

January 12-14, 2013

Please note that news sites update their hyperlinks, so it is advised that articles of interest be read soon as they might not be accessible later.

Detroit Legal News: Once upon a court: Video project highlights good work done by courts

"There's an old Hollywood adage, attributed to film comedian W.C. Fields, that you should never work with animals or children. In her first stab at producing a video Marcia McBrien violated both rules. The children worked out great. The animals ... not so good. A new online video series called 'Court Stories' aims to tell everyday stories about the good work being done in the Michigan court system. The videos are expected to all be about five minutes long and highlight some activity or aspect of a state court that may not have gotten attention in the past."

[Full story](#)

The Detroit News: Flat Rock woman who fell into pit at oil shop loses case

"The Michigan appeals court has overturned a decision in favor of a woman who fell into an oil pit at an oil-change shop. The appeals court says the hazard was 'open and obvious,' a key threshold in state law."

[Full story](#)

Also see:

Detroit Free Press: Flat Rock woman who fell into pit at oil shop loses case

[Full story](#)

Note: The article also ran in several news outlets including the Battle Creek Enquirer, the Cadillac News, the Lansing State Journal and the Times Herald/Port Huron.

The Detroit News: Birmingham school students get serious about civics in mock congressional hearings

"Berkshire Middle School students held mock congressional hearings this week that reinforced research, formal writing and public speaking skills.... Among the experts on hand were Michigan Appeals Court Judge Elizabeth Gleicher, Novi Police Detective Todd Anger and 6th Circuit Judge Michael David Warren."

[Full story](#)

The Detroit News: Support for Macomb County music teacher perplexes judge

"[Macomb County Circuit Court Judge Mary Chrzanowski] lashed out against supporters of a Macomb County music teacher while sentencing him to prison for having sex with one student and sharing lewd material with two others. Christopher Skebo, 30, was sentenced Thursday to at least five years in prison after pleading no contest to third-degree criminal sexual conduct and other crimes."

[Full story](#)

Also see:

Associated Press: Judge baffled by support for Metro Detroit teacher convicted of sex crimes against students

[Full story](#)

Detroit Free Press: Judge dismisses woman's Michigan courthouse cursing charge

"A contempt charge was dismissed Friday against a woman who got in trouble for cursing in a courthouse, according to the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan. In December, district court clerks in Berrien County heard LaRue Ford, 49, use profanity while trying to settle fees related to old traffic violations, ACLU officials said."

[Full story](#)

Also see:

The Detroit News: Michigan judge dismisses woman's cursing charge

[Full story](#)

The Herald-Palladium/St. Joseph: Swearing case dismissed

[Full story](#)

Kalamazoo Gazette: Woman jailed for cursing in Berrien County Clerk's Office has charges against her dropped

[Full story](#)

Leader Publications/Niles: Judge dismisses cursing lady case

[Full story](#)

ABA Journal/Chicago, IL: Juror oath oversight leads to tossed conviction

"A defendant who was convicted of conspiracy to commit extortion is entitled to a new trial because the jurors weren't sworn in before the trial began, a Michigan appeals court has ruled. The Court of Appeals of Michigan has overturned the conviction of David Lee Allan, who was convicted in a scheme to extort money from a man who had sex with Allan's daughter, Michigan Live reports."

[Full story](#)

Also see:

Battle Creek Enquirer: No jury oath, no conviction, Michigan appeals court says

[Full story](#)

Note: The article also ran in several news outlets including the Alpena News, the Daily Tribune, the Lansing State Journal, the Macomb Daily and the Times Herald/Port Huron.

Jackson Citizen Patriot: Michigan Court of Appeals throws out conviction of father sentenced for working with daughter to extort money from man she had sex with

[Full story](#)

The MiLW Blog: No jury oath? Then no conviction, rules Court of Appeals

[Full story](#)

Bay City Times: Bay County judge goes against plea recommendation in sentencing man convicted of child abuse to jail

"Although he no longer has a felony conviction of child abuse on his record, a Linwood man who repeatedly assaulted his girlfriend's 5-year-old son was in for a surprise when a Bay County judge went against attorneys' recommendations and sentenced him to a half-year in jail."

[Full story](#)

Daily Press & Argus: Howell students take first-place state Constitutional honors

"Anyone looking for an interpretation of U.S. Constitution would do to call Howell High School. The school's We the People team — 29 students well-versed in Constitutional law — just earned first place honors in this year's state finals, held Friday in Lansing."

[Full story](#)

Hometown Life Newspapers: Judge reduces charge in Avila murder case

"A River Rouge man has been bound over for trial on a reduced murder charge. Despite Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Raj Prasad's objections, 21st District Court Judge Richard Hammer Jr. reduced from

first degree to second degree the murder charge that had been brought against during Christopher Jason Tanner in connection with the death of Oscar Ernesto Avila.”

[Full story](#)

Hometown Life Newspapers: Legal help offered at county courthouse

“The Oakland County Bar Association and Legal Aid and Defender Association, Inc. (LAD) are jointly sponsoring a help desk for pro se litigants at the Oakland County Courthouse. The help desk is open on Thursdays from noon to 2 p.m. in the lobby of the north entrance of the courthouse, 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac.”

[Full story](#)

Jackson County Legal News: Outreach Court offers fresh start for those at risk of homelessness

“... The Street Outreach Court (SOC) offers county residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness the chance to be relieved of unpaid fines, tickets and arrest warrants for non-violent misdemeanors... Elizabeth Hines, 15th District Court judge for the city of Ann Arbor, came up with the idea of the SOC in 2005, with wide support from the Washtenaw County criminal justice community.”

[Full story](#)

Jackson County Legal News: Jackson attorney leaves private practice for FOC position

“Jackson attorney Allison Bates, a Pioneer High School graduate who spent years working in the Washtenaw County and Jackson county prosecutor’s offices, says she is returning to her true calling. Bates is the new referee with the Jackson County Friend of the Court. She replaces Janet Gage, who retired last year.”

[Full story](#)

Note: The article also ran in the Washtenaw County Legal News.

The Macomb Daily: Macomb County juvenile court referee suspended over possible health insurance fraud

“A Macomb County Court juvenile court referee has been suspended with pay while under investigation for possible health insurance fraud. John J. Kennedy was placed on indefinite administrative leave Jan. 3 while county officials investigate whether his stepson may be improperly collecting health insurance benefits through Kennedy’s county-paid health plan. His stepson may have health insurance available to him through a job with a health system.”

[Full story](#)

MLive.com: Is Michigan gay friendly? Advocates encouraged by changing attitudes, but seek fairness first

“... While the ACLU awaits word on the federal challenge, Attorney General Bill Schuette is seeking to advance a separate state suit against the Michigan Civil Services Commission for offering benefits to live-in partners of state employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or romantic involvement... The Michigan Court of Appeals, in a split decision released earlier this month, upheld the Civil Services policy on the grounds that it was ‘strictly gender-neutral,’ noting that an employee could ‘also share those benefits with an opposite-sex boyfriend or girlfriend, or with a nonromantic best friend, or a mere housemate.’ ”

[Full story](#)

The MiLW Blog: Taylor to chair Mackinac Center Board of Directors

“Former Michigan Supreme Court Justice Clifford Taylor has been selected to chair the Mackinac Center for Public Policy’s Board of Directors. Joseph Lehman, the Center’s president, made the announcement

today. Taylor, who has been on the Center's board since last June, replaces D. Joseph Olson, a founding member of the Center who has served as chairman for most of the Center's history."

[Full story](#)

The MiLW Blog: Hathaway should get healthy pension

"Despite accusations of foul play in the short sale of a home, and a sudden but inevitable resignation, soon-to-retire Supreme Court Justice Diane Hathaway will take a sizable retirement check with her."

[Full story](#)

Also see:

Traverse City Record-Eagle: Jack Lessenberry: Good sense needed in picking a new Supreme Court justice

[Full story](#)

The MiLW Blog: Mertz appointed to 46th Circuit Court

"George Mertz, a 2002 graduate of the Detroit College of Law at Michigan State University, has been appointed to the 46th Circuit Court, which serves Kalkaska, Crawford and Otsego counties in northern lower Michigan. Mertz's appointment fills a vacancy created by the death of Judge Dennis Murphy. Murphy passed away last June."

[Full story](#)

Also see:

State Bar of Michigan Blog: Governor Appoints George Mertz To 46th Circuit Court

[Full story](#)

Oakland County Legal News: Marlinga to address PALS at general meeting

"The Polish American Legal Society (PALS) is conducting its first General Meeting of 2013 on Wednesday, Jan. 23, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Polish Village Cafe, 2990 Yemans Avenue in Hamtramck. The featured speaker will be Macomb County Probate Court Judge Carl J. Marlinga."

[Full story](#)

Oakland County Legal News: Rochester holiday revelry

"The Rochester Bar Association (RBA) conducted its Holiday Party on Monday, Dec. 17, at Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester. Among those enjoying the festivities were Oakland County 52-3 District Court Judge Nancy Carniak; Randy Shepard of Colbert, Shepard, & Sadowski LLP; Oakland County 52-3 District Court Judge Lisa Asadoorian; RBA President Boyd Farnam, assistant general counsel for Oakland University; and Oakland County 52-3 District Court Judge Julie Nicholson."

[Full story](#)

Traverse City Record-Eagle: Cheerleader for literacy, reading and children

"Ruth Bay loves reading so much that she's spent the last 30 years trying to share that joy. Bay is a volunteer tutor and mentor in a Traverse City elementary school through the Grand Traverse Probate Court Learning Partners program."

[Full story](#)