

2026 Ingham County Bar Association Bench-Bar Conference

February 28, 2026

Veterans Memorial Courthouse, 313 W. Kalamazoo

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| 8:00 – 8:15 a.m. | Meet the Judges Continental Breakfast | |
| 8:15 – 8:25 a.m. | Welcome and Opening Remarks Judge Cynthia M. Ward | Jury Assembly Room |
| 8:30 – 9:10 a.m. | Lawyer and Judicial Well-Being Molly Ranns, State Bar of Michigan | Jury Assembly Room |
| 9:20 – 9:50 a.m. | Breakout Session I | |

1. Family / Probate Track

Courtroom #6, 3rd floor

Navigating the Friend of the Court Process**

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

2. Criminal Law Track

Courtroom #7, 3rd floor

Criminal Law Update

Presenter:

Jessica Zimbelman, Deputy Director, State Appellate Defender Office

3. Civil Law Track

Courtroom #8, 3rd floor

Appellate Update: Personal Injury, No-Fault & Medical Malpractice Cases

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, 3rd 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, 3rd floor

Voir Dire

Presenter:

Angela DelVero, Unit Chief, Crimes Against Children,
Ingham County Prosecutor's Office

3. Civil Law Track

Courtroom #8, 3rd floor

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

Presenters:

Hon. Wanda M. Stokes, Judge, 20th 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.*