

PLEADINGS

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SPRING DESK CLEANING

It's said that cleanliness is next to godliness, so how does that translate at work? Simply put, a sloppy desk implies sloppy work.

If piles of paper and empty coffee cups are part of your cube decor, it could be time for a little spring-cleaning.

Working in a pigsty can create more than just annoying clutter -- it can interfere with your work. A messy desk can stifle your creativity and thinking, make a bad impression on your co-workers and even make you sick.

If the thought of tackling the chaos of your cube seems overwhelming, take a deep breath and relax. We've put together a method that will make your chore no sweat.

Clear away clutter, crumbs

Start small with this fundamental change. Make an appointment with yourself and clear the clutter from your

workspace. Go through stacks of paper -- file what you want to keep and toss what's obsolete. Empty those overflowing wastebaskets, dump the dead plants and recycle those old newspapers and industry publications.

Don't just wipe off your dusty computer monitor and keyboard -- actually clean everything you touch, including mouse, phone, drawer handles and desk surface.

Think of all the things you touch in a day and think of how many others have done the same -- bathrooms, refrigerator doors, elevator buttons, stair rails, subway seats. If you touch those, chances are their germs will end up on your desk.

Scientists have found that desktops typically contain more bacteria than a toilet seat. Buy some wipes with the words "disinfecting" or "sanitizing" on the label and keep them in your desk.

Pay special attention to your keyboard -- all kinds of things can get caught under those keys. Buy an air duster for electronics -- it will get rid of all the crumbs and debris under there. Then turn the keyboard upside down and give it a good shake over the trash can.

Simplify, liven up work space

You can simplify your work and make it more efficient if you organize your work space. Now, what are your must-haves? Place only the bare necessities on your desktop and put away the things you use only once or twice a week.

Tackle your drawers, too. Depending on your space, reserve at least one drawer for personal items -- breath mints, contact solution, snacks, vitamins and pain reliever.

You probably have the regulation file folders, pen holder and catch-all for paper clips and rubber bands. Invest in some gear and gadgets to

arrange things. Try fun magnets, colorful bins, space-saving bookshelves and a coat hook. Nobody said this had to be boring.

Personalize your home away from home

Now why don't you make a few enhancements to the space you call your home away from home? Bring in a few things that will personalize your space and make it more welcoming.

Fluorescent lighting can be the enemy, and artificial light can make you feel stagnant and depressed. Add a desktop lamp to the mix. Flowers and plants bring color and life into your work space. Bring in some pictures of your friends and family (remember to be tasteful) or put up a colorful calendar.

Bringing some of your personality to work can inspire creativity, make you more appealing to co-workers and demonstrate your commitment to the boss.

By Kate Lorenz, editor for CareerBuilder.com.

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Clutter: Some Things to Dispose of Immediately

Useless rubbish can clutter your office area—here are ten things to discard right now.

Most of us have no idea we're even doing it, but it can rob you of productivity in a big way. We're talking about the tendency that many office professionals have to

accumulate "junk" in and around their desks . . . and before you know it, the junk takes over and the projects you're working on become more difficult simply because you can't find the reference materials you need in the midst of so much clutter.

The following are 10 types of things that may be cluttering your office environment, things that you should dispose of right away:

1. Pens and markers that no longer write.
2. Old paper clips that are bent, twisted and no longer usable.
3. Condiments and other things left over from past lunches . . . i.e., ketchup packets, forks, napkins.
4. Old memos, perhaps from months ago.
5. Phone message slips that you've already read and acted upon.
6. Stubby pencils with worn-down erasers.
7. Containers of correction fluid or white-out products that have dried up.
8. Old rubber bands that have become worn, cracked, brittle and are ready to break as soon as you use them.
9. Last year's daily planner that you never got around to throwing away.
10. The announcement of the upcoming company picnic,

which is still hanging on your bulletin board even though the picnic occurred three weeks ago.

From Keeping Tabs, the I Hate Filing Club by Pendaflex.

NALS OF GREATER KALAMAZOO BOARD OF DIRECTORS May 7, 2019

The May Board Meeting was held on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, at Goidosik Morse Law Offices. Minutes of the April Board meeting were approved. The Treasurer's report for April was approved subject to audit. Committee reports were given and discussed, including Scholarship, Ways and Means, Employment, Membership, and Programs and Reservations. Diane Berry reported \$160 received from the last Schwan's campaign. Schwan's is discontinuing this program, but did give us a nice donation. Four members so far plan to attend the NALS Forum in Little Rock. Funding decisions on this will be voted on at a later meeting, once we have more information on NALS of Michigan possibly funding its officers. Wrap-up of the 2019 Annual Meeting is on-going; a few more bills have to be paid, and the final bill negotiated with the hotel. Our chapter raffles at the Annual Meeting brought in over \$600!

The next board meeting will be June 4 at 5:30 at Goidosik Morse, held in conjunction with the annual budget/planning meeting. All members are welcome to attend.

NALS OF MICHIGAN DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Nancy Thomas, PLS



On April 26-28, 2019, I attended the NALS of Michigan 58th Annual Meeting and Educational Conference held at the Delta Marriott in Kalamazoo. Also attending from our chapter were: Paula Steffey, Tami Carl, Pam Wilcox, Kim Snow, Diane Berry, Michele Guyman, Kathleen Hutchins, Jen Antisdale, Jen Robinson, Deb Koppers, Janet Steward, Tierney Tubergen, Colleen VanSickle, Cathy Zackery, and Andrea Kardatzke. Special guest for the weekend was Maria Easterly, Director of Certification and Education for NALS, Inc., from Tulsa.

We had 52 register for the entire weekend, with 10 additional for Friday only, and 4 additional for Saturday only, plus several guests for various meals. There were a few glitches with the hotel and conference center, but we managed to keep calm and carry on in spite of those.



First of all, congratulations to our own Paula Steffey, PP, CLP-SC, CWCP, who received the NALS of Michigan Legal Professional of the Year Award! Paula is certainly a worthy recipient!

Friday was an all-education day, including topics on employment law, homeowners' insurance, criminal defense, stress management, consumer/lemon law, mock trial, SAKI update, and criminal profiling. Shannon Smith, defense attorney for Larry Nasser, was the keynote speaker. Tami Carl and Pam Wilcox did an outstanding job of lining up the education programs, with help from Paula Steffey and Diane Berry, among others. The exhibitors and vendors were with us on Friday, and we enjoyed visiting their displays. Friday's luncheon focused on the exhibitors, who were kind enough to furnish several door prizes.

Saturday featured the regular business meeting conducted by Teri Garber, NALS of Michigan President. Membership awards were presented to NALS of West Michigan and NALS of Detroit (tied for first place), and to NALS of Greater Kalamazoo (!) (second place). Proposed bylaw and standing rule amendments generated a lot of discussion, and in the end, several proposed changes were rejected and others approved. The budget was also approved.

The scholarship award winner selected by those members in attendance was Gianna Mason of Jackson. She received a \$1000 scholarship award toward her major in criminal justice at Ferris State University. She was able to join us for the banquet on Saturday night.

The Nominations Committee presented a slate of candidates. There was an opening for the office of treasurer, so nominations from the floor for that position were necessary. NALS of Greater Kalamazoo scored a hat trick for the 2019-2020 board. The following will serve on the NALS of Michigan board for 2019-2020:

President	Sue Acklin, PP, PLS, NALS of West Michigan
Vice President/Membership & Marketing	Cathy Zackery, CLP, NALS of Greater Kalamazoo
Vice President/Education & Certification	Maureen Jones, PP, PLS, ALP, Grand Traverse ALP
Treasurer	Jen Robinson, NALS of Greater Kalamazoo
Executive Secretary	Tami Carl, CLP, NALS of Greater Kalamazoo
Parliamentarian	Becky Quimby, NALS of West Michigan
Executive Advisor	Sherri Bowden, PP, PLS, NALS of West Michigan

NALS of Lansing agreed to host the 2021 annual meeting. More information will be submitted later as to location and dates. NALS of Michigan is the "host" for the 2020 annual meeting, to be held in Frankenmuth. Teri Garber is chairing. Volunteers are needed to assist with various committees.

Saturday also featured the certification luncheon, where newly certified members were recognized. At the Saturday banquet, the Clara LaGow Award for having the highest percentage of chapter members pass the certification exams in the past year was given to NALS of West Michigan.

Chapter finance tables were set up Saturday, and our table this year featured a Chinese raffle (courtesy of Cathy Zackery and Jen Robinson's organizational (and other) abilities), plus a 50/50 raffle. We made \$119 from the

50/50 raffle and \$510 from the Chinese raffle. Thanks to all of our members who helped at the raffle tables, the registration table, and throughout the meeting.

Saturday concluded with the banquet, featuring installation of the new officers, awarding of the Legal Professional of the Year (to Paula Steffey), and passing of the gavel. Also at the Saturday banquet, magician John Dudley entertained us and acted as master of ceremonies (thanks to Diane Berry!).

The 2020 annual meeting will be held April 16-18, 2020, at the Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth. Volunteers from all NALS of Michigan chapters are needed to help coordinate this meeting.

The next CLE day hosted by NALS of Michigan will take place on June 1, 2019, at the McCurdy law office in Cadillac. Attendance via GoTo Meeting will be available for those not wishing to make the drive north. More details will be out soon.

If anyone has questions or concerns about our state association, please feel free to contact me.

The 2019-2020 NALS of Michigan Executive Committee: Maureen Jones, Sheri Bowden, Tami Carl, Sue Acklin, Cathy Zackery, Becky Quimby, and Jen Robinson.

Below: Paula Steffey was selected as NALS of Michigan's 2019 Legal Professional of the Year. Congratulations, Paula!

John Dudley entertained us at the banquet with his magic.

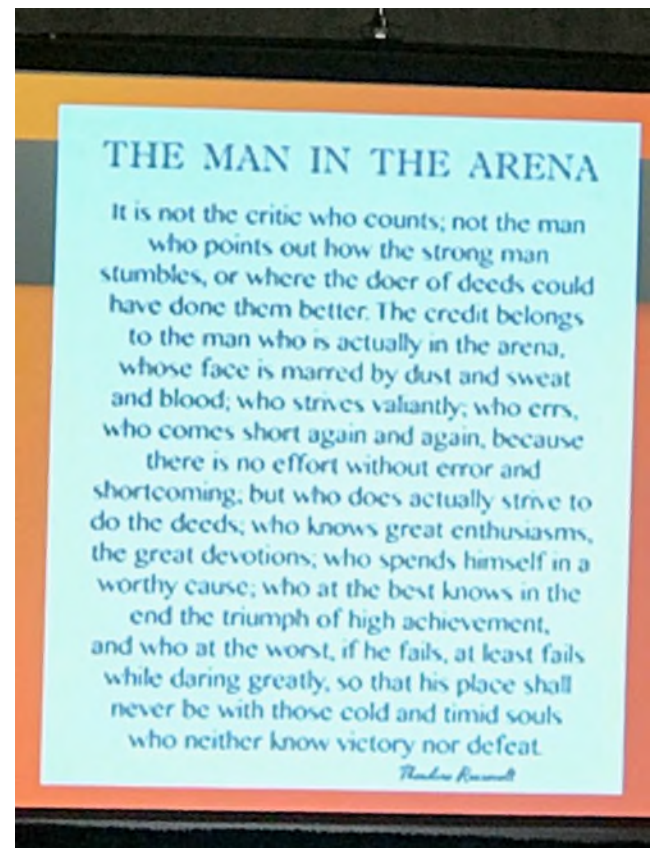




NALS of Greater Kalamazoo members shown at the 2019 NALS of Michigan Annual Meeting banquet: Andrea Kardatzke, Cathy Zackery, Diane Berry, Jen Robinson, Deb Koppers, Kim Snow, Kathleen Hutchins, Michele Guyman, Colleen VanSickle, Pam Wilcox, Nancy Thomas, Tami Carl, Paula Steffey. Thanks to all the members who helped us plan and staff the 2019 Annual Meeting!



Attorney Shannon Smith was the keynote speaker for the 2019 NALS of Michigan Annual Meeting. Part of her presentation included the "Man in the Arena" quote.





2018-2019 NALS of Michigan officers at the Annual Meeting:
Heidi Hopper, Lynn Philp, Teri Garber, Lalease Curtiss, Maureen Jones, and Sue Acklin.



NALS of Michigan Past Presidents gathered for dinner at the Central City Taphouse during the Annual Meeting.

Front row: Nancy Comfort, Sharon Smith, Luann Kantor, Marion Stone.
Back row: Betty Knoll, Judy Salminen, Kathie Amirante, Sheri Bowden, Carole Schneider, Kay Rushton, Olive Pessetti.

Thanks to all of these ladies for helping to guide the NALS of Michigan ship to success!



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DULY NOTED

Chambers USA 2019 names Warner a leading Michigan law firm

For the 17th consecutive year, Warner Norcross + Judd LLP has been recognized as one of the leading law firms in Michigan by *Chambers USA 2019*.

Warner has again been ranked as one of Michigan's leading law firms in the areas of banking and finance, corporate, mergers and acquisitions, employee benefits and executive compensation, general commercial litigation and real estate. Labor and employment law is new to the list for 2019.

Additionally, seven attorneys have been individually recognized as Leaders in Their Field for their work in the areas above, as well as bankruptcy.

The seven attorneys are: Melissa N. Collar, real estate; Douglas A. Dozeman, commercial litigation; Anthony J. Kolenic, Jr., employee benefits and executive compensation; Mary Jo Larson, employee benefits and executive compensation; Robert H. Skilton III, bankruptcy; Stephen C. Waterbury, corporate/M&A; Lisa B. Zimmer, employee benefits and executive compensation.

Chambers USA is published annually by London-based Chambers and Partners and highlights top firms and attorneys in each state.

Chambers USA 2019 recognizes Varnum attorneys, practice teams

Varnum is once again ranked in the latest edition of *Chambers USA*, which ranks lawyers and law firms based on client and peer research. In Michigan, *Chambers USA* ranks firms in just eight practice areas.

Varnum was ranked in the areas of Banking & Finance, Corporate/M&A, Labor & Employment and Real Estate. The firm was also recognized for Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation. In addition, *Chambers* ranked several individual attorneys from a variety of practice areas.

Chambers guides are the culmination of thousands of in-depth interviews by the largest research team of its kind and are trusted globally to objectively rank the world's best lawyers and law firms. The following attorneys were individually recognized by *Chambers*: Jon Anderson, Real Estate; Nyal Deems, Real Estate; Jeff DeVree, Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation; Tom Forster, Real Estate; Dick Hooker, Labor and Employment; Dave Khorey, Labor and Employment; Larry Murphy, Employment Litigation.

Law Day 2019 draws a large crowd to celebrate free speech and a free press

by Cynthia Price
Legal News

The conviviality and strong values of the Grand Rapids Bar make events the GRBA hosts a substantial draw, and Law Day 2019 was no exception.

Over one hundred lawyers, law professors, award-winners and their families, students and many more mixed and mingled during a buffet luncheon and the annual awards presentation, which is co-hosted by WMU-Cooley Law School.

Current GRBA President Randall Velzen of Mika Meyers emceed the event, with Law Day Committee Chair Anita Hitchcock, the Grand Rapids city attorney, welcoming the crowd.

Most of the awards come from the bar association itself, while one, the Marion Hilligan Public Service Award, is from WMU-Cooley. It was given as the final award of the event by Grand Rapids Campus Assistant Dean Tracey Brame — who also happens to be the incoming GRBA president — to the Veterans Bar Association. Attorney Edward Perdue (Dickinson Wright) and Thomas Dorwin, the clerk of the U.S. Court for the Western District of Michigan, accepted the award.

Each year, the bar takes advantage of the Law Day luncheon to recognize attorneys with 50 years in practice. This year the distinguished group include James Brady, Dirk Hoffius, John Smietanka, Terry Mroz, Edward Paul, and Gary Schenk. All but Mroz and Paul were present to receive their pins from GRBA Executive Director Kim Coleman.

The additional awards presented are:

—The Liberty Bell award, for outstanding contributions to justice by a non-lawyer citizen or non-profit. This year's recipient was the YWCA of West Central Michigan, in particular for its advocacy resource services, which include legal assistance and referrals, to those suffering domestic and sexual assault. CEO Charisse Mitchell accepted the award.

—The President's Award which recognizes extraordinary assistance to the

Grand Rapids Bar Association itself, went to three people this year: attorneys Scott Melton and Richard Zambon and Judge Christopher Yates, primarily for their assistance in the challenging project of establishing an attorney space at the Kent County downtown courthouse.

—The Donald R. Worsfold Distinguished Service Award. This year, luncheon attendees had a special treat: Don Worsfold's brother Chuck spoke about the tradition of recognition. Few people know that it was actually started as just the Distinguished Service Award during Don Worsfold's tenure as GRBA President, which he fulfilled admirably despite having received a terminal cancer diagnosis. Interestingly, the first award given after it was renamed in Worsfold's honor was to Judge Stewart Hoffius, whose son Dirk had just been recognized for 50 years in practice.

Kristin Vanden Berg was the incredibly deserving recipient of the 2019 award.

Following the awards ceremony, Judge James Robert Redford spoke on this year's theme, "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Society." Redford is now at the Michigan Court of Appeals, having also served as a judge of the 17th Circuit Court and as the director of the Michigan Veterans' Affairs Agency.

Judge Redford started out by talking about his research into the first U.S. newspaper published, in 1690, which was shut down four days later "because the government didn't like it." Virginia's governor, William Berkeley, said, "I thank God, there are no free schools nor printing; for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy... and printing has divulged them."

He noted that the framers of the Bill of Rights made free speech and a free press the first amendment because they saw the dangers in such repression of the public discourse. "To be free fundamentally we need to be able to say what is in our minds individually and collectively... This makes our government and those who serve in our government better," Judge Redford stated.



LEGAL NEWS PHOTOS BY CYNTHIA PRICE

The Hon. James Robert Redford, a judge formerly in the 17th Circuit Court and now in the Michigan Court of Appeals, gave a stirring defense of the free press and free speech in his Law Day 2019 keynote.



Grand Rapids Bar Association President Randall Velzen with Worsfold Distinguished Service Award winner Kristin Vanden Berg



The annual President's Award, given this year by Randy Velzen (left), went to (left to right) Richard Zambon, Scott Melton, and Judge Christopher Yates.



The GRBA Annual Law Day Luncheon continues to attract large numbers.

Statewide conference of legal professionals offers full, stimulating day of presentations

by Cynthia Price
Legal News

The statewide conference of NALS, "the association for legal professionals," is three days long, this year starting at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, April 25, and going through a Sunday farewell breakfast.

A lot of that is devoted to conducting business, but Friday's agenda is more relaxing: social time, door prizes, a varied exhibitor hall, and a full roster of entertaining and informative presentations.

The event attracts legal assistants and paralegals from all over the state; the West Michigan chapter has a strong presence. The 2019 location was the newly-completed Delta Hotels Conference Center in Kalamazoo.

Two of the days' speakers provided

updates to previous stories run in the *Grand Rapids Legal News*.

The first of those was from James Liggins, the Warner Norcross + Judd attorney, and was an update on holding the 2021 National Mock Trial Competition in Michigan, specifically in Kalamazoo.

Liggins started out by complimenting his former assistant at previous firm Miller Canfield, Pam Wilcox, who was responsible for arranging the NALS session.

He then spoke about the great honor of hosting the national competition, which will be May 6, 2021, and of the challenges facing the Center for Civil Education, which is spearheading it.

"I will say that we will need a host of support for this initiative," he explained.

See NALS MICHIGAN page 2



LEGAL NEWS PHOTOS BY CYNTHIA PRICE

Warner Norcross + Judd attorney James Liggins (third from right) "played" the judge as students demonstrated their mock trial skills.

NALS MICHIGAN from page 1

In exchange for the predicted \$1 million in commerce it will bring, the sponsors anticipate 250 to 300 volunteers will be needed, which can include attorneys and non-attorneys. Many on the bench as well as practicing lawyers will be asked to serve as judges for the competition, which entails groups from every state giving their best arguments in a pre-set case.

Liggins, who derived the passion for his legal career from being on the Kalamazoo High School team, brought along three students who demonstrated what mock trial is like, along with the team coach, Francis Bilancio. In March, the 2019 team became the state champion for the 21st time, making it the team in Michigan with the most times advancing to nationals.

Following that, Special Assistant Attorney General Erin House updated the group on the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative in Kalamazoo.

Readers of the Oct. 3, 2018, *Legal News* may remember that House and her team were assigned to SAKI after it became clear that, nationally, there were thousands of sexual assault forensic evidence kits which had never been tested – over 11,000 in Detroit alone.

What the SAKI team has

found out is perhaps not surprising, but is important in keeping people safe in the future. One key finding is that a large percentage of sexual assault perpetrators are repeat offenders – one advantage that going through the old evidence kits offers, in that corresponding with databases of known assailants may help take dangerous people off the street.

They have also discovered that not everyone with an untested kit wants to reopen the case. This has made it difficult for her team to keep going since they have to make a direct approach to those assaulted before pursuing the case, and that may open up some very negative emotions.

Though the Kalamazoo SAKI caseload has continued to grow – 207 cases have been referred, with at least four convictions and several investigations ongoing – House said that her most important take-away is that society needs to change its view of sexual assault.

“Be a part of changing the way individuals, society and the legal system talks about and responds to sexual assault victims and perpetrators,” House urged.

Watch for more coverage of the NALS conference in next week’s issue.



Erin House, a special assistant attorney general assigned to Kalamazoo, gave an update on the Kalamazoo County Sexual Assault Kit Initiative.

A work force

Gershel, head of Attorney Grievance Commission, bids farewell after five years

by Tom Kirvan
Legal News

The path to retirement has been somewhat of an odyssey for Alan Gershel, recently-retired grievance administrator for the Attorney Grievance Commission in Michigan.

Gershel, who was appointed head of the commission in October 2014, retired from the chief administrative post on Friday, April 26, officially capping a 40-year career in the law.

His retirement journey began in the spring of 2008 when he left the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Detroit after a distinguished 28-year career as a federal prosecutor. His work there included 20 years as chief of its Criminal Division and two stints as an interim U.S. Attorney. He also served as a Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Department of Justice.

Shortly after leaving the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Gershel joined the full time faculty at WMU-Cooley Law School, teaching criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence, and white-collar crime courses. Eventually becoming a tenured professor at Cooley, Gershel left teaching in 2014 when he was appointed to lead the Grievance Commission, the “investigative and prosecutorial arm of the Michigan Supreme Court for allegations of attorney misconduct.” He has served under three chief justices of the Supreme Court – Robert Young Jr., Stephen Markman, and Bridget McCormick.

Now, after leading the commission for nearly five years, Gershel is looking outside the legal profession for his next challenge, earning an appointment as a volunteer docent at the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. Later this year he hopes to begin conducting tours of the museum, where the atrocities of the Holocaust are documented and visitors are encouraged to be mindful of its

lasting lessons.

Gershel, a graduate of Northeastern University in Boston who earned his law degree from the University of Detroit in 1978, is helping to choose his successor at the commission, working with a search panel to narrow the list of candidates for the job heading the 32-member staff, which includes 14 attorneys. The Michigan Supreme Court will appoint the new Grievance Administrator, Gershel indicated.

A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., Gershel was saluted at a surprise retirement luncheon late last month in Detroit, enjoying the company of his entire staff, members of the Grievance Commission, along with his wife of 43 years, Linda. As a retirement present, Gershel received a gift certificate for a new set of golf clubs.

“I’ve really enjoyed each aspect of my career, but there comes a time when it is ‘time,’” said Gershel of his decision to retire. “I’ve had the honor and the pleasure of working with very talented and skilled attorneys over the years, and their work has certainly made my jobs more enjoyable.”

In his leadership role at the Attorney Grievance Commission, Gershel acknowledged that he took particular satisfaction in settling charges filed last year against then Branch County Prosecutor Ralph Kimble. Before the case was headed to trial, Kimble entered into a consent discipline agreement wherein he admitted to a number of sexual harassment charges. He also agreed to resign from office and to accept a six-month suspension of his law license. If he decides to return to the practice of law, he will be required to go through a formal reinstatement process, according to Gershel.

“His conduct impacted a number of women who worked

in the office and the courthouse there, and hopefully the settlement sent a message that such misconduct will be penalized,” said Gershel.

An even-handed approach has been a hallmark of Gershel’s, and was recognized by Gerald Rosen, chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan when Gershel was appointed Grievance Administrator in 2014.

“There couldn’t be a better choice,” then Chief Judge Rosen told *The Legal News* at the time.

Miller Canfield attorney Tom Cranmer, a past president of the State Bar of Michigan, also has sung Gershel’s praises over the years. When Gershel left the U.S. Attorney’s Office in 2008, Cranmer was among those who lauded his work.

“His tenure has spanned a number of different U.S. Attorneys, people who were appointed by both Democratic and Republican presidents, and the fact that his tenure continued speaks volumes for the kind of person he was and is,” Cranmer said of Gershel in an April 2008 article in *The Legal News*.



Alan Gershel ushered in retirement April 26 after enjoying a three-pronged career in the law.

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COMING EVENTS

May 16: **Grand Rapids Bar Association Annual Meeting**, 6:00-10:00 p.m., The B.O.B., 20 Monroe Ave N.W., Grand Rapids. Join fellow Bar members for this annual event. To register, visit www.grbar.org and click on the event in the calendar - online registration is available until May 13. If you have questions, contact Dawn Carowitz, dawn@grbar.org, 616-454-5550 ext. 101

May 17: **Grand Rapids Bar Association Labor and Employment Law/Corporate Counsel Sections Joint Meeting**, 11:30-1:00 p.m., University Club, 111 Lyon St N.W., Grand Rapids. Please join the Labor and Employment Law Section and the Corporate Counsel Section of the GRBA for a lunch presentation addressing how the passage of Proposal One affects Michigan employers’ ability to discipline employees for marijuana use. The featured speaker will be Luis Avila. Mr. Avila is a partner with the Varnum law firm and focuses his practice on Labor & Employment issues. Mr. Avila was the featured speaker on local news outlets after the passage of Prop. 1 and will be available to answer participants’ questions. Don’t miss out on the discussion of this important topic for your clients. From 11:30-12 noon, there will be registration, lunch, and networking; 12:00-12:15 introduction of presentation and speaker, 12:15-12:45, the presentation, and a question and answer period following until 1:00. *Section meetings are open to Grand Rapids Bar Association members only.* For more information, contact Dawn Carowitz, dawn@grbar.org, 616-454-5550 ext. 101. To register, visit www.grbar.org and click on the event in the calendar - online registration is available until May 13.

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DULY NOTED

Rhoades McKee Commercial Litigation Team ranks among only 11 other Michigan law firms for 2018 work

According to *Chambers*, Rhoades McKee is known as a "Grand Rapids-based firm with a robust commercial litigation group focusing on financial and accounting disputes, professional negligence actions, and many other contentious issues." According to interviews completed, *Chambers* says, the commercial litigation team "demonstrates a strong commitment to its clients," further adding that "the team also possesses depth and strength in knowledge and responsiveness."

Chambers also specifically recognized Rhoades McKee attorney Paul McCarthy as a Leader in the Field. He was acknowledged for his expertise in post-acquisition disputes and director liability actions.

Ranking the best lawyers since 1990, *Chambers* and Partners employs 150 full-time editors and researchers to evaluate law firms across the United States on a yearly basis by conducting telephone reference interviews and evaluating case summaries. Rhoades McKee submitted complex litigation cases that highlighted its unique capabilities in areas of finance, accounting, and business valuation.

"Our litigation attorneys are honored to be selected and ranked with these other larger firms. Our representative work in the litigation area continues to grow. In the past year, we had the opportunity to secure great results for our business clients, including resolving a post-acquisition dispute valued at more than \$2.25 million and helping two sets of 50/50 shareholders reach agreements for succession," stated Stephen Hulst, Litigation Practice Chair.

Other members of the Commercial Litigation Team include David Bevins, Catherine Brainerd, Bruce Courtade, Patrick Dueke, G. Will Furtado, Jackie Gordon, John Lichtenberg, Bruce Neckers, Ian Northon, Peter Rhoades, Mark Smith, James Schipper, Patrick Sweeney, and Greg Timmer.

For more on *Chambers* and Partners, visit www.chambersandpartners.com/

For more information on the Commercial Litigation Service Team, visit www.rhoadesmckee.com/service/commercial-and-business-litigation/



PHOTO COURTESY OF RHOADES MCKEE

Paul McCarthy

NALS hears from controversial defense lawyer, lemon law attorney, others

by Cynthia Price
Legal News

The annual conference of the Michigan chapter of NALS ("the association for legal professionals") offered a wide variety of speakers and events when it was held April 25 through 28 in Kalamazoo.

In addition to hearing about the siting of the 2021 National Mock Trial Competition in Michigan and getting an update on the sexual assault kit investigations, as reported last week, the paralegals, legal assistants, administrators, vendors, court reporters and others that make up NALS membership heard from some high-profile legal speakers.

Chief among them was the morning keynote speaker, Shannon Smith. Smith is best-known for serving as the defense lawyer for Larry Nassar, but that is not her only controversial case, as NALS members learned.

Her energetic and thought-provoking presentation was called "Defending the Damned and Despised," and it was named after a quote from the famous defense attorney Clarence Darrow: "To be an effective criminal defense counsel, an attorney must be prepared to be demanding, outrageous, irreverent, blasphemous, a rogue, a renegade, and a hated, isolated, and lonely person - few love a spokesman for the despised and the damned."

To hear Smith tell it, she has been all that and would do it again for her clients despite the personal toll it takes.

Her life has been threatened, along with the lives of her husband (who attended the NALS conference and was applauded for his administration of Smith's law office) and four children. She has been called a number of names by people who really hit below the belt, including caricatures of her looks. The well-known Nassar victim Rachel den Hollander said that for Smith "sexual assault was nothing more than an opportunity for a photo op and self-promotion."

Smith, whose initial interest in her career was sparked by being bullied as a child, said that her immediate urge was to defend herself immediately against such criticisms. "At first I was forming a response, like, that's not what I meant when I said that... but then I just had to say to myself, I can't care, I just can't care," Smith said.

At the same time, the Nassar case disturbed her. "I had to take a few days off after the sentencing," she said. "I thought long and hard about, do I really want to be a defense lawyer? There's a lot of compassion fatigue that you feel for the victims and even for your own client, whether the charges are true or not true."

Smith thought that defending a client like Larry Nassar was a once-in-a-lifetime challenge, but her next case was defending a doctor accused of female genital mutilation. She willingly went through the stress of that "convicted-in-the-media" case because she feels that even the damned and despised deserve representation... but in fact her client was not guilty of that crime.

When Smith showed experts videos of what her doctor client did, they all agreed that she was not engaging in female genital mutilation but rather an operation similar to circumcision, and all of the charges against her were dropped.

Another high-profile speaker was Steve Lehto, the "lemon law attorney." Lehto's humorous and exuberant presentation fundamentally focused on the many ways he got his name out and the interesting twists his life and career have taken.

Starting with volunteering to defend the people (all men, he noted) who received traffic tickets for showing off during the Detroit-area Woodward Dream

Cruise, one thing led to another and Lehto became widely known even before there was a blogosphere.

In 2006, Lehto wrote a book about the "1913 massacre" in Calumet, Mich., where dozens of children of striking miners were killed in a stampede after someone yelled "Fire." When an ad for the book was featured in the weird headline portion of the Jay Leno *Tonight Show*, he followed up by sending Leno his card. This combined with Lehto's love of vintage cars and eventually resulted in his meeting Leno and a host of other lesser-known celebrities.

Friday attendees were also treated to a useful session on managing stress from mindfulness instructor Cindy VanderWeele. She encouraged the participants to savor actual physical strawberries she passed around, focusing each of the senses in turn.

The last presentation of the day, which nonetheless held people's attention, was a talk on "Causation of Crime" from Grand Valley State University School of Criminal Justice's Christopher Kierkus, Ph.D. Technical difficulties prevented him from starting out with some videos, including one of the Grand Rapids slaying of a nine-year-old boy by a 13-year-old boy, and another about the Muskegon case of Jessica Heeringa, of which Jeffrey Willis was convicted.

Kierkus then went through a large number of theories about why people commit such crimes, noting that a prime reason for asking that question is to prevent them but also, in many cases, to improve the lot of potential offenders.

Such entertaining and informative talks were not the only draw to Kalamazoo for the NALS professionals. On Saturday, the group's annual meeting and awards banquet were held, along with the swearing-in of a new roster of officers.

The national NALS began in 1929, and NALS of Michigan was established in 1961; the organization is well-known for providing certification and training for legal professionals. There are six Michigan chapters: Detroit, Greater Kalamazoo, Jackson, Lansing, West Michigan, and Grand Traverse Area. NALS of West Michigan is generally a strong presence statewide, and this year was no exception.

Sue Acklin, who works at Warner Norcross + Judd in Grand Rapids and was the winner of the NALS of West Michigan award of excellence this year, is the new state president. Christopher Acklin of the Avanti Law Group in Wyoming, Mich., gave the oath of office.

Other officers are: Vice President of Certification & Education, Maureen Jones; Vice President Membership & Marketing, Cathy Zackery; Treasurer, Jennifer Boak Robinson; Executive Secretary, Tami Lewman Carl; Parliamentarian, Becky Quimby; Executive Advisor, Sherri Bowden.

Both Quimby and Bowden are from NALS of West Michigan. Zackery, Robinson, and Lewman are from NALS of Greater Kalamazoo.

Also from Kalamazoo was the state Legal Professional of the Year, Paula Steffey, who was instrumental in putting on the conference.

The Clara LaGow Award, given to the Michigan chapter that has the highest percentage of members who passed the various legal accreditations offered by NALS went to NALS of West Michigan, while the West Michigan group tied with the one from Detroit for the highest number of new members in the chapter.

Another NALS of Michigan activity is giving a scholarship each year. This year, the \$1000 scholarship went to Gianna Mason, who has a GPA of 4.0 and is attending Ferris State University for her



LEGAL NEWS PHOTOS BY CYNTHIA PRICE

Attorney Shannon Smith told NALS legal professionals about what it is like to defend high-profile criminals such as Larry Nassar. Her firm "exclusively defend[s] allegations of criminal sexual conduct and child abuse."



The adjacent exhibit room featured not only legal vendors, but also sellers — some of them NALS members — of crafts, beauty, and other products.



Attorney Steve Lehto, who focuses his practice on auto consumer law, showed a variety of (mostly car-related) photos, including this one with Jay Leno, former host of the *Tonight Show*, at left.



PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF PAULA STEFFEY

Paula Steffey was named NALS Professional of the Year 2019, after being the Volunteer of the Year in 2018. Steffey is a legal assistant at Goldosik Morse Disability Law Group in Kalamazoo.

NALS OF MICHIGAN 2019-2020 COMMITTEES



2020 Annual Meeting Chair:	Teresa M. Garber, PP, CLP (NALs of West Michigan)
2021 Annual Meeting:	NALS of Lansing (Deborah Surls, CLP – President)
Certification Chair:	Paula Steffey, PP, CLP-SC, CWCP (NALs of Greater Kalamazoo)
Credentials Chair:	Nancy Thomas, PLS (NALs of Greater Kalamazoo)
Finance Chair:	Lynn Philp (NALs of West Michigan)
Financial Review:	Annette Jeltema, PP, PLS (NALs of West Michigan)
Legal Education Chair:	Michelle D. Spiker, PLS (NALs of Lansing)
Legal Professional of the Year:	NALS of Detroit (Gayle Lawson – President)
Marketing/Public Relations Chair:	Pam Wilcox (NALs of Greater Kalamazoo)
Membership Co-Chairs:	Heidi Hopper, PP, PLS (NALs of Lansing) Julie Cowles, PP, PLS (Member at Large) Local Membership Chairs
Nominations Chair:	Kathy Rood (NALs of Lansing)
Past Presidents' Council Chair:	Dolores J. Oliver, PLS (NALs of Lansing)
Scholarship Chair:	Jennifer Fauble (Grand Traverse Area Legal Professionals)
State Bar Liaison:	Barbara Jean Mikusko (NALs of West Michigan)
State Publication Chair:	Paula Steffey PP, CLP-SC, CWCP (NALs of Greater Kalamazoo)
Strategic Plan Co-Chairs:	Kathleen Amirante, PLS (NALs of Lansing) Maureen K. Jones, PP, PLS, ALP (Grand Traverse Area Legal Professionals)
Technology/Website Chair:	Heidi S. Hopper, PP, PLS (NALs of Lansing)
NALS Foundation Liaison:	Carole M. Schneider, PP, PLS (NALs of Lansing)

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

We welcome our newest members of NALS of Greater Kalamazoo, each of whom will be installed at an upcoming meeting:

- ❖ Alissa R. Legacy (Lewis Reed & Allen)
- ❖ Brittany Minix (Levine & Levine)
- ❖ Collin Siegrist (Miller Johnson)



November 11, 2014 marked the 100 year anniversary of the start of World War I, “The War to End all Wars.” In tribute, the British placed ceramic poppies outside the Tower of London.



In Flanders Fields

*By: Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, MD
(1872-1918)
Canadian Army*

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Although he had been a doctor for years and had served in the South African War, it was impossible to get used to the suffering, the screams, and the blood, and Major John McCrae had seen and heard enough in his dressing station to last him a lifetime. As a surgeon attached to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade, Major McCrae, who had joined the McGill faculty in 1900 after graduating from the University of Toronto, had spent seventeen days treating injured men -- Canadians, British, Indians, French, and Germans -- in the Ypres Salient in the spring of 1915.

It had been an ordeal that he had hardly thought possible. McCrae later wrote of it: "I wish I could embody on paper some of the varied sensations of that seventeen days... Seventeen days of Hades! At the end of the first day if anyone had told us we had to spend seventeen days there, we would have folded our hands and said it could not have been done."

One death particularly affected McCrae. A young friend and former student, Lieut. Alexis Helmer of Ottawa, had been killed by a shell burst on 2 May 1915. Lieutenant Helmer was buried later that day in the little cemetery outside McCrae's dressing station, and McCrae had performed the funeral ceremony in the absence of the chaplain. The next day, sitting on the back of an ambulance parked near the dressing station beside the Canal de l'Yser, just a few hundred yards north of Ypres, McCrae vented his anguish by

composing a poem. The major was no stranger to writing, having authored several medical texts besides dabbling in poetry. In the nearby cemetery, McCrae could see the wild poppies that sprang up in the ditches in that part of Europe, and he spent twenty minutes of precious rest time scribbling fifteen lines of verse in a notebook.

A young soldier watched him write it. Cyril Allinson, a twenty-two year old sergeant-major, was delivering mail that day when he spotted McCrae. The major looked up as Allinson approached, then went on writing while the sergeant-major stood there quietly. "His face was very tired but calm as we wrote," Allinson recalled. "He looked around from time to time, his eyes straying to Helmer's grave."

When McCrae finished five minutes later, he took his mail from Allinson and, without saying a word, handed his pad to the young NCO. Allinson was moved by what he read: "The poem was an exact description of the scene in front of us both. He used the word blow in that line because the poppies actually were being blown that morning by a gentle east wind. It never occurred to me at that time that it would ever be published. It seemed to me just an exact description of the scene." In fact, it was very nearly not published. Dissatisfied with it, McCrae tossed the poem away, but a fellow officer retrieved it and sent it to newspapers in England. The Spectator, in London, rejected it, but Punch published it on 8 December 1915.



engage
inspire
enhance
promote

*maximizing your
Saturday potential!*

NALS of Michigan Summer CLE Registration June 1, 2019

9:00 a.m.	<i>Ethics</i>	David L. Porteous McCurdy Wotila & Porteous P.C.
10:00 a.m.	<i>Real Estate</i>	Michael A. Figliomeni McCurdy Wotila & Porteous P.C.
11:00 a.m.	<i>General Law</i>	Ravi R. Gurumurthy Ravi R. Gurumurthy PLC
12:00 p.m.	<i>Hot Probate Topics</i>	Alexander S. Mallory McCurdy Wotila & Porteous P.C.
1:00 p.m.	<i>How to Help Your Title Company Help You</i>	Julie Cowles PP PLS NALs of Michigan

Location:

McCurdy, Wotila & Porteous, P.C.
120 W. Harris Street
Cadillac, MI

In Person Fee:

\$25 – NALS of Michigan Member
\$30 – Future Member
\$15 – Student

Go To Meeting Fee:

\$15 – NALS of Michigan Member
\$20 – Future Member

Flash Drive Fee: \$10

Mail completed registration form and check payable to **NALS of Michigan** to:

Maureen K. Jones, PP, PLS, ALP
McCurdy, Wotila & Porteous, P.C.
120 W. Harris Street
Cadillac, MI

Name: _____ Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

If member, list chapter: _____ If student, please list school: _____

Please RSVP by May 24, 2019

Refund Policy:

Full refund if notification received prior
to May 24, 2019

NALS of Greater Kalamazoo Membership Meeting and CLE

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

Miller Johnson, Radisson Hotel & Suites, 100 West Michigan Avenue, Suite 200, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269.226.2950



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SPEAKER

Blake C. Padget
Miller Johnson

TOPIC

Employment Law



Attorney Blake Padget is an Associate in Miller Johnson's Employment and Labor Section. He works with a variety of clients from industry groups such as health care, manufacturing, distribution and education. In addition to counseling clients on complex labor and employment topics, he works as a part of Miller Johnson's employment litigation team. Attorney Padget is a graduate of The University of Toledo College of Law where he earned his J.D., summa cum laude, in 2018. He received his B.A. degree in History from Alma College in 2015.

AGENDA

5:30 p.m. – Networking

6:00 p.m. – Dinner

6:30 p.m. – Speaker Presentation (CLE)

The 2019-2020 Board installations will follow the speaker presentation, followed by a short business meeting.

BUFFET DINNER

Catered by J. Gumbo's (Real Down-Home New Orleans Cookin'), including:



- **Gumbo** (tender chicken and smoked sausage with onions and celery over white rice)
- **Pazoli Stew** (VEGAN, GF – tomatoes, corn, black beans, green chili peppers, and onions over white rice)
- **Bourbon Street Chicken** (tender chicken slow-cooked in a sweet butter Hoison sauce over brown rice)
- **Honey Sriracha Chicken** (GF - tender chicken slow-cooked in a sweet and spicy Honey Sriracha sauce over brown rice)
- French bread and corn bread will be available

Price Per Person: \$15.00

Tax, tip and non-alcoholic drink included in the price. Wine and beer available for a donation.

RESERVATION PROCEDURE

E-mail your reservation to Tierney Tubergen at tubergent@millerjohnson.com or call (269) 226-2972 **no later than noon on Friday, May 17, 2019** to reserve your spot. Give your payment to Jen Robinson, NALS Treasurer, at the meeting. Checks are welcome. If you pay in cash, please bring the exact amount. SORRY, BUT ONCE THE RESERVATIONS HAVE BEEN CALLED IN, YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENT FOR YOUR ORDER IF YOU HAVE TO CANCEL AND DO NOT FIND A REPLACEMENT.

2018 - 2019 Officers

Paula Steffey, PP-SC, CLP, CWCP, President
Phone: 377-9341; westernmom40@gmail.com

Kathleen Hutchins, PLS, Vice President
Phone: 568-5122; kehutch60@yahoo.com

Samantha Wilder, Recording Secretary
Phone: 870-5329; sgwilder22@yahoo.com

Tierney Tubergen, Corresponding Secretary
Phone: 226-2972; tubergent@millercanfield.com

Shawn Brew, Treasurer
Phone: 692-5244; shawn@woznickilaw.com

Nancy Thomas, PLS, Director
Phone: 381-7030; thomasn@millercanfield.com

Michele Guyman, Immediate Past President
Phone: 586-557-4054; mightymmo@sbcglobal.net

Nancy Thomas, PLS, Parliamentarian
Phone: 381-7030; thomasn@millercanfield.com

* * * * *

Nancy Thomas, PLS, *Pleadings* Editor
Phone: 381-7030; thomasn@millercanfield.com

CALENDAR

Next Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 4, 2019
5:30 p.m.

Location: Goidosik Morse

2019 Budget/Planning Meeting:

Tuesday, June 4, 2019
5:30 p.m.

Location: Goidosik Morse

May General Membership Meeting

May 21, 2019

5:30 p.m.

Miller Johnson

Program: Employment Law & Proposal 1

NALS of Michigan CLE Event

Saturday, June 1, 2019

McCurdy, Wotila & Porteous

Cadillac, Michigan

and via GoToMeeting



**NALS of Greater Kalamazoo
P.O. Box 50221
Kalamazoo MI 49005**