of the raid. By setting a temporary pontoon bridge afloat, her forces outmaneuvered

Confederate troops and returned to Union lines unscathed. This operation under Tubman's guidance demonstrated that African American soldiers could successfully carry out complex military missions, which encouraged the Union to integrate more Black regiments into combat roles.

Her leadership on the battlefield inspired the formation of additional Black regiments, such as the famed 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, the first African American regiment to fight for the Union. These units would go on to serve with distinction, fundamentally challenging notions that African Americans could not serve as effective soldiers. Tubman's success on the battlefield also advanced the case for African American officers and leaders, laying essential groundwork for expanded roles of Black soldiers and the reshaping of military policy in the Union Army.

Tubman's military service had an impact that extended far beyond the Civil War, signaling a shift in American society's values and leading to broader social reforms. By proving herself as a fearless leader and tactical genius, Tubman became a powerful symbol for African Americans, especially women,

demonstrating that they could challenge societal norms and fight for equality. Tubman's achievements highlighted the capabilities of Black leadership, helping to inspire generations of civil rights activists who would fight for justice and equality in the years to come.

Following the war, Tubman continued her advocacy by supporting the women's suffrage movement and advocating for civil rights, further extending her influence on the nation's social fabric. Her work encouraged other Black leaders to take up the fight, and her legacy provided an enduring inspiration for civil rights movements throughout American history. Tubman's life story showcased the transformative power of leadership grounded in justice and the critical role that African American women could play in reshaping society. Her efforts set a standard for activism and underscored the importance of equality in American ideals.

Harriet Tubman's extraordinary life of bravery, resilience, and dedication to justice merits recognition as one of the most transformative contributions in American history. From her work as a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad to her invaluable role as a scout, spy, and military leader during

the Civil War, Tubman challenged the boundaries of what was possible, paving the way for African American soldiers and deepening the abolitionist cause. Her daring actions, such as the Combahee Ferry Raid, where she helped free over 700 enslaved individuals, were not just tactical victories—they were profound statements against the institution of slavery and for the equality and dignity of all people.

Tubman's contributions resonate far beyond her era, as her courage and unwavering moral conviction continue to inspire today's movements for justice and freedom. Her service, sacrifice, and steadfast dedication to her people and her country transcend traditional definitions of heroism, making her truly worthy of the highest honors. Recognizing her with the rank of Brigadier General honors the unofficial "rank" bestowed upon her by the hundreds she liberated. This title not only acknowledges her military leadership but also celebrates her as a powerful figure in the fight for human rights and equality. Honoring her in this way underscores her enduring impact and commemorates her profound role in shaping America's journey toward justice and freedom.

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# Veterans in the DEI Equation

By Kristina Bilowus



**Kristina Bilowus**  
[bilowusk@msu.edu](mailto:bilowusk@msu.edu)

As 2024 winds down and we look ahead to the new year, I am reminded of the changes, challenges, and triumphs of the current year. Against the backdrop of this year, we had a presidential election. And with that backdrop, we experienced one of the most polarizing elections in a very long time. Regardless of political affiliation, I wanted to spend a moment reflecting on the role of DEI during the current times we live in. And given the theme of this issue, I wanted to particularly amplify the role of veterans in DEI spaces.

In prior articles, I mentioned the values and reasons for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Some of the topics became more nuanced with respect to pronouns, defining equity, and looking to the disparity between generations working together in the legal field. Given this month's overarching theme is pertinent to veterans, let's examine this topic from a DEI perspective.

Looking to the definition, we know that a veteran is a former member of

the armed forces, an old soldier of long service, or "a person of long experience usually in some occupation or skill."<sup>1</sup> In the United States, we have over nineteen million veterans, ranging from permanently disabled to war vets, from retired to active members of the military.<sup>2</sup> Most likely, you can think of at least one person that you are close to (and probably several others) that have participated in military service. This is a large part of our population.

From a DEI lens, there are different motivations for an individual to join military service. And while many may receive benefits for their service, there are unique considerations that are often overlooked.<sup>3</sup> As a population, veterans are typically overlooked in employment spaces and in DEI initiatives.<sup>4</sup>

For example, there may be misconceptions or biases against veterans relating to mental health, physical health, and post-traumatic stress disorder ("PTSD").<sup>5</sup> Some of these assumptions are predicated on the idea that veterans are overly aggressive, or lack adaptability to civilian work.<sup>6</sup> While many of these assumptions are unfounded, there remains a lack of accessibility to civilian work for veterans, due to barriers.

Understanding that while many veterans may face challenges with respect to their health, wellbeing, and acclimating to civilian life after service, there are many resources and opportunities for workplace integration.<sup>7</sup> A significant contributing factor is the afore-

mentioned bias, but also a lack of inclusivity.<sup>8</sup>

Many companies either lack intentionality with hiring veterans by failing to utilize their diverse skills sets or not acknowledging their status in DEI considerations.<sup>9</sup> Certain skills of problem-solving under pressure, leading, and collaborating, are among some of the traits that veterans exemplify, but lack consideration for. Additionally, some hiring practices simply overlook the inclusivity of hiring veterans, which is a missed opportunity for enhancing culture and organization in that business structure.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally, there is also the need for resources tailored to the needs some veterans require. For some, the transition from active military life back to civilian life comes with a complex identity.<sup>11</sup> Additional considerations may also include depression, disabilities that are service-related, and PTSD. Rather than seeing these aspects in a vacuum or viewed as a stigma, DEI can employ strategies to meet the needs of veterans. For example, support systems can be implemented. Resources for mental and physical health, education, personalized opportunities (such as a flexible work schedule or physical accommodations) can weave the intersectionality of intentional best hiring practices, as well as retaining great employees.<sup>12</sup> Rather than focus on stereotyping or bias, instilling an inclusive practice of outreach and hiring for veterans, along with education and implementing resources for their hires, can help close

the equity gap with respect to this subset of our population.

Thinking with intentionality also goes a long way. Many of us have personal ties to the military. Whether we served, have a family member who has, or we know someone in active service, veterans are an essential part of our workforce. Yes, it is important to acknowledge and respect veterans' sacrifices to serve. But we need to go beyond that. As a workforce, we need to deliberately instill transitions for veterans returning to civilian life and work. We need to improve recruitment to

find our service members. And then we need to retain them – through resources and equitable means.

As this year draws to a close, let's all think how we can create more spaces for diversity in our lives, as well as intentional opportunities for inclusiveness of others.

#### Endnotes

- 1 "Veteran" <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/veteran> (last accessed November 25, 2024).
- 2 "DEI Toolkit: Veteran Status," [https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/leader-](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/leader-resources-tools/dei-toolkit/dimensions-of-diversity/veteran-status/)

[resources-tools/dei-toolkit/dimensions-of-diversity/veteran-status/](https://www.aauw.org/resources/tools/dei-toolkit/dimensions-of-diversity/veteran-status/) (last accessed November 25, 2024).

- 3 "Honoring Out Veterans Through Inclusion," <https://www.anneloehr.com/2024/11/07/honoring-our-veterans-through-inclusion/> (last accessed November 25, 2024).
- 4 *Id.*
- 5 *Id.*
- 6 *Id.*
- 7 *Id.*
- 8 *Id.*
- 9 *Id.*
- 10 *Id.*
- 11 *Id.*
- 12 *Id.*

## 130th Annual Dinner

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**For Immediate Release**

September 27, 2024

**Contact:** Eriks Dumpis  
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## Fraser Trebilcock Welcomes John R. Fifarek to the Firm



**John R. Fifarek**  
[jfifarek@fraserlawfirm.com](mailto:jfifarek@fraserlawfirm.com)

**Lansing, MI** – Fraser Trebilcock is pleased to announce the hiring of attorney John R. Fifarek who will work primarily in the firm’s Lansing office.

Mr. Fifarek is an attorney with over four decades of experience in real estate matters advising property owners, developers, buyers, sellers, commercial landlords and tenants in the development, sale, purchase and leasing of property, environmental, land use and planning matters, and in court and administrative proceedings.

His dedication to his clients and his profession is evident in his thorough and thoughtful approach to each case,

making him a respected figure in the legal community.

“We are excited to have John join the firm and are confident that he will continue the mission of providing excellent legal services to our clients,” said Thaddeus E. Morgan, President of Fraser Trebilcock.

Fraser Trebilcock is one of Michigan’s longest-established full-service law firms. Since 1883, Fraser Trebilcock has been providing preeminent legal services and representation to small and large businesses, individuals, governmental entities, and associations. Through its association with SCG Legal, Fraser Trebilcock has access to a global network of independent law firms. More information is available at [fraserlawfirm.com](http://fraserlawfirm.com) | [scglegal.com](http://scglegal.com).

# ICBA Wellness Committee Park Profile

## - Hawk Island Park

By Christopher Wickman



Christopher Wickman  
[cwickman@nicholslaw.net](mailto:cwickman@nicholslaw.net)

On behalf of the ICBA Wellness Committee, we are happy to begin our regular “Park Profiles” column showcasing one of Ingham County’s greatest resources – our public parks! Parks are great places to maintain or find your wellness whether it’s exercising, playing, socializing, or simply enjoying some quiet time. You can enjoy them with a partner, friends, children, a dog, or even find peace for yourself!

Our first park profiled will be one of the most popular (and yet underutilized) in Ingham County – Hawk Island Park. Located in South Lansing, Hawk Island is one of our most versatile parks situated around Hawk Island Lake. There’s a playground for kids, a lake beach for public swimming, some fishing docks, a splash pond, and boat rentals. There are also picnic areas and shelters that can be enjoyed with a group. Around the lake, there is an extensive boardwalk to walk above the lake itself as well as a beautiful trail circling the lake. There is also an off-leash dog park (Soldan Dog Park – separate membership required) that is a wonderful place for our four-legged friends to run free and play with other dogs. In the winter, it is a great place for cross country skiing, snow shoeing, or taking the kids (or young at heart) for some snow tubing! It is also well-integrated into the Ingham County trail

system so you can easily take trails out of Hawk Island to other nearby trails and parks for those longer walks/bikes, etc.

What I personally love about Hawk Island Park is the ability to find serenity due to the sheer expanse of the park – all year round. Even if one part of the park is busy or noisy, I can go to another part of the park if I want and sit on a bench and enjoy the beautiful views of the lake and woods. There’s side paths and docks to enjoy the beautiful fresh air or some wonderful conversations. - Chris

More information about Hawk Island Park can be found at [https://pk.ingham.org/parks/hawk\\_island.php](https://pk.ingham.org/parks/hawk_island.php). If you want your favorite Ingham County park featured (or would like to write a feature of your favorite park) contact co-chairs Chris Wickman ([cwickman@nicholslaw.net](mailto:cwickman@nicholslaw.net)) or Jackie Dupler ([jdupler@fosterswift.com](mailto:jdupler@fosterswift.com)).

SAVE  
THE  
DATE

**16th Annual Barristers**

March 13, 2025

U Club at 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

# I Am Victorian: The Story of GI 0000 "Involuntary Acts of Valor"

By Laurence Grant- A.S, B.S, M.S-L.M.H.C.A

We are victorious over all our trials and tribulations despite our race, creed, or color. No matter what cultural background we came from, we went to war together. We went to school together and learned, we went to breakfast in the morning and ate, and we focused on our physical health every day because when it was time, our minds carried us through war. Some fought harder than others, and some did not fight at all. We are privates and generals through the ranks.

Through and through as a team we found out what one person had, another person can learn from, and what one person may have been bad at our battle buddy reflected our fullest potential. We may not have been drafted, but as we completed basic training, we looked at the blue sky, and it was the beginning of 9-11. Some joined to start a new life, some a new career, some for education, and some to continue a legacy, but we were together whether we liked it or not. We were joined together as a force in a brotherhood of arms.

Over the years, as we look back and remember what was that of young, we see blue skies and are thankful for those who sacrificed so much just so we can continue to see the same blue skies they can no longer live to see. We say thank you and salute those acts of valor for those who volunteered and for those who, without choice, fought the good fight. We will continue to be at war for the greater cause which unites us all. I am "GI 0000".

**ICBA MEMBER DIRECTORY**  
**Are you listed in the [online member directory](#)?**

Hon. Shauna Dunnings tells why you should be an ICBA Member

[CLICK HERE](#)



**SAVE THE DATE**

**ICBA Shrimp Dinner**  
VFW Post 701 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.

.....

**May 21, 2025**

[Click here to Register](#)





# Young Lawyers Section New Board Members



Daniel Noble  
[daniel@aboodlaw.com](mailto:daniel@aboodlaw.com)

**What’s your favorite fictional lawyer or legal drama, and why?**

A Few Good Men. This legal drama includes one of the more famous courtroom scenes in cinematic history culminating with Jack Nicholson’s “You can’t handle the truth.” Despite the drama, this movie centers around taking a case to trial based solely on the belief that the protagonist’s clients were innocent of the charges. I believe it to be a great representation of our duty to “act with reasonable diligence ... in representing a client.” MRPC 1.3. This duty is important even if the proverbial chips are stacked against a client.

**What’s your favorite way to spend a weekend?**

I like to spend a quiet weekend with my family. Taking our dog on a long walk and watching our young daughter grow and learn.

**What’s a place you’ve visited that you’d love to go back to?**

The North Shore of O’ahu. It is the perfect place to relax on the beach and listen to the Pacific Ocean’s thunderous waves come crashing down. If you travel during peak surf months, you can watch competitors train on some of the most dangerous waves on Earth.



Patrick Abood  
[patrick@aboodlaw.com](mailto:patrick@aboodlaw.com)

**What’s your favorite way to spend a weekend?**

My favorite way to spend a weekend is to spend it with my family. This would entail being outside as much as possible, whether it is grilling, gardening, golfing, or exploring our state with my wife and son.

**Do you have a favorite quote or saying that inspires you?**

My grandfather talked about a person’s capacity, and how each person has a capacity to better this world and that we should all strive to fulfill our capacity. This inspired me to go to law school and become a lawyer knowing that I had more capacity as a person and knowing that I should strive to fulfill it.

**What’s a place you’ve visited that you’d love to go back to?**

For my honeymoon, my wife and I went to Italy and traveled throughout the country exploring and learning about the culture. My favorite regions were Bologna and Modena. These two cities are close in proximity and offer everything from the birthplace of balsamic vinegar and parmesan cheese to the longest continuously operated university in the world to the Ferrari Museum. We have wanted to go back ever since we left.

# Omega Veterans Day Speech

By LTC Leonard Rusher



Thank you for the privilege and honor to speak at one of the most premier chapters in the 10<sup>th</sup> District. To the leadership, I bring greetings from the men of Sigma Upsilon. I was told that the theme is “Why is community Service important to the Fraternity?” and I was asked to address the significance of Veterans.

## Why is community Service important?

Our watch word is Service. We don't give handouts, we as Omega men give a hand up. Because we are lifting as we climb. Our service is an essential part of contributing to society and making a difference in our community. We / you encompasses a wide range of activities that help improve the lives of our fellow man and promote the welfare of the community as a whole. The act of giving back to your community not only benefits our sisters and brothers in

need, but it also enriches our own lives and provides a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Our community service raises social awareness. I have seen your pictures on Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms. Your work and deeds provide awareness. Your community service activities allow people to learn about social issues affecting this community. By working on projects and interacting with individuals from different backgrounds, people gain insights into their communities' challenges and opportunities. This increased awareness can inspire people to take action and make a difference in their communities.

Community Service establishes contacts and friendships. The easiest way to make friends and partners is through activities you perform together. Not only would you be helping the ones in need, but you would also be able to meet some other volunteers. This benefit of community service is especially important if you are new in an area. After all, is there a better way to meet your neighbors and show them how eager you are to improve your community? I think not! In addition, you could invite your existing friends to do community service with you and through it, further strengthen your relationships and have fun at the same time.

Our Kids need to see us performing community service. Now many of you

know or don't know I help kids with scholarships, understanding HBCUs, or help kids navigate to get into college. This is a passion of mine. I tell parents and kids that community service is the bread and butter on a scholarship application, if you are not in tune to your community and all you do is play video games you wasted your time. There are a host of reasons why kids need to see us doing community service. But the main reason is that our little black boys and our black girls need to see a positive black men in the community making a difference., changing lives, providing inspiration, and giving a hand up and not hand out. Now what does this have to do with Veterans Day? Our veterans have given so much. Some give their lives, some gave their limbs, some are homeless and dealing with mental illness or some form of depression. I am one of those veterans who suffered from depression. I went into a very dark place. It was not that I wanted to self-inflict harm on myself, but I wanted what I thought was an unending pain to stop instantly. My world was bleak, I could not see the next 5 minutes into the future, but with help from the VA and the members of this great fraternity, I managed to recover. I attended support group classes which were very beneficial to me. Reach out to a veteran or veteran organization. You will be pleasantly surprised by how your efforts will change lives.

# Press Release



## Dickinson Wright Receives 39 Rankings in Best Lawyers 2025 Best Law Firms® Survey

Media Contact: Kelly Durso,  
Associate Director of Marketing Communications,  
(313) 223-3085  
kdurso@dickinsonwright.com

### For Immediate Release

November 7, 2024

LANSING – Dickinson Wright is pleased to announce it received 24 national rankings and 15 rankings in Lansing in the 2025 Best Law Firms® report by *Best Lawyers*.

The rankings, presented in tiers, showcase more than 10,000 law firms ranked nationally and/or by metropolitan region. Firms were ranked nationally in one or more of the 80 legal practice areas and by metro or state in 118 practice areas. Below are Dickinson Wright's 2025 Best Law Firms® rankings:

### Lansing, MI

#### Tier 1

Administrative/Regulatory Law  
Appellate Practice  
Bet-the-Company Litigation  
Commercial Litigation  
Corporate Law  
Energy Law  
Government Relations Practice  
Insurance Law  
International Mergers & Acquisitions  
Municipal Law  
Public Finance Law  
Real Estate Law  
Tax Law  
Utilities Law

#### Tier 2

Gaming Law

### National Rankings

#### Tier 1

Appellate Practice  
Construction Law

#### Tier 2

Banking and Finance Law  
Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights/  
Insolvency and Reorganization Law  
Commercial Litigation  
Corporate Law  
Land Use & Zoning Law  
Litigation – Bankruptcy  
Litigation – Construction  
Litigation – Labor & Employment

Litigation – Real Estate  
Mergers & Acquisitions Law  
Real Estate Law  
Tax Law  
Trademark Law  
Trusts & Estates Law

#### Tier 3

Copyright Law  
Employment Law – Management  
Environmental Law  
Labor Law – Management  
Leveraged Buyouts and Private Equity  
Law  
Litigation – Intellectual Property  
Securities Regulation  
Technology Law

### About Dickinson Wright

Dickinson Wright is a general practice business law firm with more than 500 attorneys among more than 40 practice areas and 16 industry groups. The firm has 22 offices in the U.S. and Canada, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Nevada, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington, D.C. The firm's Canadian offices are located in Toronto and Windsor.

Dickinson Wright offers our clients a distinctive combination of superb client service, exceptional quality, value for fees, industry expertise, and business acumen. As one of the few law firms with ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certification and one of the only firms with ISO/IEC 27701:2019 certification, Dickinson Wright has built state-of-the-art, independently-verified risk management procedures, security controls, and privacy processes for our commercial transactions. Dickinson Wright lawyers are known for delivering commercially-oriented advice on sophisticated transactions and have a remarkable record of wins in high-stakes litigation. Dickinson Wright lawyers are regularly cited for their expertise and experience by Chambers, Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers, and other leading independent law firm evaluating organizations.

# Is Yoga Right for Me?

## Exploring the Benefits of Yoga

By Julie Dillon



**Julie Dillon**  
[juliedillon2000@gmail.com](mailto:juliedillon2000@gmail.com)

Julie Dillon is the owner of Be Balanced Studio. She is a speaker, certified Yoga teacher, Pilates instructor, and Yoga-Qi Gong practitioner with 20 years of experience in the wellness industry. Her practice provides a holistic approach to coaching: integrating movement with breathwork, postural alignment, flexibility, and other mindfulness techniques.

To learn more, visit her website:  
[www.bebalancedstudio.com](http://www.bebalancedstudio.com)  
517-927-8431

You've probably heard people talk about yoga—how it transformed their body, helped them manage stress, or brought them peace of mind. If you're wondering, "*Is yoga right for me?*", the answer is a definite yes. Yoga isn't a one-size-fits-all practice; it's adaptable, flexible, and offers something for everyone, whether you're a beginner or a fitness fanatic.

Here's a brief overview of yoga: what benefits it can offer and why it's worth giving it a try, even if you're a complete beginner.

### What Is Yoga?

Yoga isn't just about contorting your body into complicated poses—this is a common misconception. While it's true that yoga involves various poses, it's much more than just physical exercise. At its core, yoga is a practice that aims to unite the body, mind, and breath. It's about being present and mindful, whether you're in a challenging pose or simply sitting in silence.

Yoga combines physical movement, breathing exercises (pranayama), and meditation or mindfulness practices. There are many different styles of yoga—like Hatha, Vinyasa, Ashtanga, and Yin—each with its own focus and pace. Whether you want to work up a sweat or find some inner peace, there's a practice for you.

### The Physical Benefits of Yoga

One of the main reasons people turn to yoga is for the physical benefits. It's a great way to get moving without needing a lot of equipment or space. Here's what you can expect:

#### 1. Improved Flexibility

Yoga involves stretching your muscles and moving your joints through their full range of motion. Don't worry if you're not naturally flexible—that's kind of the point. With repeated practice, you'll notice a difference.

#### 2. Increased Strength

Many poses require you to hold your body weight in various ways, like planks, downward dog, and warrior poses. These postures strengthen your muscles—especially your core, arms, and legs—in a balanced way, which can help prevent injuries.

#### 3. Better Balance and Posture

Many yoga poses focus on improving balance and alignment. Practicing regularly can help you become more aware of how you carry yourself throughout the day, leading to better posture and less strain on your body.

#### 4. Enhanced Cardiovascular Health

Certain types of yoga provide a solid cardio workout. Even gentler forms of yoga, like Hatha, can help improve circulation and lower blood pressure over time.

## The Mental and Emotional Benefits of Yoga

Beyond the physical benefits, yoga has a lot to offer in terms of mental and emotional well-being. In today's fast-paced world, finding a moment of calm can be difficult. Yoga provides a structured way to slow down and reconnect with yourself. Regularly practicing yoga has been shown to:

### 1. Reduce Stress

One of the greatest benefits of yoga is its ability to help manage stress. The combination of movement, deep breathing, and mindfulness creates a natural stress reliever. When you focus on your breath and your body, it's hard to stay wrapped up in your worries. Studies have shown that yoga can help lower levels of cortisol, the body's main stress hormone.

### 2. Improve Mental Clarity

Yoga can help clear your mind, making it easier to focus and think clearly. The practice encourages you to be present, which is so helpful if you're someone who constantly feels distracted or overwhelmed. By honing your ability to concentrate on the present moment, you might find it easier to stay focused in other areas of your life as well.

### 3. Increase Emotional Resilience

Yoga is a safe space to tune into your emotions without judgment. It's normal to feel a range of emotions during your practice—sometimes a sense of calm, other times frustration or even sadness. The practice teaches you to notice these emotions, acknowledge them, and let them pass without getting too caught up. Over time, this can help you become more emotionally resilient, both on and off the mat.

## Who Can Benefit from Yoga?

The short answer: *just about everyone!* Yoga is incredibly versatile, and can be tailored to fit a wide range of needs. Here's a look at some of the groups that might benefit:

- **Beginners:** If you've never done yoga before, don't worry. There are plenty of beginner-friendly classes and online videos that guide you through the basics at a slow, comfortable pace.
- **Athletes:** Yoga can be a great complement to other forms of exercise. It helps improve flexibility, balance, and muscle recovery which can enhance your performance in sports or weightlifting.
- **Older Adults:** As we age, maintaining mobility and balance becomes more important. Gentle forms of yoga, like Chair Yoga or Restorative Yoga, are perfect for older adults looking to stay active without putting too much strain on their bodies.
- **Those with Chronic Pain:** Yoga has been shown to help manage symptoms of chronic pain conditions, like arthritis or lower back pain. The gentle stretching and mindful breathing can ease tension and provide some much-needed relief.

## Getting Started with Yoga

A simple yoga mat and some comfortable clothes are enough. I suggest signing up for a beginner class where an instructor can guide you through the experience. You can also find countless free videos online tailored to all experience levels, from beginner flows to advanced practices.

## Final Thoughts: Is Yoga Right for You?

The best way to find out is simply to give it a try. Approach it with an open mind, and don't get discouraged if it feels awkward or challenging at first. It's normal to struggle with poses or feel a bit lost in the beginning—that's part of the learning process.

Yoga isn't about perfection; it's a "PRACTICE" about showing up for yourself, even if it's just for a few minutes a day. Whether you're looking for physical fitness, mental clarity, or a bit of peace in your busy life, yoga has something to offer.

So, is yoga right for you? There's only one way to find out—roll out a mat, take a slow, deep breath, and see where the practice takes you.

## ICBA Membership Scholarship Application

ICBA may offer scholarships to prospective members who may be experiencing a hardship and cannot pay the standard rates to be an active member of the Bar.

Recipients will remain anonymous. It is up to the discretion of the ICBA President to grant scholarships, but it can only be approved on an annual basis (i.e. this is not a benefit that automatically renews year-to-year).

The scholarship application can be accessed [here](#).

# The Few, The Proud, The Marines!

## Remembering the Montford Point Marines: Lee Vernon Newby Jr Story

By Dwayne L Gill, Associate Vice President, Governmental Consultant Services Inc  
gill.d@gcsionline.com | (517) 484-6216

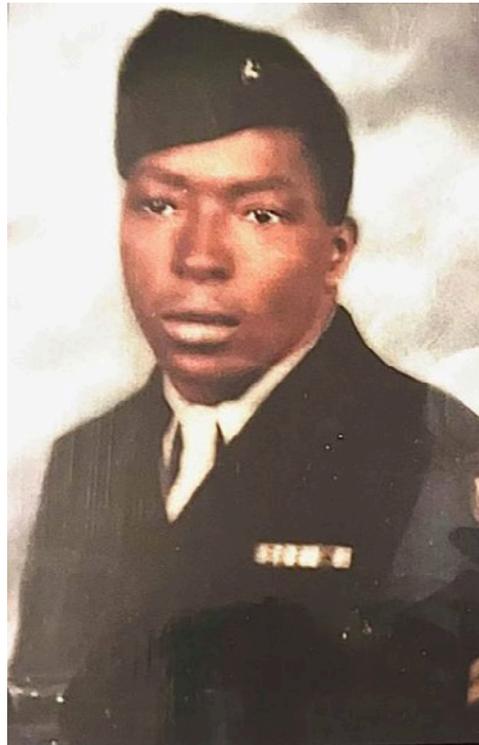
As a Detroit native and current resident of Lansing, I joined the United States Marine Corps in 1981 and served for 10 years. During my service, I was stationed in Okinawa, Japan, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Beirut, Lebanon, Hawaiian Islands and Detroit Michigan. I ended my military service in March 1991 and then began a 29-year career with the Michigan State Police. My journey of service in the United State Marine Corps wouldn't have been possible without the trailblazing men who came before me and became the first Black Marines.

In 1941, as the United States was preparing to enter World War II, the U.S. Marine Corps was resistant to training and serving alongside African Americans. However, on June 25, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, prohibiting racial discrimination in the defense industry and government, effectively integrating the Armed Forces. The Marine Corps,

despite its strong opposition, was forced to comply.

Montford Point, North Carolina, was designated as the training site for the first Black Marine recruits. Between 1942 and 1949, over 19,000 Black Marines trained at Montford Point, with more than 13,000 of them serving in the Pacific Theater during WWII. Montford Point Marines fought valiantly in battles at Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Peleliu,

Okinawa, and Iwo Jima. After their first battle, Marine Corps Commandant Lt. Gen. Alexander Vandegrift famously stated, "The Negro Marines are no longer on trial. They are Marines, period."



One of these remarkable men was Lee Vernon Newby Jr. I had the privilege of knowing Mr. Newby because I served alongside his son, Dr. John Newby, during my time in the Marine Corps. Mr. Newby recently passed away at the age of 100, with his service honored by his family. He was as tough as they come.

Drafted at the age of 19, Newby completed his recruit training at Montford Point before being deployed to the Solomon Islands for the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942-1943. During the battle, Newby suffered fourth-degree burns when gasoline exploded in a hole, leaving more than 60% of his body covered in burns. He described the incident, saying, "All of a sudden, something hit me right in my chest. It just burned the clothes off of me. When I hit the deck and got up, all the skin was just laying out." After a long stint in the hospital, he was sent right back to the front lines.

Newby was honorably discharged in 1946. After returning home, he faced the challenges of racism and Jim Crow laws but found work as a janitor and chauffeur before starting a family. Decades later, Newby and his fellow Montford Point Marines received the Congressional Gold Medal from President Barack Obama. In April of 2023, President Joe Biden commemorated Newby's 100th birthday with a framed letter and heartfelt congratulations.

For years, Newby's family has fought for him to be recognized with a Purple Heart for the injuries he sustained during the war. Despite the recognition from state and local officials, in 2022, the Navy informed Newby that he was not eligible for the Purple Heart, stating that his injuries did not meet the criteria

*The Few, The Proud, The Marines! continued*

because they were not inflicted “at the hands of the enemy.”

The Navy’s letter explained that the injury occurred when a fellow service member tried to kill rats by pouring gasoline down a hole, which accidentally ignited, causing Newby’s burns. However, Newby and his family dispute this account, stating that he doesn’t recall rats being involved.

The Pentagon’s criteria for the Purple Heart include two key conditions: the wound must have resulted from enemy action, and it must have been severe enough to require treatment by a medical officer. The letter reiterated that if a wound does not meet both standards, the Purple Heart cannot be awarded.

Newby’s family remains determined to appeal against the decision, emphasizing the mental and physical toll he endured, including PTSD from his experiences of enemy planes, bombings, and the loss of friends. His daughter, Jannise Newby, said, “How much more of his heart did

he have to give? More than half of his body was burned.”

The family hopes that Mr. Newby and other Black Marines who never received the recognition they deserved are properly honored for their service.

As we approach Veterans Day and also the Marine Corps Birthday next month in November, let us all pause to remember and reflect on the service of brave men like Mr. Newby, and never let his sacrifice be forgotten.



## Lawyer Referral Application

Please take note that the Ingham County Bar Association does not do Lawyer Referrals. If you need to use this service provided by the State Bar of Michigan, please call them at [\(800\) 968-0738](tel:8009680738) between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, to speak with a lawyer referral representative or you can use the links below.

- [Lawyer Referral and Information Service Registration Form](#)
- [LRIS Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [Become a Lawyer Referral Service Panel Member](#)



124 W. Allegan St., Suite 1000  
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125 Ottawa Ave NW, Suite 153  
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**For Immediate Release**

October 23, 2024

**Contact:** Eriks Dumpis  
(517) 377-0865

[edumpis@fraserlawfirm.com](mailto:edumpis@fraserlawfirm.com)

## Fraser Trebilcock Welcomes Charles L. Lasky to the Firm



**Charles L. Lasky**  
[clasky@fraserlawfirm.com](mailto:clasky@fraserlawfirm.com)

**Lansing, MI** – Fraser Trebilcock is pleased to announce the hiring of attorney Charles L. Lasky who will work primarily in the firm’s Lansing office.

Mr. Lasky has over four decades of experience with a primary focus on real property law: commercial and residential real estate, real estate development, tax incentive financing, tax law, business law: business mergers, sales and acquisitions, business entity formation, corporate law, and financial institution law. His extensive knowledge and experience make him a trusted advisor in complex legal matters.

His prowess in the legal and business industry should not overshadow his involvement with his community. Mr. Lasky has served on the Board of

Directors of various financial institutions in Michigan, Nevada, and Colorado, as well as serving on the Board of Trustees for local organizations such as the Ingham Regional Medical Center, and the Ingham Regional Healthcare Foundation.

“We are excited to have Chuck join the firm and are confident that he will continue the mission of providing excellent legal services to our clients,” said Thaddeus E. Morgan, President of Fraser Trebilcock.

Fraser Trebilcock is one of Michigan’s longest-established full-service law firms. Since 1883, Fraser Trebilcock has been providing preeminent legal services and representation to small and large businesses, individuals, governmental entities, and associations. Through its association with SCG Legal, Fraser Trebilcock has access to a global network of independent law firms. More information is available at [fraserlawfirm.com](http://fraserlawfirm.com) | [scglegal.com](http://scglegal.com).



## JOIN THE BILLABLE HOUR CLUB!

*Help the Ingham County Bar Foundation (ICBF) make a difference...*

Donate the dollar value of one billable hour of your time to ICBF before December 31, 2024 and help expand the good work ICBF does in the community.

To donate visit <https://www.inghambar.org/icbf-home-page/> and click **DONATE**.

**News:** Individuals who have given one billable hour for three consecutive years will be recognized in Summer 2025.

The Ingham County Bar Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



# ICVTC Veteran Mentors

## Supporting Justice-Involved Veterans for 15 years

By Jon Caterino



Jon Caterino

Established in March 2010, the Ingham County Veterans Treatment Court (ICVTC) is a specialty treatment court designed to assist veterans from all branches of the military who have found themselves involved in the criminal justice system. The goal of the Ingham County Veterans Treatment Court is to divert eligible veteran-defendants from the traditional court process to a specialized criminal court docket. These veterans suffer from substance dependency and/or mental illness and are charged with what are typically felony or misdemeanor criminal offenses. With this in mind, the court substitutes a treatment problem solving model for traditional court processing.

One of the things that sets Veterans Treatment Courts apart from their treatment court counterparts is the Veteran Mentoring Program. This is an essential component of any ICVTC program, as experience has shown that veterans are more likely to respond favorably to other veterans with similar

experiences than to nonveterans. Mentoring is critical to making a deep and lasting impact on the life of the veteran participant.

The driving force behind the creation of the ICVTC was Judge David Jordon. Judge Jordon and I had been close friends for a number of years prior to the creation of the court. Knowing that I had served in the U.S. Navy, he asked me to become the mentor coordinator.

My first job as mentor coordinator was to recruit veterans in the community who were willing to help fellow veterans in trouble. I had recommended veterans in the law enforcement community. When I met with these veterans nearly all agreed to become mentors in the court. Frequently they knew of other veterans and by the end of the first year we had over 50 volunteer mentors. As mentor coordinator I have had the pleasure of meeting and becoming friends with outstanding veterans who willingly give of their time to help fellow veterans.

With the help of Veterans Administration professionals and mental health and substance abuse counselors in the community, we were able to develop a training program to prepare the new mentors for the job ahead. The training

program explained that a treatment team would assess the needs of each veteran in the court and would set forth a program designed to address those needs. The mentor assists the veteran defendant in complying with the requirements of that program. The first job of the mentor is to assure the mentee that the goal of the ICVTC is to help the veteran. That is done by keeping in regular contact with the mentee to ensure that all appointments are kept, encouraging them when there is compliance, and holding them accountable when failures occur.

In addition to serving as mentor coordinator, I also have mentored 9 veterans over the last 15 years. While there were ups and downs during the process of mentoring, I can honestly say that the entire experience has been exceptional. Helping a fellow veteran through a tough time is an uplifting experience.

Upon completion of their time in the ICVTC a graduation ceremony is held. Frequently family members attend. Once, I heard a mother of the graduating veteran say that she believed the ICVTC saved her son's life. On another occasion, I heard a wife say the court saved their marriage. Regularly the graduating veterans thank their mentors and the court for helping them get their life back on the right path.

In 1865 Abraham Lincoln said “...to care for him who shall have borne the battle”. The Ingham County Veterans Treatment Court and the volunteer mentors who work in that court meet President Lincoln's charge.





## ICBA-YLS

# Young Lawyers Updates

By Lauren Kissel

ICBA-YLS had several great events this fall! On October 20, 2024, we had our second annual goat yoga event at Hilltop Views Farms. Participants enjoyed a half-hour yoga session followed by a goat happy hour with cider and donuts (and more goats).

On November 2, 2024, we hosted a tailgate in partnership with Women Lawyers Association Mid-Michigan Region for the MSU vs. Indiana game. Even though MSU lost, we still had a great time! Also, huge shoutout to our sponsors for this event, Speaker Law Firm, Sinas Dramis Law Firm, and Kristina Bilowus. We appreciate your continued support of our events.

Finally, on November 6, 2024, we hosted our bi-annual swearing in ceremony for new lawyers. We had the privilege of sponsoring the admission of five new attorneys to the bar. Thanks to the Honorable Lisa McCormick for swearing in our new lawyers.



# Section Chair Profile

## Chris Wickman, ICBA-CDLS Co-Chair



Christopher Wickman  
[cwickman@nicholslaw.net](mailto:cwickman@nicholslaw.net)

- 1. Where are you originally from?**  
**Belleville, Michigan.** While it is now best known as a football (and other sports) powerhouse nowadays, we had a day off in high school because our football team actually made the playoffs for the first time in a while.
- 2. What was your motivation for becoming a lawyer?** The possibilities of what you can do with a law degree. I was torn between pre-med and pre-law and happened to check pre-law on my MSU application. When I got there and was sitting with all the other pre-law majors, we all talked about what we wanted to do with our degree. I didn't know if I wanted to be a lawyer, politician, or something else – but being a lawyer opened so many doors for me and I was excited by all of them for me and others.
- 3. What is your educational background?** MSU Undergrad and Temple University Beasley School of Law.

**4. How long have you been with your current firm, and what is the nature of your practice?** I have been with the Nichols Law Firm for 6 years. I practice criminal defense and related areas including criminal appeals, driver's license restoration, personal protection orders, and Title IX investigations.

**5. What are some of the most significant challenges/rewards in your area of practice?** I do what I do because I love working with people. Working with others towards justice is absolutely the best part of my job. The most significant challenge is when one of the other involved parties falters and injustice occurs. I'm a big believer in our imperfect justice system, but it needs everyone to do their job for there to be a chance at justice.

**6. Describe some of the most significant accomplishments of your career:** Changing lives and having clients end up in a better place than they started. Whether this is following a Not Guilty verdict, cases being dismissed (2/2 on false threat of terrorism), a favorable plea deal, or genuinely changing the trajectory of someone's life through the course of a case or especially through the work of amazing specialty courts. Many of my accomplishments are not my accomplishments alone and I could never do anything I do without the amazing people around me.

**7. How did you become involved with the Ingham County Bar?** I never knew a lawyer when I was growing up. When I passed the bar, I showed up to the State Bar building with my letter and asked them for my license to practice. They told me I needed a lawyer to swear me in and I didn't know any (the closest lead was my soccer coach at the age of 5 MAYBE was a lawyer according to my mom and we hadn't talked to him in 20 years), but the Ingham County Circuit Court said the ICBA could provide a lawyer to swear me in. ICBA President Scott Mandel swore me in in front of Judge Canady. Afterwards, I met Shenique Moss and Melissa Keener who I thanked for being helpful to getting me sworn in and they encouraged me to come to an ICBA-YLS meeting. By the end of the first ICBA-YLS meeting, I was president-elect of ICBA-YLS (pseudo against my will – I said "No," the first time they asked) and the rest is history.

**8. What do you feel ICBA provides to Michigan lawyers?** I always say I think the best part of the ICBA is its sections. These sections not only provide valuable information and an opportunity to get to know individuals in the same practice area or years of practice (YLS). The ICBA also provides opportunities to recognize and educate our members and to assist our community.

**9. What do you feel is the greatest benefit of becoming involved with the Bar?** While it is possible to have a job practicing law, being involved with bar associations makes it a career. Being involved in bar activities has benefited me professionally with obtaining my current job, business referrals, and knowing countless people throughout the county and state who I never would have met. It has also benefited me personally as that is how I have met countless

friends and my amazing wife. We continue to bar together – either formally or supporting one another in our respective roles.

**10. Why would you encourage others to become involved with the Bar?** See the above answer. The benefits can be as large or small as you make them.

**11. What are some of your hobbies and interests outside of work?** I am a little obsessive about musicals so

I can be frequently found at those in Michigan and NYC. I am also a big MSU sports fan (especially football) and I bleed, sweat, and cry Honolulu blue. I also enjoy walks through our beautiful Lansing neighborhood and through the wonderful local parks with my wife. I love to cook and am learning to bake which is challenging when gluten-free.



The Ingham County Bar Association is reviving its memorial initiative program to celebrate and honor the contributions of deceased members of ICBA. You can help. If you know of a member who has recently passed, please email [support@inghambar.org](mailto:support@inghambar.org) along with a mailing address for a spouse, relative, etc., of the deceased member so we can send them a certificate of appreciation.

## BRIEFS Author Guidelines & Policies

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Publication Schedule

Copy Deadline

BRIEFS Committee Meetings

Author and Article Pictures

Article Length and Format

- **Raising the Bar announcements:** 100-200 words
- **Local legal events notices:** 100-150 words
- **Columns:** 300-500 words
- **Articles:** 700-1,000 words
- Submit articles in a Word .doc/.docx

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Opinion Articles

Author Information

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## BRIEFS Insert Contract, Rates & Policies

## Ingham County Circuit and Probate Courts are pleased to announce significant changes to leadership and docket distribution effective January 1, 2025.



Hon. Shauna Dunnings

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## Judge Joyce Draganchuk Retires

Click below to read about Judge Joyce Draganchuk's career and what will happen now that she is retiring.



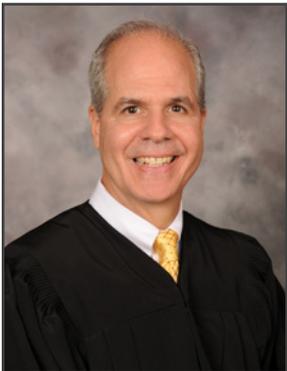
Judge Joyce Draganchuk

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## Michigan Supreme Court Appoints Judge James S. Jamo As Business Court Judge



Judge James S. Jamo

The Michigan Supreme Court has announced the appointment of Judge James S. Jamo as the new Business Court Judge for the 30th Judicial Circuit Court. This prestigious appointment

recognizes Judge Jamo's exceptional dedication, expertise, and commitment to upholding justice in complex civil and commercial litigation.

With 40 years of legal experience, Judge Jamo brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record of excellence in handling complicated legal matters. He has served in multiple capacities throughout his legal career and was elected to the bench in 2012. Judge Jamo is a graduate of the University of Michigan and received his Law Degree from Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

Upon receiving the appointment, Judge Jamo expressed his gratitude and commitment to the new role, stating, "I appreciate the Supreme Court's trust in

me. I commit to bring to this important litigation the high level of dedication and integrity Judge Joyce Draganchuk provided in her 11 years of service as Ingham Circuit's Business Court Judge."

Business courts are intended to provide a case management structure that facilitates more timely, effective, and predictable resolution of complex business cases. Specialized dockets improve the efficiency of the courts, which benefits all litigants.

For more information about the Business Court and its functions, please visit [www.courts.michigan.gov](http://www.courts.michigan.gov) or contact the Michigan Supreme Court at (517) 373-0120.



## Criminal Defense Law Section

After most of a year off, the Criminal Defense Law Section is back with a vengeance!

On August 23, 2024, Ms. Jessica Zimbelman presented case law updates from the Michigan Court of Appeals and Michigan Supreme Court. A frequent presenter on the same topic at CDAM and for the State Bar Criminal Law Section, Ms. Zimbelman generously shared her time and insights with all of us – and it was wonderful!

On September 20, 2024, the ICBA-CDLS hosted an event on Challenging Search Warrants. It was an amazing presentation by Tim Holloway with some good in-depth discussion for criminal defense attorneys to think about new ways to address shortcomings in search warrants and processes.

On October 11, 2024, the ICBA-CDLS hosted Keeley Blanchard of LawStory to present on cross-examination of law enforcement. It was a fun and interactive presentation focusing on the proper investigation into and cross-examination of law enforcement!

On November 8, 2024, the ICBA-CDLS hosted a presentation aimed at new attorneys and law school students focusing on the Michigan Sentencing Guidelines. Aimed at newly licensed attorneys and law students with an interest in criminal law, 45 people were present via Zoom for an overview of the law and discussion of the proper scoring of the three co-defendants who robbed the ICBA National Bank.

Look for more events in 2025! Hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season! Reach out to co-chairs Chris Wickman ([cwickman@nicholslaw.net](mailto:cwickman@nicholslaw.net)) or Marisa Vinsky ([marisa@cndefenders.com](mailto:marisa@cndefenders.com)) if you have any questions or want to be added to the Ingham County Criminal Defense Attorneys only listserv.

## Employment and Labor Law Section

The Employment and Labor Law Section holds its meetings from noon to 1 p.m. each month at WMU-Cooley Law School, 300 S. Capitol Ave., Room 911, in downtown Lansing.

Section Chair is Kelly McClintock. Contact Kelly if you have ideas for topics and speakers.

**Upcoming Meetings:** 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month – Noon, Location: TBA

If you have questions about Section meetings, please email Kelly at [mcclintock@bwlawonline.com](mailto:mcclintock@bwlawonline.com).

## Family Law Section

The Family Law Section meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from noon to 1 p.m. Location TBD. Lunch is provided.

Section Co-Chairs are Jennipher Martinez and Erica Terranova.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month (no meetings June, July, August) at Noon, Location – Zoom

If you have suggestions for meeting topics, want to sponsor a lunch or just have general questions, please email [erica@baileyterranova.com](mailto:erica@baileyterranova.com).



## Probate and Trust Section

The Probate and Trust Section Chair is Ernschie Augustin. The Section holds its in person meetings the second Wednesday of every other month at Noon at Chalgian & Tripp Law Offices, PLLC, 1019 Trowbridge Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 (ZOOM option is available for those who are unable to attend in person). If you plan to attend the meeting in person, please RSVP to Ernschie at [augustin@augustinlawoffices.com](mailto:augustin@augustinlawoffices.com).

Please join the Section's Facebook Group by searching "ICBA Probate & Trust Law Section" and connect with us on social media. As a way to streamline RSVPs and minimize emails, you can RSVP for the Section meetings via Facebook. Are you feeling generous? Please consider sponsoring lunch for our in-person meetings. Email Ernschie Augustin if you are interested.

## Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section

The Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section offers free networking and educational events for legal staff in Ingham County. Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month, virtual.

Section Co-Chairs are Elizabeth Sailor, Megan Cochrane, and Emily Erbisch.

### Upcoming Meetings:

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at Noon, Location – Zoom

If you have questions or would like to learn more about the Section, contact Elizabeth at [lizzy@endefenders.com](mailto:lizzy@endefenders.com).

## Real Estate Section

The Real Estate Section holds its meetings at noon on the fourth Thursday of each month. Location TBD.  
Section Co-Chairs are Bill Tomblin, Ellen E. Ward, and Mitchell Zolton.

**Upcoming Meetings:** 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month unless specified otherwise via Listserv (No meetings June, July, August, and December) — Noon

Location: TBA

Lunch is served at meetings. Upcoming speakers and topics will be announced. Member input is always appreciated.

If you plan to attend a meeting, please RSVP to Bill Tomblin at [Wdtomblaw@aol.com](mailto:Wdtomblaw@aol.com).

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Thanks for reading

# BRIEFS



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