

# 2026 Ingham County Bar Association Bench-Bar Conference

**February 28, 2026**  
**Veterans Memorial Courthouse, 313 W. Kalamazoo**

---

8:00 – 8:15 a.m.	Meet the Judges Continental Breakfast	
8:15 – 8:25 a.m.	<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b> Judge Cynthia M. Ward	<b>Jury Assembly Room</b>
8:30 – 9:10 a.m.	<b>Lawyer and Judicial Well-Being</b> Molly Ranns, State Bar of Michigan	<b>Jury Assembly Room</b>
9:20 – 9:50 a.m.	Breakout Session I	
<b>1. Family / Probate Track</b>		<b>Courtroom #6, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor</b>
	<b>Navigating the Friend of the Court Process**</b>	
Moderator:		
	Chief Judge Lisa McCormick, Presiding Judge of the Family Division	
Panelists:		
	Helen Walker, Director, Friend of the Court, Ingham County	
	Robert Hotchkiss, Assistant, Friend of the Court, Ingham County	
	Inger Lanese, MA LPC, Director, ManeStream Services, LLC	
<b>2. Criminal Law Track</b>		<b>Courtroom #7, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor</b>
	<b>Criminal Law Update</b>	
Presenter:		
	Jessica Zimbelman, Deputy Director, State Appellate Defender Office	
<b>3. Civil Law Track</b>		<b>Courtroom #8, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor</b>
	<b>Appellate Update: Personal Injury, No-Fault &amp; Medical Malpractice Cases</b>	
Presenters:		
	Sandra Lake, Attorney, Hall Matson Garver Thomas Law	
	Steve Sinas, Attorney, Sinas Dramis Law Firm	
	Katie Tucker, Attorney, Sinas Dramis Law Firm	

9:55 – 10:40 a.m.

Breakout Session II

**1. Family / Probate Track**

**Courtroom #6, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor**

**Litigating the New Ex Parte Order Rule & Tips for Preparing Your Case for Appeal**

Presenter:

Jordan Ahlers-Smith, Associate Appellate Attorney, Speaker Law Firm

**2. Criminal Law Track**

**Courtroom #7, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor**

**Voir Dire**

Presenter:

Angela DelVero, Unit Chief, Crimes Against Children,

Ingham County Prosecutor's Office

**3. Civil Law Track**

**Courtroom #8, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor**

**Effective Voir Dire: What You Need to Know But Were Too Afraid to Ask**

Presenters:

Hon. Wanda M. Stokes, Judge, 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court

Lindsay Dangl, Attorney, Murphy & Spagnuolo, P.C.

10:50 – 11:40 a.m.

**Ethical and Effective Use of AI**

**Jury Assembly Room**

Presenter:

Alex Rusek, Shareholder, Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C.

11:40 – 12:30 p.m.

**Ask the Judges**

**Jury Assembly Room**

Panelists:

Chief Judge Molly Hennessey Greenwalt, 54B District Court

Chief Judge Shauna Dunnings, Ingham County Probate Court

Chief Judge Lisa McCormick, Presiding Judge of the Family Division

Judge Cynthia M. Ward, 54A District Court

*\*\*Breakout I - Session I (Family/Probate Track) may qualify for judicial credit.*