

December 7-9, 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.

Prisoner seeks review of former governor's commutation grant – and denial – in appeal Supreme Court hears this week

Also before the Court: Ethics charges against judge who had affair with litigant

[Press release](#)

"One Court of Justice" website is now smartphone-friendly

Other website updates: Site users can sign up for appellate opinions, other bulletins via social media; Supreme Court posting audio of oral arguments

[Press release](#)

Detroit Legal News: Adoption Advocates

"The Oakland County Circuit Court Family Division conducted its 2013 Adoption Day Award Ceremony on Tuesday, Nov. 26, in the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Auditorium in Pontiac. The event was held in conjunction with the statewide celebration of Adoption Day. Michigan Supreme Court Justice Bridget Mary McCormack provided remarks and a resolution from the Supreme Court."

[Full story](#)

Muskegon Chronicle: Ken Stevens Picks Pics: Adoption Day moment tops in this week's best-of collection

"This time of year is always filled with excitement and anticipation as one sports season ends and another begins. Photos are included from the last couple of weeks since schedules around Thanksgiving didn't allow us to have an installment last week. MLive Muskegon Chronicle multimedia intern Theophil Syslo's Adoption Day photo of Jaleo Page's reaction with Judge Kathy Hoogstra is a wonderful moment, and that made it the top photo of the past couple of weeks."

[Full story](#)

Detroit Free Press: Resentencing delayed for man convicted in death of Detroit firefighter Walter Harris

"A Detroit judge said he will have to wait until January to resentence the man convicted of murder and arson in connection with the 2008 fire that killed Detroit firefighter Walter Harris.... [Judge Michael] Callahan originally sentenced Willis to 41 1/2 to 62 1/2 years on the murder charge, with about 10 to 20 years for arson, ordering him to serve both sentences at the same time. But [Mario] Willis appealed, and the Michigan Court of Appeals sent the case back to Callahan for resentencing."

[Full story](#)

Detroit Free Press: Carol Cain: Detroit's former mayor Roman Gribbs has advice for Mike Duggan

"... [Roman] Gribbs, who was 45 when elected [mayor of Detroit in 1970], was seeing less of his five young children. That's why he decided against seeking a second term. He went on to serve as a judge in Wayne County Circuit Court and Michigan's Court of Appeals."

[Full story](#)

Daily Press & Argus: County courts shuffle dockets; Move could bolster service, reduce costs

"Livingston County's court system is reorganizing its dockets in an effort to provide 'more efficient' service to the public, court officials said. District Court Administrator Debra Kubitskey and Judge Theresa

Brennan, both of whom were not available to comment Friday, addressed the changes — which include moving staff from Brighton to Howell — at the Brighton City Council meeting Thursday.”

[Full story](#)

Ingham County Legal News: US Supreme Court beefs up standard for plea bargain-stage ineffective assistance appeals

“Federal courts taking up ineffective assistance-based appeals involving plea bargains must apply a ‘doubly deferential’ standard of review that gives significant weight to state court determinations, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled, reversing a 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in *Burt v. Titlow*, No. 12-414.... In *Titlow*, the 6th Circuit held that a Michigan murder defendant must be reoffered a favorable plea deal that she accepted but later rejected after consulting with an attorney she claimed gave deficient counsel. The defendant was ultimately convicted of second-degree murder and given a harsher sentence than what was offered in the plea deal. But the Supreme Court found that the defendant’s proclamation that she was swayed by bad advice was not enough to trump the Michigan Court of Appeals’ determination that her attorney acted reasonably.”

[Full story](#)

Macomb County Legal News: State House approves right-to-jury bill

“The Michigan House has voted unanimously to make sure people who file certain types of lawsuits against the state have a right to a jury trial, an attempt to fix a controversial law that gave jurisdiction over state suits to different judges. Majority Republicans and Gov. Rick Snyder enacted the law in November to take lawsuits against the state and its officials away from Ingham County judges in the Democratic-leaning Lansing area and move them to four appeals court judges to hear traditional Court of Claims cases.”

[Full story](#)

The Mining Journal/Marquette: Road appeal nixed

“The Michigan Court of Appeals has affirmed a Marquette County Circuit Court decision against the Huron Mountain Club in a dispute over abandonment procedures for a section of county road and a bridge over the Salmon Trout River in Powell Township.”

[Full story](#)

Muskegon County Legal News: Michigan State Bar exam changes set, but law schools are still unhappy

“Michigan State Bar exam takers appear to be adapting to the no-scaling grading rule put in place last year, with first-time passers hitting 67 percent in July’s exam, compared to 62 percent for July 2012. Total passers are at 60 percent in 2013, compared to 55 percent in 2012. And, despite complaints by all of Michigan’s law schools, the Board of Law Examiners’ stance appears to be what you see is what you get from now on.”

[Full story](#)

Oakland County Legal News: New Peacemaking Court will help ease relationship conflicts

“A dream has come true for Washtenaw County Trial Court Judge Timothy Connors who will oversee a new Peacemaking Court thanks to a yearlong grant from the state’s Court Performance Innovation Fund.... The Peacemaking Court will use Native American principles for resolving disputes, using values Connors refers to as the four Rs: respect, responsibility, relationship, and redirection.”

[Full story](#)

Saginaw News: Michigan House approves series of bills adding, subtracting judgeships across state

"Saginaw and Wayne counties could lose judges from their courts if a state House-approved re-balancing of judicial resources goes on to become law. The series of bills, passed on Thursday, Dec. 5 by the Michigan House of Representatives, also proposes adding a total of eight judges to the state's court system in Macomb, Oakland and Kent counties."

[Full story](#)

Star Tribune/Minneapolis, MN: Marshall, Mich., is devoted to keeping history alive

"... Another eccentric character was the person responsible for our last stop of the day, the Honolulu House Museum, which serves as the Marshall Historical Society headquarters. Abner Pratt, a prominent lawyer who moved to Marshall in 1839 and later served as chief justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, was appointed U.S. consul to the Hawaiian Islands (then the Sandwich Islands) in 1857."

[Full story](#)

Traverse City Record-Eagle: So what can we do with kids who kill?

"Technically, in Michigan, it has been possible since 1997 to have a person of any age — even an infant — charged, tried and sentenced as an adult. It has also been legal to sentence minors who murder to life without the possibility of parole."

[Full story](#)

Traverse City Record-Eagle: In old ruling, judge ruled DNA not essential

"Accusations that Jason Anthony Ryan raped and killed Kalkaska resident Geraldine Montgomery in 1996 came about because a group that works to exonerate convicted criminals through DNA evidence took an interest in the case.....But a then-circuit court judge ruled DNA evidence was not the most important piece of Peterson's conviction. The judge, Alton Davis, who later briefly served on the Michigan Supreme Court, held that he would not retest the DNA because it was immaterial to the case, and because no new technology was available at the time."

[Full story](#)