

EDMIBARnewsletter

A Joint Publication of the Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association and FBA Eastern District of Michigan Chapter
- 65 years of service to our Federal Bench and Bar -

SUFFS! EDMIBAR's Night Out

By Kristina Gregerson

The Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association celebrated a remarkable night of history and harmony on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, when members embarked on a special theater outing to see the acclaimed Tony Award-winning musical Suffs about the brilliant, passionate, and funny American women who fought tirelessly for the right to vote.

The evening began with an elegant pre-reception hosted at Miller Canfield's downtown Detroit office. Surrounded by panoramic views of the city, attendees enjoyed a full dinner and drinks, taking advantage of the informal setting to strengthen the professional bonds and camaraderie that define our bar and share their anticipation for the show.

The pre-reception was enjoyed by the many practitioners and judges who attended, including U.S. District Judge Terrence G. Berg, U.S. District Judge Susan K. DeClercq, U.S. Magistrate Judge Anthony P. Patti, and Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Andrew J. Lievens. After the event, Judge Patti shared his appreciation of the EDMIBAR, which he said "helps foster and maintain a warm relationship between the Bench and the Bar in our common endeavor to serve the people of this District. Events like our theater night afford us an opportunity to 'let down our hair,' enjoy casual comraderie, and break bread together, while at the same time engaging in a shared evening of culture and entertainment."

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President's Column

Charissa Potts

Chess has long been my favorite game. When I was four years old, my dad taught me how to play, and some of my fondest memories are of sitting across from him at

the chessboard, drinking tea and learning how to think strategically. When my own son turned four, I taught him the same way. He is now a highly rated 20-year-old player, and I have not beaten him in many years.

I returned to the game recently and with intensity, to improve so that I can play him more competitively. Chess teaches one to see the full board. Every piece matters. Every move has consequences. Success depends on strategy, adaptability, and the ability to recognize and leverage opportunity. This year, as I have served as President, I have found myself returning to those same lessons. I am certainly not the first to see the metaphor of chess and leadership, but the parallels are hard to ignore.

As I come to the close of my term as President of the Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association, I find myself reflecting on what was accomplished this year and how those efforts will shape the trajectory of our organization. This was a year of intentional institutional growth and focused on strengthening our foundation for a sustainable future.

Much of this progress was behind the scenes. We took important steps to professionalize and streamline our financial processes by engaging an accountant and establishing a dedicated finance committee. These efforts created greater transparency, consistency, and long-term stability for the organization. Properly setting this financial table is essential to ensure that EDMIBAR can continue to grow robustly in the years ahead.

Member engagement was strong this year. The number and quality of our events, the enthusiasm of our attendees, and the energy surrounding our programming was

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President's Column *(from page 1)*

extraordinary. From our longstanding Luncheon Series to innovative new programming, it was gratifying to see our membership showing up, participating, and bringing energy to events.

EDMIBAR will also look different moving forward. Work is underway to revamp the website, improving both functionality and accessibility. We engaged a graphic designer to reimagine our logo and broader branding. These efforts reflect a recognition that as our organization evolves, so too must the ways in which we communicate our identity and mission.

None of this work happens in isolation. I have been fortunate to serve alongside an exceptional group of colleagues whose contributions shaped every aspect of this year. I am deeply grateful to our Executive Director, Mindy Herrmann, whose steady leadership, institutional knowledge, and tireless commitment make everything we do possible.

I also want to thank my fellow officers. Andrew Lievense, now serving on the Michigan Court of Appeals, was a constant source of guidance and perspective. Incoming President Lauren Mandel brings thoughtfulness and intentionality that will serve this organization well in the year ahead. Matt Allen's leadership, particularly his work on the finance committee, was instrumental in advancing one of our most important initiatives. Robin Wagner's dedication never wavered, even as she undertook the significant challenge of launching a new firm this year. Lena Gonzalez elevated the role of Program Chair in meaningful ways, bringing renewed energy and creativity to our programming, all while welcoming a new baby during her tenure.

I am grateful to Chief Judge Stephen J. Murphy, III, whose commitment to collaboration with this bar association and servant leadership continues to open doors and create opportunities for meaningful engagement between the bench and bar.

Serving in this role reinforced for me that the strength of our organization lies in the people who invest their time, energy, and ideas into it. This year was one of building, focused on systems, engagement, and momentum. I am confident that momentum will carry forward.

As we look ahead, EDMIBAR is well positioned to continue evolving in ways that reflect the needs and aspirations of our members while honoring the traditions that have long defined our district. It was a privilege to serve in this role, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this organization and to the community it represents.

Thank you for your support and your engagement.

SUFFS! EDMIBAR's Night Out

(from page 1)



SUFFS! Night out attendees.

Following the pre-reception, attendees gathered at the historic Fisher Theatre in downtown Detroit for the evening's performance of Suff's. Watching the protagonists navigate the delicate balance between political expediency and moral obligation resonated with our attendees, who must consider this balance in their legal work.

The outing was a resounding success, from the vibrant discussions at Miller Canfield to the final curtain call at the Fisher. It highlighted EDMIBAR's continued commitment to hosting events that allow members to engage with the legal history of our nation, state, and local communities in creative ways. EDMIBAR thanks Judge DeClercq for suggesting the outing and her recommendation of Suff's, which Judge Berg described as "the perfect Broadway musical for the EDMIBAR to see together. It dramatized the sacrifices, strategies, and strong friendships of the suffragists and their struggle for equality for all women." EDMIBAR also thanks Miller Canfield for its hospitality, sharing its breathtaking views of Detroit with attendees.



Michael Evan Carter

Camaraderie and Commitment: Michael Evan Carter Honored with 2026 Gilman Award

By Laura Mazor

On April 15, 2026, the Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association proudly honored

Michael Evan Carter as this year's recipient of the prestigious Leonard R. Gilman Award—an honor that reflects not only professional excellence, but a career defined by principled advocacy, intellectual rigor, and an unwavering commitment to public service. Held at the Westin Book Cadillac, the luncheon showcased the legal community—including federal judges and past Gilman Award recipients—who gathered in force for an event that underscored the breadth of respect Carter commands.

Carter's work as Executive Director at the Federal Community Defender Office (FCDO) has distinguished him as a leader in the criminal defense community. Yet titles alone fail to capture the depth of his impact. Colleagues describe him as formidable in the courtroom and deeply humane outside it—a rare combination that has earned him enduring respect and genuine affection among his colleagues. That affection was on full display during the ceremony, as nearly forty current and former members of his office rose to applaud their Chief.

The Gilman Award recognizes contributions that strengthen the administration of justice, and Carter's career exemplifies that mission. His commitment to public service is neither theoretical nor episodic; it is the throughline of his professional life. From his earliest days with John Shea and as a public defender in Washington, D.C., Carter has championed the rights of human beings and has demonstrated that excellence and empathy are not competing ideals, but complementary obligations. His work underscores a fundamental truth: that the legitimacy of the legal system depends on the quality and integrity of representation afforded to all.

This theme resonated powerfully in Carter's keynote and acceptance remarks. (In a unique turn, Carter had been invited to serve as keynote speaker before the selection committee finalized its decision to make him this year's honoree. As anticipated, Carter handled this double role with grace). Speaking with candor and precision, he addressed the enduring impacts of race and poverty in the American criminal legal system—forces that shape outcomes long before a case reaches a courtroom. His remarks did not dwell in abstraction; rather, they reflected lived realities encountered daily by public defenders and their clients. He challenged the audience to confront uncomfortable questions about equity, access, and the role of systemic disadvantage in shaping legal outcomes.

At the heart of his speech was a thoughtful examination of the Sixth Amendment right to counsel. Carter posed a series of probing, philosophical questions: What does it mean to provide counsel in a system marked by resource disparities? Is the right satisfied by mere appointment, or does it demand something more robust—time, trust, and the capacity for

meaningful advocacy? And how should the legal community measure whether that constitutional promise is being fulfilled in practice?

These questions, Carter suggested, are not merely academic. They go to the core of the profession's ethical obligations and the broader legitimacy of the system. His reflections served as both a call to action and a reminder: that public defenders are indispensable to the constitutional framework, and that their work safeguards not only individual rights, but the integrity of the system itself.

In honoring Carter, the EDMIBAR recognized more than a distinguished career—it acknowledged a body of work that challenges, elevates, and inspires. His leadership has strengthened an institution; his advocacy has changed lives; and his voice encourages challenging conversations about justice, fairness, and the meaning of representation.

The Gilman Award was a fitting tribute. But perhaps more telling is the esteem in which he is held by the legal community—the judges and practitioners who see, day after day, the depth of his dedication and the humanity that animates his work. In that respect, the ideals of Leonard Gilman—decency, fairness, and professionalism—remain vibrantly alive in the work and leadership of Michael Evan Carter.



McCree Luncheon Keynote speaker, Orlando R. Gregory, who serves as the Executive Director of the Wayne County Jail Outreach Ministry.

Annual Wade Hampton McCree Jr. Award Luncheon for the Advancement of Social Justice

By EDMIBAR Newsletter Committee

On February 11, the Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association hosted the annual Wade Hampton McCree Jr. Award Luncheon for the Advancement of Social Justice. This year's luncheon was held at the Westin Book Cadillac hotel in Detroit. The McCree Award is given annually to an individual or organization who has made significant contributions to the advancement of social justice.

Bar President Charissa Potts launched the event with opening remarks, including recognizing the award recipient, retired District Judge Victoria A. Roberts.

Pro Bono Committee Co-Chairs Jennifer Newby and Nolan Moody then spoke about the Court's pro bono efforts. Newby recognized the approximately 40 attorneys who had participated in the Court's pro bono program in recent years, and Moody inspired future participants in the program by describing his rewarding experience handling a pro bono case.

Past President Andrew Lievens followed by introducing the McCree Award and commenting on Solicitor General McCree's significant role in the legal profession. He also

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McCree Jr. Award *(from page 3)*

announced that, in lieu of a physical award, and at Judge Roberts' request, a contribution in her name was being made to the St. Leo's Soup Kitchen, an organization in Detroit that she supports.

Next, District Judge Linda V. Parker introduced the award recipient, her friend and mentor Victoria A. Roberts. Judge Parker and attorney Saul Green nominated Judge Roberts for the McCree Award, and Judge Parker recounted many of Judge Roberts' tremendous personal qualities and professional accomplishments toward social justice that caused them to nominate her.

Before her current role as a mediator at JAMS, Judge Roberts was an Eastern District Judge for 25 years. Before that, she served in many legal roles, including representing the United States, the state of Michigan, the Detroit Building Authority, and many others. Throughout her career, Judge Roberts has been a trailblazer for so many, including native Detroiters, women, and African Americans. Among other things, while on the Court she pioneered new initiatives regarding federal juries and was a moving force behind the Court's Pro Se Prisoner mediation program and Pro Se Clinic.

Judge Roberts then took the stage. She expressed her deep appreciation for the recognition, including recounting a story of her interactions with then-Judge McCree, who helped her make professional connections early in her career despite not hiring her as his law clerk.

Chief Judge Stephen J. Murphy, III then introduced the event's keynote speaker, his friend Orlando R. Gregory, who serves as the Executive Director of the Wayne County Jail Outreach Ministry.

Gregory, a true son of Detroit, retired from the Detroit Fire Department after 25 years of service, where he had risen to become Second Deputy Fire Commissioner. Gregory spoke about his new purpose of service, having engaged in prison ministry since 2005. In his current role leading the Wayne County Jail Outreach Ministry, he leads efforts to address both the spiritual and practical needs of incarcerated and marginalized populations. He is also the CEO of BAM Ministries, LLC, an American Red Cross Instructor Trainee, and an active member of several nonprofit boards.

Gregory provided passionate remarks about the meaning and impact of his work, which was truly inspirational and in the spirit of the social justice mission the McCree luncheon seeks to highlight. The luncheon concluded with President Potts' closing remarks, including an overview of the many upcoming bar association events.

A Devilishly Good Time: Recapping EDMIBAR Women's Committee's Third Installment

By Hannah Smith & Mindy Herrmann



"Devil in the Details"
Moderator, Elizabeth Jolliffe.

Elizabeth A. Stafford, and Bankruptcy Judge Lisa S. Gretchko, which was moderated by Elizabeth Jolliffe. As a career coach for lawyers and formerly a long-time commercial litigator, Jolliffe's unique practical insight allowed attendees to get the most out of the panel's discussion. The panelists shared

specific actionable strategies for recognizing issues or concerns in practice that can either elevate a career or act as unexpected hurdles.

Afterwards, attendees broke out into small groups of 8-10 women where they engaged in meaningful dialogue. Each group was moderated by either a panelist or one of the other judges in attendance, including Judge Denise Page Hood, Judge Laurie J. Michelson, Judge Susan K. DeClercq, Judge Brandy R. McMillion, and Bankruptcy Judge Maria L. Oxholm. Participants were provided with not only invaluable "behind-the-bench" perspectives, but also the opportunity to develop camaraderie among themselves.

At the end of the discussions, all attendees reconvened to share their takeaways. A number of themes emerged throughout the discussion: confidence, perseverance, and

the innate ability to trust instincts in your practice. Older attorneys marveled at the fact that younger female attorneys are still faced with the same problems that they dealt with early on in their career. To cap off the evening, attendees enjoyed great food, wine, and each other's company.



Panel and attendees engage at the Women's Committee "Devil in the Details" event.

This successful event would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of our Women's Committee: Ashley Racette, Susan Fairchild, Justice Maura Corrigan, Margaret Debler, and Jennifer Salvatore.

EDMIBAR Diversity Committee Brings Law Students to Court for Annual "Classroom to Courtroom"

By Amir El-Aswad

On January 14, 2026, the EDMIBAR Diversity Committee welcomed law students from across Michigan to the Theodore Levin U.S. Courthouse in Detroit for its annual Classroom to Courtroom program. Chief Judge Stephen J. Murphy, III opened the day with remarks on his path to the bench and practical guidance for building a meaningful legal career.

Students then rotated through nine federal courtrooms to observe a wide range of proceedings—from civil jury and bench trials to criminal pleas, sentencing, and supervised release violation hearings—presided over by Judges Mark Goldsmith, Gershwin Drain, Matthew Leitman, Linda Parker, Jonathan Grey, Susan DeClercq, and Brandy McMillion. Cases touched on employment discrimination, civil rights, drug trafficking, firearm possession, illegal re-entry, and pandemic-era fraud, offering attendees a vivid look at federal litigation in action.

Over lunch, Ki Lee Kilgore, a former federal law clerk and current associate at Foley & Lardner LLP, moderated a high-impact panel featuring U.S. Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Stafford, former Assistant U.S. Attorney Abed Hammoud, Assistant Federal Defender Celeste Kinney, and federal law clerk Taylor Janssen. Panelists shared their career stories, advice for

succeeding in clerkships and litigation, and reflections on navigating the legal profession as diverse attorneys. Students left energized by the opportunity to see advocacy and judicial decisionmaking firsthand.

The Diversity Committee thanks all participating judges, court staff, and panelists for another successful event and looks forward to continuing its mission to make the federal courts accessible to the next generation of advocates.



Moderator Ki Lee Kilgore at the Classroom to Courtroom Event.

New Lawyers' Seminar - A Gold Medal 50th Year!

By Christine Dowhan-Bailey

The Association conquered its own version of winter sport by delivering another power-packed, two-day New Lawyers' Seminar (NLS) on January 27th and 28th for the 50th year! Legal talent of various ages and experience flexed their considerable grey-matter muscle to share collective wisdom and knowledge with 71 new(er) attorneys at the Theodore Levin U.S. Courthouse. While the setting may not have been Milan-Cortina, it felt like an Olympic challenge when the fall federal government shutdown forced an abrupt scheduling pivot. Nonetheless, like Old Glory, the program unfurled seamlessly featuring many fresh/interactive sessions and a broader audience, courtesy of a new local law school outreach.

The passing of the knowledge torch was not limited to the seminar, per se. Our three newer NLS committee co-chairs: Joan Campau of Salvatore, Prescott, Porter & Porter, LLC; Jeff May of Bodman Law; and Sinéad Redmond, also of Bodman, more than proved their mettle and readiness to take the future helm of this grand tradition. Their

input sharpened the agenda, and the trio adeptly tackled all curveballs hurled by the gods of last-minute changes. The following additional co-chairs kept their sleeves rolled up, too: Grant Gilezan of Dykema; Lauren Mandel, Career Law Clerk to the Honorable Linda Parker; Cathrine Wenger of



New Lawyers' Seminar attendees shown here in the Million Dollar Courtroom.

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New Lawyers' *(from page 5)*

La-Z-Boy, Inc.; and Christine Dowhan-Bailey, retired, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Detroit District Counsel.

Alexander Coryell of Brooks, Wilkins, Sharkey & Turko skillfully moderated Day 1 of the seminar. United States District Judge Laurie Michelson began by welcoming attendees on behalf of Chief Judge Stephen Murphy, their colleagues, chambers' staff, and all of the other individuals who make up the federal court's family. Judge Michelson noted that as the NLS Golden Anniversary, it was, indeed, a special occasion. She then spoke about how the seminar was an opportunity to become familiar with the federal court, demystify what it means to practice there, receive practical guidance, network with participants, and perhaps discover new areas of the law. Judge Michelson stressed common goals for all practitioners: fairness, professionalism, and integrity.

Nahin Ahmed, the court's Case Administration Team Leader, presented essential information every lawyer must know to get something done in federal district court: using the Case Management and Electronic Filing (CM/ECF) system and PACER. Richard Hewlett from Varnum provided an Anatomy of a Civil Case, walking new lawyers through the litigation process in state and federal court. An overview of 42 U.S.C. § 1983 litigation followed, with Robin Wagner of Robin Wagner Law moderating a panel of other experienced practitioners in the field: Margaret Debler of Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler; Reginald Dozier of Lewis & Munday P.C.; and Sarah Prescott of Salvatore, Prescott, Porter & Porter, LLC. The panel offered practice tips for plaintiffs and defense lawyers.

A discussion of civil rights litigation was an ideal transition to learning about pro bono opportunities in federal district court from Nolan Moody of Dickinson Wright PLLC and Assistant United States Attorney Jennifer Newby. With nearly 25% of civil cases in the Eastern District involving at least one unrepresented party, they stressed the great need for lawyers to assist pro se parties prosecuting or defending civil rights cases. Representation can be for an entire matter or limited to a discrete portion of a case. Jennifer and Nolan emphasized that pro bono work is a great opportunity for new(er) lawyers to get into court, participate in oral argument, take

or defend depositions, or try a case. They also explained how volunteering plays a critical role in closing the "Justice Gap."

Seminar participants next received tips directly from members of the bench: Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Martha Snow and United States District Judges Shalina Kumar and Laurie Michelson. These experienced jurists provided "do's and don'ts" for preparing complaints, briefs, oral arguments, and communicating with the bench and staff. They encouraged attendees to visit the courthouses where they will practice and observe other lawyers as often as possible.

Following a delicious lunch from Rocco's Deli and time to socialize, Eastern District of Michigan Official Court Reporters covered "Making the Record." As Shacara Mapp demonstrated RealTime reporting, Sheri Ward provided some stenography history, and Leann Lizza offered critical advice for lawyers to help court reporters make an accurate

and complete record.

Speakers for the remainder of the afternoon introduced a variety of substantive practice areas. United States Bankruptcy Court Judge Paul Hage and bankruptcy practitioner Charissa Potts of Freedom Law, P.C. provided an overview of bankruptcy law. Parisa Gold of Johnson, Szykiel, Hunt, Fraser, Gold & Barron, P.C. next spoke about personal injury law. Robert Heitmeyer of the Internal Revenue Service then discussed Tax Consequences of Routine Legal Transactions, to make lawyers in various fields aware of the tax issues they must consider in their everyday practice. The day's topics concluded with an overview of employment law by experienced practitioner Cathrine Wenger.

The first day ended with a unique opportunity for admission to practice before The District Court of the Eastern District of Michigan in the "Million Dollar Courtroom." Senior Judge Bernard A. Friedman presided, first leading a brief tour of the magnificent space. He shared the rich history of the jurists depicted in portraits, the globally-sourced

materials used in the courtroom's 1800's era construction, and a discussion of décor themes. On the motion of Joan Campau, Judge Friedman swore in the newest members of the Bar of the Eastern District of Michigan. Following the ceremony, participants remained to take photos of the historic space and commemorate their important accomplishment with Judge Friedman.



U.S. District Judge Susan K. DeClercq participating at the New Lawyers' Seminar.



U.S. Magistrate Judge Anthony P. Patti participating at the New Lawyers' Seminar.

Gabriella D'Agostini of Honigman ably moderated Day 2, which began with a warm welcome, congratulations, and a plug for the value of bar activities from Jacob Glenn Eccleston, Michigan State Housing Authority and Chair of the Michigan State Bar Young Lawyers Section (NLS Co-Sponsor). Michael Goetz, Grievance Administrator for the Michigan Grievance Commission, connected with students as he outlined the purpose, work, and process of the Commission. His passion and ability to speak extemporaneously regarding common mistakes of young lawyers, how to avoid them, and how to respond to a grievance energized the room. Julie Fershtman of Foster Swift, and a former NLS student, followed by sharing invaluable personal experience and tips for new lawyers who are considering a solo practice. Todd Flood took the podium next delivering a captivating explanation of how to evaluate and handle criminal cases in state and federal court.

The group returned to the Million Dollar Courtroom to observe a spirited and well-argued hearing on a motion to dismiss before Judge Terence Berg. Attendees packed the benches and the jury box to witness the proceedings and pose questions to the attorneys and Judge Berg. The litigants and jurist shared preparation details, strategy, and thoughts about their respective positions.

At noon, Judge Berg, along with Judges Paul Borman, Susan DeClercq, Jonathan Grey, Denise Page Hood, David Lawson, Brandy McMillion, Robert White, and Anthony Patti, joined the attendees for lunch. These members of the bench put participants at ease with stories of their most embarrassing young lawyer moments. The judges also took time to meet and talk with new attorneys at their tables while dining on a delicious lunch from Edibles Rex.

Kevin Hendrick of Clark Hill began the afternoon with alternative dispute resolution strategies to resolve cases. Shel J. Stark, Arbitrator and Mediator, presented negotiation methods for settlements, including an engaging opportunity for participants to practice what they learned.

Day 2 concluded with a simulated heated deposition

leading to a hearing on opposing motions for a protective order and motion to compel. Judge Patti presided over the fictional proceeding while Jeff May and Sinéad Redmond played the roles of opposing counsel. The interchange underscored the importance of practicing civility, knowing the presiding judge's Practice Guidelines, engaging in efforts to resolve matters without court involvement, and preparation, preparation, preparation!

Scenes from the Holiday Party



The committee thanks the judges and lawyers, many of whom are NLS veterans, for generously sharing their time and talent. We extend a special thank you to Executive Director Mindy Herrmann for her amazing work, not the least of which included scaling curbside wintry moguls to deliver food and EDMIBAR 50th year swag. Thank you, also, to the law firms who answered the call and enrolled new associates.

The flame will be lit again on December 8 and 9, 2026. Save the date and send us your fresh recruits this fall.

2025 EDMIBAR Holiday Party

By EDMIBAR Newsletter Committee

The Chapter threw its nineteenth annual Holiday Party on December 10, 2025, in the Beaubien Room of the Atheneum Hotel and Conference Center. Members of the bench and bar enjoyed entertainment by Magician Jasen Magic, in addition to hors d'oeuvres, spirits, and camaraderie. Judicial attendees included U.S. District Judges David M. Lawson, Gershwin A. Drain, Laurie J. Michelson, Shalina D. Kumar, and Susan K. DeClercq, and U.S. Magistrate Judges Kimberly G. Altman and Anthony P. Patti.

Pictures of the event are available on EDMIBAR's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/edmibar/>

The FBA would like to thank the many people who assisted in this year's event. The event was sponsored by The Miller Law

Firm, David Haron/Hoyer Law Group, Darrow Mustafa, Honigman, Pitt McGehee Palmer Bonanni & Rivers, Rosati, Shultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, Kienbaum, Hardy, Viviano,

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Holiday Party *(from page 7)*

Pelton & Forrest PLC, Miller Canfield, Warner Norcross & Judd, Bush Seyferth, JAMS, Howard & Howard, Hickey Hauck Bishoff Jeffers & Seabolt PLLC, Brooks Kushman, and Dennis Barnes – Barnes ADR. Thank you especially to EDMIBAR Executive Director Mindy Herrmann, who works tirelessly. Also thank you to event chairs Tom Cranmer and Elisa Angeli Palizzi for planning another successful event.

Northern Division Holiday Party

By Kristina Gregerson

On December 15, 2025, the District's Northern Division held its annual holiday party. Attendees included both of the Northern Division's judicial officers—Judge Thomas L. Ludington and Magistrate Judge Patricia T. Morris—as well as their chambers staffs; employees of the U.S. Attorney's Office; Chief U.S. Probation Officer Anthony Merolla; Probation and Pretrial Services officers and staff; and U.S. Marshals and Court Security Officers.

The festivities were largely planned and executed by Judge Ludington's staff, including Paralegal Haley Hages, Case Manager Kelly Winslow, and Court Reporter Carol Harrison. Lunch included a soup bar featuring nearly a dozen varieties of soup, home-baked rolls and bread, salad, and numerous dessert options. The soup bar gave partygoers an opportunity to stick to tried-and-true options or try something new.

Additionally, Court Administrator/Clerk of Court for the District, Kinikia D. Essix, attended this year's party. She brought with her length-of-service awards and tokens of the Court's appreciation for Northern Division employees who were unable to make the trip to Detroit for this year's Employee Appreciation event. Congratulations to the Northern Division's Lisa Kern and Keith Stotts for their fifteen years of service, Kelly Winslow for her ten years, and Kristina Gregerson and Haley Hages for their five years.

The holiday party was a success, attracting dozens of attendees who enjoyed breaking bread with their Northern Division colleagues, and giving all a chance to appreciate the camaraderie of the District's northernmost courthouse.



Northern Division Holiday Party Attendees.

Photo by Kristina Gregerson



Northern Division Holiday Party Attendees.

Photo by Kristina Gregerson

Jonathan Green, Access to Bankruptcy Court, and Michelle Adams recognized at the Rom/Rakow/Historical Society Luncheon

By Hon. Andrew Lievense

On November 12, the Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association and Chapter held the second of its annual four-part luncheon series. It was an action-packed event that combined the Annual Meeting of the Court Historical Society, the Edward H. Rakow luncheon, and the recognition of the recipient of the Barbara J. Rom Award for Bankruptcy Excellence. The Court Historical Society also bestowed the Avern Cohn Award for excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Michigan legal history. This year's luncheon was held at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel.

President Charissa Potts began the event by welcoming all in attendance. Potts introduced Susan Fairchild of the Eastern District's Federal Bar Foundation, which bestows the Edward H. Rakow Award. Fairchild recognized this year's recipient, Access to Bankruptcy Court, with a \$5,000 grant that she presented to Bankruptcy Judge Paul Hage. Access to Bankruptcy Court funds attorneys who provide bankruptcy-related legal services at a reduced rate to individuals who live below the poverty line.

Chief Judge Stephen J. Murphy, III then introduced the Barbara J. Rom Award, which honors individuals who have exhibited the highest level of overall excellence in the practice of bankruptcy law. Chief Judge Murphy focused his remarks on Barbara Rom herself and the legacy she built as a

bankruptcy practitioner in the Eastern District. His recognition was especially well received as Barbara Rom herself was in attendance.

Chief Judge Murphy passed the microphone to Marc Swanson, a Miller Canfield colleague, mentee, and friend of the Rom Award recipient, Jonathan S. Green. Swanson described the impact Green has had on him and the bankruptcy bar generally in his thoughtful remarks. In particular, Swanson noted Green's encyclopedic knowledge of the bankruptcy code and his skill in negotiations, punctuated by Green's ability to dissect a dispute and fashion an outcome that serves the needs of all parties.

Green is a long-time Miller Canfield partner who concentrates his practice in bankruptcy and restructuring,

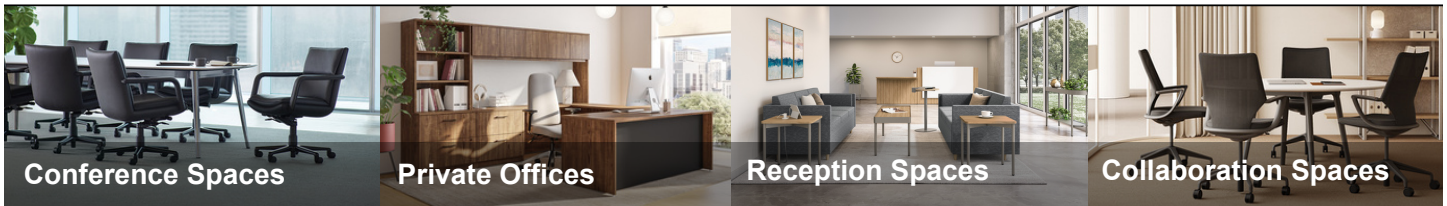
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ROM/Rakow/Historical *(from page 8)*



Jonathan S. Green

representing clients in debtor-in-possession financings, supply protection negotiations, Chapter 11 restructurings, and asset acquisitions. Among other professional accomplishments, Green played a key role as part of the Miller Canfield team serving as Michigan counsel to the City of Detroit in its Chapter 9 bankruptcy and ongoing restructuring efforts, which included the establishment of the Great Lakes Water Authority

and multiple post-confirmation financings.

Among other accolades, Green has been recognized by Chambers USA in Bankruptcy/Restructuring since 2006 and is listed in Best Lawyers in America, Michigan Super Lawyers, DBusiness Top Lawyers, and Leading Lawyers.

Accepting the Rom Award, Green spoke eloquently on what his 40+ year legal career in the bankruptcy bar has meant to him, both professionally and personally. He described the great mentorship that he received from Barbara Rom, Miller Canfield attorneys, and others, hoping that he had been as good of a mentor to others as those attorneys had been to him. Green's passion for bankruptcy law began early in law school, and he left listeners with a keen observation: "Bankruptcy isn't about money, it's about the amount!"

At this point, Matt Lund convened the Annual Meeting of the Historical Society for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. He summarized the Historical Society's recent accomplishments, including continuing oral histories of the Court, a documentary, and educational tools. Lund then introduced Professor Michelle Adams, the keynote speaker and recipient of this year's Avern Cohn Award. The award is named in honor of the late District Judge Avern Cohn in recognition of his immeasurable contributions to the cause of legal scholarship and the study of legal history.

Professor Adams, a law professor at the University of Michigan School of Law, was recognized for her new book, *The Containment: Detroit, the Supreme Court, and the Battle for Racial Justice in the North*. The book chronicles the events that led up to the Supreme Court's decision in *Milliken v. Bradley*, with special emphasis on what led to Eastern District Judge Stephen Roth's landmark order to achieve racial balance in schools by tearing down the walls separating the city and its suburbs. Professor Adams' remarks included a summary of the lead-up to the trial, the trial itself, and Judge Roth's eventual desegregation remedy and order, which were reversed in *Milliken*. And Professor Adams commented on how the impact of *Milliken* is still felt today in society.

Potts finished the luncheon by providing closing remarks. Many thanks to Professor Adams for her contribution to Michigan legal history and for her remarks.

Chief Judge Stephen J. Murphy, III Delivers State of the Court

By Robin Wagner

On October 15, 2025, before a room of nearly 200 members of the Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association, the Honorable Stephen J. Murphy, III delivered his first State of the Court address as Chief Judge for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. EDMIBAR President Charissa Potts introduced Judge Murphy, highlighting his long career of public service, his wisdom, and his dedication to justice and ethical leadership.

Judge Murphy acknowledged Judges Robert H. Cleland and George Caram Steeh, who both recently changed to inactive status, as well as former Chief Judge Sean F. Cox, who retired in the past year. He also gave special recognition to the Hon. Nancy G. Edmunds, who had just announced that she would be retiring from the bench.

Delivering these remarks in the middle of the federal government shut down, Judge Murphy noted that the Court has some resources that allowed it to mostly weather the storm, but he did emphasize that the Court had not been immune to financial pressures in 2025.

Judge Murphy devoted a significant portion of his address to highlighting the role of the Magistrate Judges in our district. He explained that after Judge Jonathan J.C. Grey had been elevated to a District judgeship, that vacant Magistrate Judge position had not been filled due to budget limitations imposed by the Sixth Circuit. As a result, our six Magistrate Judges have more demanding loads, with more frequent criminal court duties alongside their important roles in the civil docket. Judge Murphy explained that the Court was evaluating several strategies for creating efficiencies for the Magistrate Judges and that we would learn more about these plans in the coming months.

Judge Murphy's remarks coincided with the release of the 2025 Annual Report of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. This report reviewed the Court's Pro Se Legal Assistance Clinic run by Professor Barb Patek and the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, along with the Pro Bono panel program and the Pro Se Prisoner Mediation Program, both of which rely heavily on the EDMIBAR membership for volunteers. You can learn more about getting involved with these programs at the Court's website and by signing up for the EDMIBAR Pro Bono community list.

As always, many of our District Judges, Magistrate Judges and Bankruptcy Judges attended the luncheon, along with the Court's Executive and Clerk, Kinikia D. Essix and members of her staff.

McIvor Annual Bankruptcy Fundraiser

By Ashley Jericho

The legal and business communities came together on October 16, 2025, at Warner Norcross + Judd LLP in Detroit, for the annual Hon. Marci B. McIvor Fundraiser benefiting Access to Bankruptcy Court. The event was a tremendous success, surpassing all prior fundraising years, thanks to the generosity and support of our sponsors, donors, volunteers, and attendees.

Access to Bankruptcy Court is a unique access-to-justice program based in the Eastern District of Michigan. The organization raises funds to provide experienced consumer bankruptcy counsel, free of charge, to low-income individuals and families in the district who otherwise might have no choice but to seek relief under the Bankruptcy Code without counsel.

The Board of Directors of Access to Bankruptcy Court extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who made this record-breaking evening possible. This year's support was needed more than ever, as the demand for Access to Bankruptcy Court's services has grown significantly amid rising financial hardship in our community. The funds raised will allow Access to Bankruptcy Court to continue providing essential guidance, legal assistance, and relief to individuals and families navigating bankruptcy and seeking a fresh financial start.

Access to Bankruptcy Court is also deeply grateful for the generous support of the Eastern District of Michigan Bar Association and the Federal Bar Association Foundation, whose partnership and commitment to access to justice were instrumental in the success of this year's event.

The success of this year's event reflects the compassion and commitment of the legal community to ensuring access to justice for all. Together, we are helping to build a stronger and more equitable community.

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Access to Bankruptcy Court welcomes continued support of its mission. To make a contribution or learn more about Access to Bankruptcy Court's work, please visit: www.accesstobankruptcycourt.com/donate/

Calendar of Events

August 12	Bench Bar Golf Outing
October 7	Open Meeting of Committee Co-Chairs/Executive Board
October 14	State of the Court Luncheon
November 4	Open Meeting of Committee Co-Chairs/Executive Board
November 10	EDMIBAR Luncheon
December 8-9	51st New Lawyers' Seminar
December 10	Holiday Party

Local updates and further developments at www.edmibar.org and national chapter updates at www.fbamich.org
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