

# Inter Alia

*Among Other Things*

Spring 2012

[www.michiganyounglawyers.com](http://www.michiganyounglawyers.com)

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## More than Words



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Every spring and fall, a crop of soon-to-be lawyers crowd into courtrooms throughout the state, eager to take part in a ritual that most of us have tucked away deep in our memories. They raise their hand and pledge to uphold the words of the lawyer's oath, which towards the end, includes a powerful promise:

*I will never reject...the cause of the defenseless or oppressed....*

In today's economy, the need for lawyers who will answer that call could not be greater. According to a recent study by the Michigan League for Human Services:

- 6.8 percent of Michigan residents (and nearly one in every four children) lived in poverty in 2010—the highest rate since 1984;
- Foreclosures continue to plague Michigan families, with our state registering the third highest number of foreclosures nationally in October of 2011; and
- Michigan's unemployment rate led the nation for most of the last decade, ranking first from 2006-2009, and only second in 2010.

Meanwhile, the Michigan Bar Foundation reports that legal aid programs must turn away nearly *half* of those who seek their help due to a lack of resources.

So, as a young lawyer, what can you do to help?

If your firm has a pro bono program, get involved! Or, if such a partnership does not exist (or if you're a sole practitioner), consider reaching out to your local legal services organization to set one up. A list of such agencies is available [here](#). The State Bar's [Pro Bono Initiative](#) is another great resource for innovative ideas.

I also encourage you to volunteer your time with the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section (YLS). One of our core missions is to provide service to the public, which we accomplish both through community service events and pro bono legal projects (like *Wills for Heroes* and seminars that are free and open to the public).

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**More than Words**

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There is an old saying that “to whom much is given, much is required.” No one said that meeting the legal needs of Michigan’s poor would be easy, but as lawyers—especially young lawyers—it is a task that we all must share, if we are to be true to the words of our oath.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this edition of *Inter Alia*, where you will learn more about some of our upcoming service events. Please feel free to join us—we would love to have you involved.

*Ms. Robinson is a staff attorney at the State Appellate Defender Office in Detroit.*

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## **Young Lawyer Council Members Welcome Newly Admitted Attorneys at Swearing-in Ceremony!**

This year YLS members spoke at swearing-in ceremonies all over Michigan to welcome the newest members to the State Bar of Michigan. Council members encouraged the newly admitted attorneys to participate in the YLS and passed out packages that included a welcome letter from current YLS Chair Brandy Y. Robinson, Top 5 Reasons to Participate in YLS, the spring 2011 *Inter Alia*, and flyers of YLS upcoming events. Council member Mark Jane spoke at the Washtenaw County ceremony, council member R. Paul Vance spoke at the Genesee ceremony, council member Lori Smith spoke at the Macomb County ceremony, council member and past council Chair Maureen McGinnis spoke at the Oakland County ceremony, and council member Shenique Moss spoke at the Ingham County ceremony. The Young Lawyer’s Section Council welcomes the participation of all Young Lawyers Section members of the State Bar of Michigan, and we hope to see you at an upcoming event!

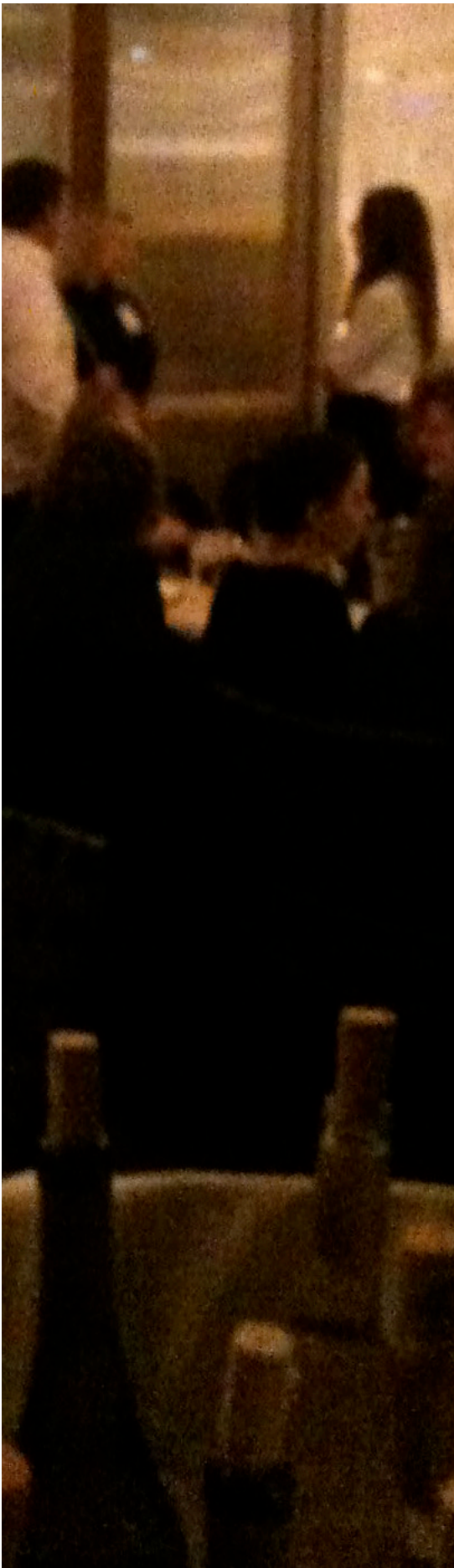


## Young Lawyers Learn Wine Tasting Skills

Members of the Young Lawyers Section of the State Bar of Michigan joined the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan – Washtenaw Chapter in a wine tasting seminar as part of the “Social Skills Series” on Thursday, November 10, 2011. The seminar took place at Zingerman’s Roadhouse in Ann Arbor, and was led by Linda Thomas of Wines for Humanity.

Lawyers learned the “5 S’s” of wine tasting sampling on numerous varietals, including pinot grigio, cabernet sauvignon, and shiraz (for those not wise to the lingo, the “5 S’s” are sight, swirl, smell, sip, and spit). Attendees also sampled delicious food prepared by the world-famous Zingerman’s eateries meant to accentuate and enhance the flavors of the specially-paired wines. Participants also had the opportunity to purchase wines sampled at the tasting, with proceeds going to support SafeHouse Center in Ann Arbor, a local charity whose mission is to provide support to victims of domestic violence.

The YLS wishes to express its appreciation to Executive Council member Bonnie Shaw for serving as event planner for the well-attended event. Mark Jane of the YLS Executive Council, and WLAM – Washtenaw County board members Rosemary Frenza, Angela Walker, Kate Sharkey, Elizabeth Kitchen-Troop, also provided key assistance and support.





## YLS Participates in Mock Trial to Benefit SKIP



On Saturday, January 21, 2012, approximately 40 students, volunteers, and parents gathered at the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice in downtown Detroit to participate in a mock trial sponsored by the Young Lawyers Section and the Wolverine Bar Association. The event was organized to benefit SKIP, a local non-profit dedicated to working with children of incarcerated parents. With the assistance of their attorney-partners, SKIP students enthusiastically took the lead in the trial by playing roles as lawyers, judges, witnesses, and jury members.

The script, which was drafted by YLS Member and DTE attorney Antoinette Gilbert, was based on the hit Pixar Film *Madagascar 2*, and involved a dispute between Melman Giraffe and Moto Moto Hippo over the ownership of a large diamond. After hearing testimony and watching the witnesses endure blistering cross-examination by their fellow student-attorneys, the jury ultimately found for the defendants.

Afterwards, students engaged in a lively discussion with the attorneys about the practice of law, took a tour of the lock-up facilities, and enjoyed lunch and good conversation with the other participants. A good time was had by all.

The YLS would like to extend a special thank you to all of the dedicated volunteers who braved the elements in order to participate. We are also grateful to Judge Craig Strong for allowing us to use his courtroom for the event, as well as Judge Prentis Edwards Jr. for sharing his inspiring story with the students. To learn more about other ways you can support SKIP and its mission, please contact YLS Chair Brandy Y. Robinson at [byrobinson@gmail.com](mailto:byrobinson@gmail.com).

## 2012 Michigan High School Mock Trial Tournament Attorney Volunteers Needed

*Presented with the Michigan Center for Civic Education*

Volunteer attorneys are needed to serve as judges and bailiffs for the March 24 state finals. The Tournament requires 180 volunteer judges and bailiff/timekeepers. [Volunteer Online](#)

This year's case is a criminal case surrounding the death of a famous musician. Was it murder, suicide, or something else . . .

Martin Louis Siriusz was found slumped over his piano listening to a playback of his latest (and as it turned out, his last) recording, entitled "Hanging at Death's Door." [A copy of the recording is available as evidence] The people of the State of New Michigan have charged Thomas "Duke" Osiski, Siriusz's former bandmate, with murder. The people allege that Osiski was furious over Siriusz's eleventh-hour decision to cancel a

reunion tour that would have provided Osiski with much-needed financial relief.

Osiski denies shooting his long-time friend, contending that he went to the recording studio in an attempt to persuade Siriusz to reconsider his decision, but when he entered the room, he found Siriusz slumped forward on the piano with the "Death's Door" soundtrack still playing. Seeing a bottle of alcohol and an open bottle of pills on the piano, Osiski assumed that Siriusz had accidentally OD'd. Feeling no pulse, Osiski ran out of the studio and out to the back patio, where he saw Siriusz's 23-year-old son standing naked in the shallow end of the pool cleaning off with a bar of soap.

Past winners of the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award include the following individuals:

- 2011
- Michael St. John
- 
- 2010
- David L. Campbell
- 
- 2009
- Jade Edwards
- 
- 2008
- Jonathan N. Jilek
- 
- 2007
- Bridgette Sparkman
- 
- 2006
- Marla A. Linderman
- 
- 2005
- Erika S. Julien
- 
- 2004
- Richard Bernstein
- 
- 2003
- Erika Butler-Akinyemi
- 

## The State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section is Now Accepting Nominations for the 2012 Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award

In 1997, the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section (“YLS”) re-named its “Outstanding Young Lawyer Award” in honor of Regeana Myrick, an executive council member of the YLS, who passed away in August of that year.

In addition to serving on the YLS Executive Council, Regeana was a dedicated member of many bar associations. Regeana was committed to education and public service. She is remembered by her family, friends, and colleagues as a bright and charitable woman with many talents who was always mindful of those less fortunate than herself.

Please join the YLS in remembering Regeana Myrick this year at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Lawyers Summit, where this award will be presented to an outstanding Michigan young lawyer who embodies Regeana’s selflessness and scholarly legacy.

*Nominations for the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award must be received by April 20, 2012.* The recipient of the award will be chosen by the YLS Outstanding Young Lawyer Award Subcommittee, and will be notified by May 15, 2012. Nomination forms can be downloaded at [http://www.michbar.org/younglawyers/pdfs/oysl\\_award.pdf](http://www.michbar.org/younglawyers/pdfs/oysl_award.pdf)

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Lawyers Summit is June 15-16, 2012, at the Westin Book-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit, Michigan. The award will be presented on Saturday, June 16. The nomination form is attached to this message. For more information, please contact Felicia Johnson at [fjohnson@co.wayne.mi.us](mailto:fjohnson@co.wayne.mi.us).



Regeana Myrick

**SAVE THE DATE!**

*June 15-16, 2012*

*The State Bar of Michigan  
Young Lawyers Section's  
5<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit  
Westin Book-Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, MI*

*The Summit presents a great opportunity  
to join fellow young lawyers at a wide variety  
of educational programs and networking events.*

Visit [michbar.org/younglawyers/news.cfm](http://michbar.org/younglawyers/news.cfm)  
and [facebook.com/sbmyls](https://www.facebook.com/sbmyls) for more  
information and links to registration forms  
in the coming months.



## Young Lawyers Section 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit at Westin Book-Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, MI

From June 15-16, 2012, the Young Lawyers Section (“YLS”) will host its Annual Summit at the Westin Book-Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, MI. A block of rooms has been reserved at a special rate for Summit attendees. Visit [michbar.org/younglawyers/news.cfm](http://michbar.org/younglawyers/news.cfm) and [facebook.com/sbmyls](http://facebook.com/sbmyls) for more information and links to registration forms in the coming months.

The YLS first hosted the Summit at the Soaring Eagle Resort in Mt. Pleasant in 2008. Over 100 attendees from across Michigan attended the 2008 Summit, which featured prominent members from the bench and bar as presenters, a keynote speech by Justice Clifford W. Taylor of the Michigan Supreme Court, and significant sponsorship support from Michigan companies.

Making it an annual event, the YLS returned to the Soaring Eagle Resort for the 2009 Summit, and traveled to the Grand Traverse Resort & Spa in 2010, and then to the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids in 2011.

The YLS is pleased to host this year’s Summit at the Westin Book-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit, and plans to offer programming topics relevant to most young lawyers, such as financial planning, persuasive writing skills, and panel discussion on alternative careers for lawyers. Further details will appear in the final program.

The YLS will again present the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award during the Saturday dinner event of the 2012 Summit. The Outstanding Young Lawyer Award is named in honor of Regeana Myrick, who was an active member of the Young Lawyers Section and also served on its executive council. From the time of her swearing-in to the Bar to her untimely passing, Ms. Myrick exemplified the commitment to service to the public that the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award represents. *Nominations for the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award must be received by April 20, 2012.* The nomination form for the 2012 award will be posted at <http://www.michbar.org/younglawyers/oylaward.cfm> and has been circulated to section members.



Scene from 2010's conference with Michigan Supreme Court Justice Marilyn Kelly.