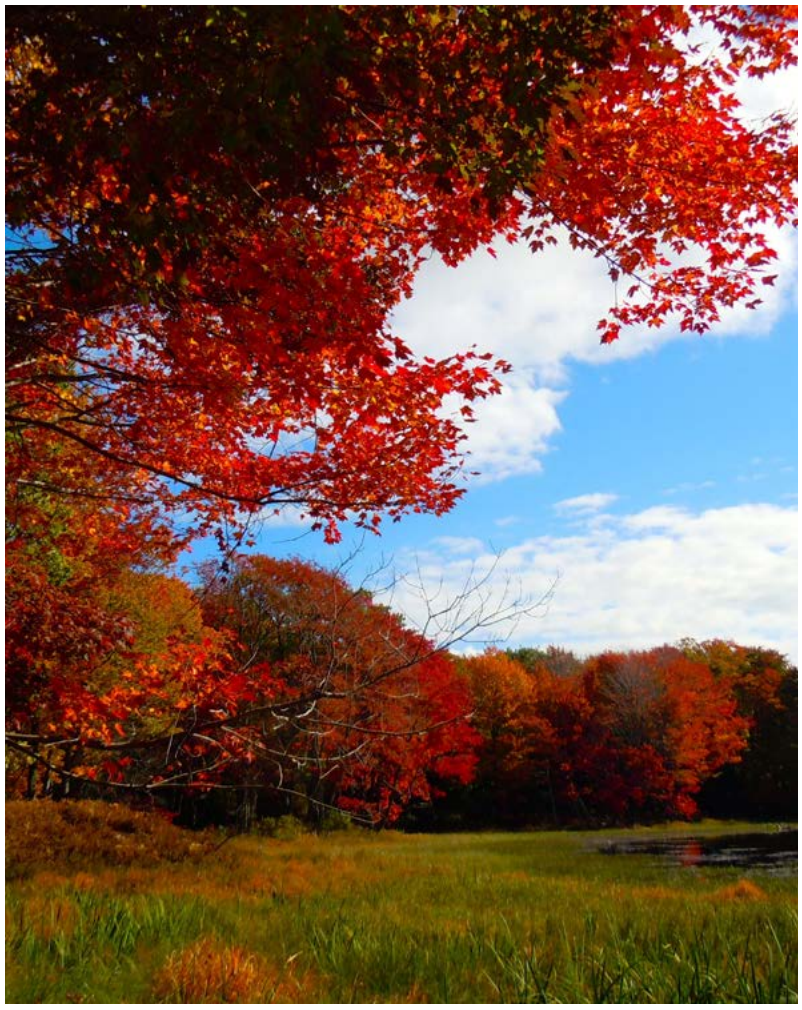
September/October 2019

BAR BEAT

Genesee County Bar Association



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Tina Said ...

New Board Members Profile

Health Care for Retirees Endangered?

What's Up for SCOTUS 2019-2020

Juvenile Mental Health Court: A Path to a Better Future

Fee-Shifting Orders in Divorce and Family Court

Senior Attorney Report

Employer Zero Tolerance Drug Policy and Medical Marijuana—Enforceable or Potential Discrimination Claim Under the Persons With Disabilities Civil Rights Act

Friend of Court at McCree

Community Action Committee Activities

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Tina Said ...

By Sherri L. Belknap, President

Sherri L. Belknap

It is my opinion that the Genesee County Bar Association is the best in the state, if not the nation. We have a great membership that reflects diversity, talent, legal skills, and philanthropy. Over the year, I want to introduce the world to that talent, but I would be remiss if I did not also introduce you to the talent in the Genesee County Bar Association office. Tina, Eileen, and Star are funny, amazing ladies that I am blessed to know.

Our leader is Tatilia "Tina" Burroughs, Executive Director, who began working for GCBA in 1996. You may hear me say the theme of my "reign" is "Tina Said" (it started out as a joke, but then she gave me deadlines). She has the responsibility to schedule all the *Bar Beat* article deadlines, swearing in ceremonies, Law Day, Golf Outing, and other events. She also handles all of the GCBA and Genesee County Bar Foundation finances. Tina is highly efficient and a great leader of our organization.

She is organized, intelligent, and focused. A life-long resident of Genesee County, Tina is married with two children. Her children are ages eight and five and are active in gymnastics, swimming, and karate. Tina is a member of her church choir and volunteers in children's ministry. In listening to her stories about her children, they are just like her …. amazing.

Next, our Office Manager is Eileen Harris, who has been with GCBA since 2010. A mother of two beautiful women, Eileen is hard-working, generous, and has a lot of patience (after all, she puts up with me). Her first major GCBA event was Law Day which she handled like a pro and without Tina who was on maternity leave.

In her free time, Eileen has renovated a home with her husband, travels, and enjoys her two dogs. In order to keep up with her, make sure you rise at 4:00 a.m. in order to go for a walk or a workout (no matter the weather). She is an avid bird watcher who will travel to see the beautiful birds in our state. Eileen's daughters, Mary and Becky, are successful in their respective fields. Mary, 2016 Asparagus Queen, is an Agronomist. Becky works for the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Last but not least, our Lawyer Referral Specialist is Starlynn Estep. Star has been with GCBA since 2000. She is resourceful, smart, and willing to give advice when I need it. As a Lawyer Referral Specialist, Star takes the intake calls from clients who want to hire an attorney. She matches their legal needs to one of the attorneys on the Lawyer Referral Panel and schedules an appointment for the client to meet with the attorney. She also helps during GCBA events like Law Day, monthly meetings, golf outing and so much more.

Star is a mother of two daughters, Aundrea and Peggy. She also has several grandchildren and fur babies. In her spare time, she likes working on puzzles, going to church, and spending time with her family.

Over the last few years, I have gotten to know the ladies as more than just employees of the GCBA office. They are friends. I look forward to going into the office and chatting with them. They are funny, interesting, and great inspirations. Thank you, ladies, for making GCBA look good.

New Board Members Profile

Leo J. Foley Jr.

Brooke E. Tucker

Name: Leo J. Foley Jr.

Family: Married to Leah Foley with a 4-year-old son.

High School: Powers Catholic High School, 2000

Undergraduate school, degree and grad year: Aquinas College 05 Bachelor of the Arts Cum Laude

Law school and grad year: Thomas Cooley 2011

Bar Association member since: 2012

Area(s) of practice: Chapter 7, 11 and 13 Bankruptcy

Office location, phone number, and email address:
2425 S. Linden Road, Ste. C, Flint, MI 48532
(810) 720-4333
leo@bklawoffice.com

Name: Brooke E. Tucker

Undergraduate school, degree and grad year: Eastern Michigan University- BA in Spanish and Public Law & Government, 2011

Law school and grad year: DePaul University College of Law-Juris Doctor, 2014

Bar Association member since: California Bar, 2015; Michigan Bar, 2015; Texas Bar, 2019.

Area(s) of practice: Administrative law, Agency law, Appellate law, Civil law, Contract law, Employment law, Municipal law, Public Health law

Office location, phone number, and email address: Genesee County Circuit Courthouse, Prosecutor's Office-Civil Division, (810) 257-3050

Past GCBA committees and activities: Christmas Dinner volunteer, Lunch N' Learn attendee

SBM involvement, if any: N/A

Reasons you believe in service to the GCBA: I believe in service as an opportunity to add to the positive aspects of the collective honor and reputation of our profession and because the community service objectives of the GCBA align closely with my own.

Health Care for Retirees Endangered?

By Alec S. Gibbs

Alec S. Gibbs

Under Michigan public sector labor law, retirees are outside the labor-management bargaining relationship, and vested retirement rights cannot be altered without the consent of retirees. *See Butler v Wayne Co*, 289 Mich App 664, 672; 798 NW2d 37 (2010). In that context, Article IX Section 24 of the Michigan Constitution (hereinafter "Pensions Clause") guarantees the payment of accrued financial benefits. However, this clause does not protect health insurance benefits. *See Studier v Mich. Pub. Sch. Emples. Ret. Bd.*, 472 Mich 642 (2005). For approximately nine years prior to the decision in *Studier*, however, there was no decisive Michigan Supreme Court decision on this point. *See Musselman v Governor of Mich*, 448 Mich 503; 533 NW2d 237 (1995) and *Musselman v Governor (On Rehearing)*, 450 Mich 574; 545 NW2d 346 (1996). Accordingly, it was not clear what language the parties to a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) needed to include in order to establish health care coverage as a vested right in retirement.

The United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit had adopted one approach in the case of *Int'l Union, United Auto, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) v YardMan, Inc*, 716 F2d 1476, 1478 (CA 6, 1983). This became known as the "Yard-Man inference" in subsequent cases, and it created a rebuttable inference or presumption that retiree benefits described in CBAs were vested and survived the general durational clause that governs most other benefits described within a CBA. This presumption was abolished by the United States Supreme Court in the case of *M&G Polymers USA, LLC v Tackett*, 574 US 427; 135 S Ct 926; 190 L Ed 2d 809 (2015).

The effect of the *Tackett* decision on Michigan's public sector retirees was unclear and unresolved until May of this year. First, there was substantial uncertainty over what protection the Pensions Clause provided prior to the Michigan Supreme Court's decision in *Studier*. As a result, the bargaining parties often assumed that health care benefits were protected in the same way that pensions were before *Studier*. Second, there are many CBAs that describe public sector retiree pension and health care benefits using virtually identical language and while the former vest as a matter of constitutional law, it would be odd to expect that the parties to these agree-

ments intended radically different outcomes when identical language was used. Many courts turned to extrinsic evidence to discern the intent of the parties in cases where there was apparent ambiguity.

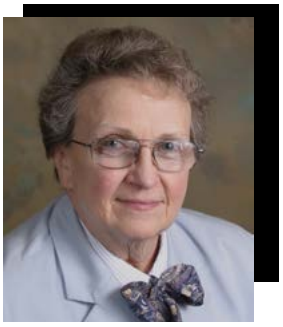
In *Kendzierski v Macomb Co*, 503 Mich 296; 931 NW2d 604 (2019), the Michigan Supreme Court adopted a framework of contract interpretation that essentially inverts the *Yard Man* inference the Sixth Circuit had used before the *Tackett* decision. The Court of Appeals had identified several provisions that would seem to indicate that health care coverage was intended to last beyond the general durational clause, including requirements that retirees sign up for Medicare in order to maintain coverage, a "survivor" option permitting continuation of a surviving spouse's healthcare coverage following the death of the retiree, and a requirement that a retiree who obtains subsequent employment sign up for comparable coverage for the duration of that employment, if comparable coverage is available through the subsequent employer.

The Michigan Supreme Court rejected the argument that any of these requirements could indicate an intent for the benefits to survive the general durational clause. Instead, the court suggested that because an employee could retire, reach age 65 and die within the three-year limit of the general durational clause, there was no ambiguity as to duration. And in the absence of any ambiguity or language specifying that health care coverage was intended to last beyond the general durational clause, it was inappropriate for lower courts to consider conclusive extrinsic evidence that showed Macomb County had considered these to be vested benefits.

Municipalities feeling the burden of rising health care costs are no doubt celebrating this decision today, but millions of families living in Michigan are covered by these contracts. This includes many who negotiated better health care coverage in retirement in lieu of salary increases that would have increased their pensions. Unless there is a legislative fix on the question of health care specifically, or a change in the direction of the Michigan court decisions on the rights of retirees, their future financial stability is in jeopardy. And the costs of their losses will have an impact on federal, state and local government.

What's Up for SCOTUS 2019-2020

By Roberta J.F. Wray



Roberta J.F. Wray

Six cases are scheduled for argument in the first week of the new Supreme Court term. Two involve 14th Amendment issues:

- *Ramos* v *Louisiana*, No. 18-5924, asks whether the 14th Amendment fully incorporates the Sixth Amendment guarantee of a unanimous verdict.
- *Kahler* v *Kansas*, No. 18-6135, asks whether the Eighth and 14th Amendments permit a state to abolish the insanity defense.

One of the first cases to be argued on the Supreme Court docket this term involves the Sixth Amendment, the fourteenth amendment and more than seven hundred years of English-American common law. It stems from a Louisiana case in which a man was convicted of second-degree murder under Louisiana law by a non-unanimous verdict. *Ramos* v *Louisiana*, 18-5924.

Apart from the point that non-unanimous verdicts are permitted in two states, the Sixth Amendment does not specifically require them. This case points to seven hundred years of common law and to the history of racism, particularly in the post-reconstruction south. The non-unanimous verdict in both Louisiana and Oregon, has been permitted "in part for racially discriminatory reasons." Brief of American Bar Association, p.3.

Amicus briefs have been filed, in addition to the ABA, by the NAACP, ACLU, and seven other groups and organizations on behalf of Evangelisto Ramos.

Another first day case is *Kahler* v *Kansas*, 18-6135. The issue here is whether the Eighth and 14th Amendments permit a state to abolish the insanity defense, citing the "cruel and unusual punishment clause." The case challenges Kansas' legislative decision to abolish insanity as an affirmative defense and abandon the relevance of a lack of moral culpability which has been an "integral part of Anglo-American criminal law" (*Kahler* Brief, p. 13/SCOTUS Merit Cases) and has antecedents dating back to the 14th century. The *Kahler* argument set forth in the brief is an interesting historical analysis of the principal

Continued on the next page

What's Up for SCOTUS
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of lack of moral culpability dating back to the sixth century BCE in the Torah, and to Plato, Justinian, St. Augustine, and the English Common Law and extending to the M'Naghten rule. (*op.cit*. p. 18 *et seq*.) The argument even includes a Flint case (*Morissette* v *United States*, 342 US 246, 96 L Ed 288, 72 S Ct 240 (1952) argued before the Supreme Court in the first week of the 1951 term by the late Andrew J. Transue, a member of the GCBA.

On the second day of the term the Court will hear three cases about whether Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting discrimination on account of sex includes transgender individuals. The following week will include five cases that have been consolidated that have to do with the actions of the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico.

November will see the first cases concerning the Department of Homeland Security's decision to wind down the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy. A Hawaii case asks whether the Clean Water Act requires a permit when pollutants originate from a point source but find their way to navigable waters via a non-point source such as groundwater.

Further cases that have already been accepted but not scheduled for argument will touch on age discrimination, transportation of licensed, locked and unloaded weapons across New York City, limits to home or shooting range outside the city, and enforcement of promises to pay health insurers for losses already incurred when Congress attempts to evade payment through legislative action. Watch this space.

Juvenile Mental Health Court: A Path to a Better Future

By Hon. Jennie E. Barkey

Hon. Jennie E. Barkey

Each and every one of us is affected by mental illness in some way. Whether it be ourselves, a member of our families, co-workers, or friends, someone we care about has struggled with their mental health. Every one of us knows someone personally that needs medication in order to handle what this world has to offer. If left untreated, mental illness can unfortunately lead an individual down a road that results in entry to the criminal justice system.

Eleven years ago, in Genesee County, a number of caring individuals in the community came together to form the first mental health court in the State of Michigan. This initiative was based on the philosophy that the community can better serve its mentally ill population. A joint initiative between the Sheriff's Department, Genesee Health System, and the courts, created the initial mental health court program for adults in the community. A juvenile program followed soon after in April of 2009.

The Juvenile Mental Health Court program is designed for juveniles that have been charged with delinquency behavior as a result of their mental illness. The juvenile must meet certain eligibility requirements for entry into the program. Eligibility is determined following a screening process that examines clinical diagnosis, type of offense, and

potential behavioral risk among other factors. If accepted into the program, the juvenile and the juvenile's parent(s) or guardian(s) must agree in writing to participate and cooperate with the program.

The program is 100% grant-funded through the Michigan Mental Health Court Grant Program. The program grant requires a comprehensive application with the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), including a Local Administrative Order and Memorandum of Understanding signed by the program's team members. Any juvenile mental health court operating in the state of Michigan must be certified by SCAO.

Like other problem-solving courts, juvenile mental health court takes a collaborative approach to address the underlying mental health, family, and social issues involved in a juvenile's life that lead to criminal behavior. Participants are assigned a case worker and/or a therapist during their time in the program. The court holds weekly status review hearings to track participants' progress and provide support, guidance, and, if necessary, sanctions for failure to follow through with program expectations. Instrumental in making the program work is the partnership with Genesee Health System and Jill Bade, a juvenile probation officer who has been with the program since day one.

The collaborative, team-centered approach allows for some creativity in how a "case" is handled. For example, sanctions for poor effort in a given week may include taking away the participant's cell phone for the following week (most participants would prefer prison!). Reports of a bad attitude with a case worker or therapist might result in court-ordered volunteer work at the local soup kitchen. Not attending school on a regular basis has resulted in me picking the participant up in the morning and dropping him off at the school's front doors – which is quite the sanction!

On the other side, good grades on a report card could earn a reward as a program incentive, such as free movie passes or increased computer privileges at home. Group recognition in front of peers and other participants often goes a long way. The overarching goal is to put the juvenile in a position where he/she can manage mental illness and get on the right path to avoid recidivism.

To date, the Genesee County Juvenile Mental Health Court has had 164 participants, with 106 successfully graduating from the program. Successful completion of the program can result in a dismissal of charges or successful completion of probation depending on the basis for referral to the program.

The practical effect of this juvenile program is finishing high school, going on to college or employment, and not being trapped in the cycle of going on and off medication with the resulting calamities. Long-term, it is hoped that the adolescent will not reenter the criminal justice system and will have learned effective, healthy strategies to continue to manage their mental health.

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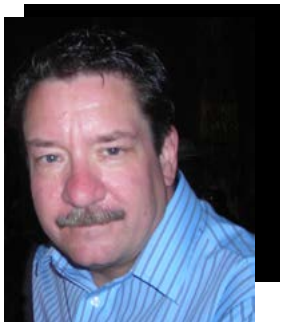
Fee-Shifting Orders in Divorce and Family Court

By John A. Streby



John A. Streby

Genesee County is not known for reasonable fee awards to domestic relations attorneys who request fee shifting under MCR 3.206(C). Domestic relations work is too demanding to be done "on the cheap," but attorneys here are increasingly left by courts to work virtually for free.

When courts defer fee requests, it discourages attorneys from accepting clients who can't pay significant retainers. Further, it suggests a disdainful view of the vital role that lawyers play in the adversary system, particularly in the domestic relations field.

The practice of holding fee petitions in abeyance likewise defies logic. Attorneys have ongoing obligations to their landlords, secretaries, health and malpractice insurance carriers, and other creditors. When debts fall delinquent, credit scores suffer, as does creditworthiness, leading to needless stress. Interestingly, deferral of fee requests contrasts with the up-front payments usually ordered for Guardians Ad Litem, who are increasingly used in contested cases.

Further, GAL fees are secured by court order, which typically requires payment before work on the case gets started. This disparity serves no legitimate purpose.

The uncertainty of what the court will eventually order takes a further toll. Those whose fee petitions are left unresolved are forced to perform under a cloud of uncertainty. A frequent source of after-the-fact dissatisfaction by domestic relations litigants is all the things that the attorney didn't do—*you didn't take any depositions; you didn't obtain appraisals; you*

Continued on the next page

Fee Shifting Orders ...
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didn't.....the list is endless. Yet attorneys can only be expected to perform commensurate with the level of funding available.

Deferral of attorney fees doesn't help get cases resolved– if anything, it creates a needless obstacle, as the prospective payer is unlikely to offer a fair attorney fee settlement when he thinks he'll fare better at trial.

Further, the process sometimes drives a wedge between the fee petitioner and her attorney. As trial approaches, the prospective payer may offer an array of favorable settlement terms that the petitioner finds appealing, but condition that on a waiver of any fee shifting. Conversely, the prospective payer may propose a generous fee award but little else that the spouse hopes for. Either scenario creates a conflict between the duty to the client and the need for compensation. Attorneys who have gone beyond the call of duty by taking deferred fee cases shouldn't be burdened with an ethical minefield as well.

The institutional attitude of which I complain forces attorneys to reject deserving but cash-starved clients, leaving them to attempt self-representation. That only leads to multifaceted prejudice to the Court, the Court's staff, and the opposing party. Pro per litigants often:

- Impose on the Clerk's and judges' staffs, seeking instructions on how to prepare and serve pleadings and motions, how to draw up orders, how to procure the attendance of witnesses and parties, and the like.
- Waste the Court's docket time with spurious issues that any experienced lawyer would dismiss.
- Attempt ex-parte contact with the Court, harass or threaten opponents or witnesses, and refuse to communicate with opposing counsel.
- Have difficulty preparing court orders to accurately reflect rulings, and not know when to object (and when NOT to) to a 7-day Notice of Presentment under MCR 2.602(B)(3).
- Are clueless on how to obtain substituted service.
- Do not know how to present argument, evidence and testimony, relying heavily on hearsay, pronouns such as "they," and the like.

Our bench and bar deal with people undergoing great distress, whose lives are falling apart at the seams. These litigants sorely need competent, diligent, compassionate advocates. Client control by good lawyers helps facilitate reasonable expectations and respect for the authority of the court. Without representation, they are cast into a cold, cruel milieu where missteps can be disastrous. Beyond that, their children, who never asked for the disruption associated with a family breakup, deserve better.

It is rumored that some judges and attorneys feel that fee shifting causes cases to be prolonged. Those holding that opinion should lobby the Michigan Supreme Court and the appropriate MSB committee to rescind the subrule in question. Until that happens, Subrule 302.6(C) should be enforced as written, subject to reasonable controls that judges and attorneys are quite capable of devising.

The domestic relations bar sorely needs judges to have our backs. Too often, they don't.

Thanks to Jeff Wright for sponsoring our 41st Annual Golf Scramble.

(His name was mistakenly left off the list that appeared in the July/August edition.)

Connect with the GCBA

Our Website: www.gcbalaw.org

On Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Genesee-County-Bar-Association/142757561178

Senior Attorney Report

By Richard "Dick" Ruhala

Richard Ruhala

We will meet for lunch on the 2nd Thursday of each month except for the months of July and August. The Luncheon will be from 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. at Logan's Restaurant in the private room reserved for our group. Logan's is a standalone building adjacent to the Genesee Valley Mall which faces Miller Road (near Linden intersection).

Any member of the Genesee County Bar Association over the age of 65 is invited to attend, as well as their member guests. All retirees are encouraged to attend as well as semi-retirees. Lunch orders are from the menu or as may be requested. Each attendee also pays his or her own meal costs.

The luncheon dates for the balance of this calendar year are Oct. 10 and Nov. 14, with one special Christmas luncheon scheduled for Dec. 12 at the Flint Golf Club.

Our Executive Committee meets when needed and the members are Dick Ruhala (Coordinator), John Mandelaris, Ed Henneke, Sally Joseph, Bob Ransom and Bobbi Wray. Your comments, suggestions and complaints are welcome.

We encourage attendees to participate in our local and State Bar Associations. For instance, some of our members attended the special State Bar of Michigan luncheon on Friday, September 27 in Novi, Michigan honoring our 50-Year Members.

The honorees are:
Jeffrey A. Chimovitz
Hon. John Connolly
Richard Figura
Peter Goodstein
Richard Hamilton
Henry Hanflik
Hon. Richard Hughes
William A. Shaheen
J. Dallas Winegarden, Jr.

We hope you have had an enjoyable summer and are now ready to resume your Bar Association activities.

Pictures from our September 2019 Membership Meeting at our new location, the Flint Farmer's Market.

Employer Zero Tolerance Drug Policy and Medical Marijuana—Enforceable or Potential Discrimination Claim Under the Persons With Disabilities Civil Rights Act

Gregory M. Meihn

By Gregory M. Meihn and Calli Duncan

Marijuana is set to become a major issue for Michigan employers, and zero tolerance drug policies are a potential new avenue for bringing disability claims against employers. In the past, Michigan employers have felt comfortable refusing to hire prospective employees who have received an offer of employment subject to a negative drug screen and then tested positive for marijuana, or terminating existing employees that have tested positive for marijuana. This zero-tolerance policy has been enforced against employees who have a medical marijuana card issued pursuant to MCL 333.26424 *et seq*.

Employers have relied upon U.S. Food and Drug Administration's listing of marijuana as a Schedule 1 drug under the Controlled Substance Act and federal case law, which holds that the Americans with Disability Act ("ADA") does not protect marijuana use, so employers may deny employment or terminate employment regardless of the existence of a medical marijuana card.

Schedule 1 drugs, substances, or chemicals are defined by the Controlled Substance Act as drugs with no currently accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse. Schedule 1 drugs are the most dangerous drugs of all the drug schedules with potentially severe psychological or physical dependence. Schedule I drugs cannot be *prescribed* by anyone and therefore are not prescription drugs.

The protections under the ADA are governed by Section 12111(6) which limits the prescription drug exemption to "uses authorized by the Controlled Substances Act." Federal case law has affirmed that ADA protections do not extend to the use of Schedule 1 drugs.

While there are no protections under Federal law for medical marijuana users, there may be protections for employees under state disability laws. Indeed, thirteen of the fifty states **have explicit protections** for card-holding employees. Nearly all of these states list specific protections against refusal to hire, wrongful discharge, or other forms of penalty and contain the important operative provision that a "***patient cannot be denied any right or privilege***" afforded by law. These protections often have limitations: many states have not barred employers from creating and enforcing their own on-site marijuana policies, nor are employers required to accommodate the patient's use of marijuana at the work place.

The Michigan Medical Marihuana* Act ("MMMA"), MCL 333.26424(4), provides the following protections for card holders:

> 4. Protections for Medical use of Marihuana.
>
> Sec. 4. (a) A qualifying patient who has been issued and possesses a registry identification card is not subject to arrest, prosecution, or penalty in any manner, *or denied any right or privilege*, including, but not limited to, civil penalty *or disciplinary action by a business* or occupational or professional licensing board or bureau, for the medical use of marihuana in accordance with this act….

Admittedly, this section is confusing and vague. MMMA provides no definition of the term "business." One way to read this language is to conclude that it does not apply to employee/employer relationships because of the use of the term "business." However, only employers can discipline an employee, so a logical reading would be that "business" means or includes employer. The MMMA does not directly address employers, employers' rights or the relationship of medical marijuana card holders and employers. Regardless, it would appear that because the MMMA uses the phrase prohibition of "***disciplinary action by a business,***" this provision of the MMMA would not protect pre-hire drug tests of card holders and would not implicate protections under Michigan's Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act for employees applying for employment.

However, the use of the words "***denied any right or privilege including, but not limited to***…" seems to imply that the list of rights or privileges cited in the statute are not exclusive and may extend to card holders in both pre-hire and post hire drug tests. Thus, an employer denying employment to a card holder who tests positive for

marijuana may be in violation of Michigan's Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act, MCL 37.1101 *et seq*.

Because of the vagueness of the MMMA regarding card holders, employers, and rights and protections of employees under the Michigan's Persons With Disability Civil Rights Act, it would appear that Michigan Courts will be required to chart a path, or the legislature will need to amend MMMA. Employers need to act carefully and be mindful of the potential for such a claim.

* [Editor's Note: The original statute uses the older spelling of marihuana with an "h"; current common usage is marijuana with a "j". Both spellings were left in place for this article.]

Friend of the Court at McCree

By Tony McDowell

Tony McDowell

Please pardon our dust at the McCree Building, but big changes are coming for the Genesee County Friend of the Court. In the next couple of months, the Friend of the Court will be moving to the second floor of the McCree Building. Our new address will be 630 S. Saginaw St., Suite 2500 Flint, MI 48502. The second floor of the McCree Building has been renovated over the past several months to meet the needs of the Friend of the Court clients and to receive some much needed upgrades. While change is never easy, the new facilities for the Friend of the Court should bring some increased benefits for clients being served by the Friend of the Court and better facilities for the valuable people who serve those clients. We hope to be occupying the new space in October of 2019.

The McCree Building move and renovation will provide some additional spaces to better serve the public, including but not limited to a training room, potential computer access for e-filing, and spaces for more immediate access to Friend of the Court services. The space has been renovated with the future of the Court in mind with internet access and power so clients will be able to submit documents electronically when e-filing is rolled out statewide.

The new space will also allow for the Friend of the Court to service clients in a courthouse with appropriate levels of security for everyone involved. The security screening, which has not been in place for the Friend of the Court for years, will create a safer environment for clients and staff alike.

With the move to the McCree Building the entire Friend of the Court team, including the child support referee office, will all be in one space and on one floor. From an organizational standpoint and a customer service standpoint, this will be a huge benefit compared to the Friend of the Court being spread out over two floors, two buildings, and several chopped up spaces. This will allow for clients to get to services more quickly and will result in better collaboration.

As the Family Support Division of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office is also in the McCree Building, clients who are served by the child support program will only have one building to go to for many of their concerns, increasing efficiency. Additionally, there will be much more opportunity for collaboration in the child support program in Genesee County as the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Friend of the Court will be able to work together to serve their clients in common in the same building.

We recognize that changing locations will be a challenge in some ways for those we serve, but we are hopeful that the benefits of the change will greatly outweigh the challenges. Please keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities in the near future to see and use our new space. We look forward to hosting and continuing to serve.

Welcome New Members

Judge: Hon. Jonathan Tukel
Employer: Michigan Court of Appeals
Undergrad School: University of Michigan
Law School: University of Michigan

Attorney: Alena M. Clark
Employer: Genesee County Prosecutor's Office
Undergrad School: Western Michigan University
Law School: University of Detroit Mercy School of Law

Attorney: Melissa Dixon
Employer: Mannor Law Group, P.L.L.C.
Undergrad School: Cleary University
Law School: Western Michigan University Cooley Law School

Affiliate: Sarah R. Cubr
Employer: Attorney Julie B. Griffiths

Affiliate: Cindy Lou Sheridan
Employer: Attorney Julie B. Griffiths

July/August BarBeat Corrections

Attorney: Francis J. Manley, V
Employer: Bodman PLC
Undergrad School: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Law School: Harvard Law School

Attorney: Paul Tower
Employer: Garan Lucow Miller, PC
Undergrad School: University of Michigan Dearborn
Law School: Wayne State University Law School

Community Action Committee Activities

Jessica J. Hammon

By Jessica Hammon

The Community Action Committee has a lot planned for this year, please note the following dates on your calendars! If you have any ideas about how the GCBA can get more involved in the community, please attend our next meeting on Wednesday, October 18th at 5:30pm at Blackstone's Smokehouse in downtown Flint.

Save these dates:

- Barristers' Ball 2020 - Saturday February 29, 2020
- North End Soup Kitchen Volunteering
  - Saturday, January 25, 2020
  - Saturday, March 28, 2020
  - Saturday, May 30, 2020
- Fundraiser to support the SBM Lawyer and Judge's Assistance Program - TBD

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- Auto Accidents
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Trucking Accidents
- Wrongful Death
- No Fault Law
- Personal Injury
- Dog Bites
- Medical Malpractice
- Premises Liability
- Dram Shop

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