

December 28-30, 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.

### **The Detroit News: Courts for mentally ill gain steam in Michigan; Macomb joins counties with such facilities, and more may follow**

"Michigan is stepping up efforts to help accused criminals with mental issues get the medical assistance and guidance they need instead of housing them in the state's crowded prisons. The Legislature this session passed bills that set guidelines for counties seeking to create mental health courts that provide treatment instead of jail time to lawbreakers whose mental issues are identified as a key factor in their crimes. [Lt. Gov. Brian Calley signed the legislation this afternoon.]"

[Full story](#)

*Also see:*

### **Mental health court bills hailed by Chief Justice Young as "good government reform"**

[Press release](#)

### **Detroit Free Press: Novi judge denies conflict over ties to testing firms**

"Novi District Judge Brian MacKenzie is known for his get-tough brand of justice, ordering those who appear before him to undergo months of daily drug and alcohol testing and use interlock devices on their cars. His court offers the thousands of defendants who pass through annually a list of suggested local testing facilities and interlock vendors, which are privately owned businesses."

[Full story](#)

*Also see:*

### **Hometown Life Newspapers: Judge's ties to drug test firms bring more heat**

[Full story](#)

### **Detroit Free Press: Detroit's 36th District Court ends deficits, stops wasting police time**

"The budget is balanced and the public is benefiting from reforms at Detroit's busy 36th District Court, according to a judge appointed in May to fix the troubled court. Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Michael Talbot said the changes should please everyone, from Detroit taxpayers to a motorist trying to settle a traffic ticket."

[Full story](#)

### **Detroit Free Press: Brian Dickerson: Bill Schuette's crusade against juvenile lifers is all about Bill Schuette**

"... [State Rep. Joe] Haveman, who chairs the House Appropriations Committee, sponsored legislation mandating parole hearings for every juvenile lifer, including those incarcerated before 2012. But state Sen. Rick Jones [persuaded his Senate colleagues to exclude current prisoners, and a version approved by the House would include them only if federal or state Supreme Court justices insisted.] The Michigan Supreme Court could do just that when it takes up the cases of three currently incarcerated juvenile lifers sometime in 2014. Justices have already agreed to hear arguments by lawyers for Dakota Eliason, Raymond Carp and Cortez Davis."

[Full story](#)

### **Detroit Free Press: Snyder signs bill doubling campaign limits, protecting secrecy of issue ad donors**

"In a move sure to become an issue in the 2014 election, Gov. Rick Snyder said Friday he had signed a controversial bill doubling campaign donor limits and protecting the secrecy of issue ad donors. The bill includes a provision designed to thwart efforts by Secretary of State Ruth Johnson to reveal who pays for issue ads that have become increasingly influential in Michigan political [and judicial] campaigns."

[Full story](#)

*Also see:*

**Detroit Free Press: Rich Robinson: Gov. Snyder's support of dark money taints his legacy**

[Full story](#)

**The Detroit News: Campaign funding law hikes limits, keeps 'issue' donors' identity secret**

[Full story](#)

**Michigan Radio/Ann Arbor: Snyder signs bill to allow bigger political donations; preempt issue ad disclosure**

[Full story](#)

**MLive.com: Critics knock Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder for reversal on 'issue ad' donor transparency**

[Full story](#)

**Associated Press: AP News Break: Man cleared of rape settles for \$1.5M**

"[Michael Cristini,] who served 13 years in prison for rape based on faulty bite-mark evidence, has settled a lawsuit against a Detroit-area suburb for \$1.5 million, his attorney said Friday.... [Co-defendant Jeffrey] Moldowan's conviction was thrown out in 2002 by the state Supreme Court after bite-mark evidence was discredited and testimony was recanted. Cristini's conviction was thrown out by a Macomb County judge in 2003."

[Full story](#)

**Note: The Associated Press article also ran in the Detroit Free Press, the Detroit News, the Daily Tribune, the Macomb Daily and other media outlets.**

**Crain's Detroit Business: Detroit bankruptcy was biggest legal news, but courts were busy all year; Here's a look at the top legal stories in 2013**

"The local business law story of 2013 was undoubtedly Detroit's municipal bankruptcy — but the private sector also turned increasingly to the courts this year for guidance on their economic and management troubles. The run-up to the city's Chapter 9 petition July 18 and court authorization to seek bankruptcy protection Dec. 3 reverberated through the court system with related legal disputes and state judicial reforms."

[Full story](#)

**Daily Press & Argus: Michigan Supreme Court declines to hear attorney's appeal in conflict-of-interest case**

"The state's highest court declined to hear [Madison Heights defense attorney Timothy Corr's] appeal seeking to overturn a ruling that disqualified him from representing two women charged with illegally selling synthetic marijuana at a Genoa Township business."

[Full story](#)

**Detroit Legal News: Holiday Hours**

"The Michigan Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, and the State Court Administrative Office will be closed for the holidays on Tuesday, December 31; and Wednesday, January 1, 2014.... The Third Circuit Court Civil, Criminal and Family Divisions will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 31 and Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014, in observance of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, and will re-open on Thursday, Jan. 2,

2014.... The 36th District Court will be closed on Monday, Dec. 30, Tuesday, Dec. 31, and Wed. Jan. 1, 2014."

[Full story](#)

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

### **Dowagiac Daily News: Outlook good for old Cass County courthouse**

"Once the proud symbol of the Cass County justice system, the halls of Cassopolis' downtown courthouse have been silent for nearly a decade, its doors closed to the public. The old courthouse, which was built in 1889, was mothballed in 2004 after the county opened its current courthouse outside the village on M-62."

[Full story](#)

### **Grand Haven Tribune: Eaton County gets dog advocate to assist victims**

"The 1 ½-year-old black Labrador, named Reagan, was introduced recently to the county Board of Commissioners. Reagan will be available to provide support during courtroom testimony or whenever a victim needs him. Officials say all five of the county's judges have agreed to allow Reagan, known as a canine advocate, in their courtrooms."

[Full story](#)

**Also see:**

### **Oakland County Legal News: Dog advocate to assist victims in courtroom**

[Full story](#)

### **Macomb County Legal News: High court names jury committee members**

"The Michigan Supreme Court has announced its appointments to the Committee on Model Civil Jury Instructions, which drafts standard instructions for juries in civil cases. The 21-member Committee on Model Civil Jury Instructions, created under Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 2001-6, is composed of judges and attorneys appointed by the Supreme Court."

[Full story](#)

### **Macomb County Legal News: District court vacancy filled**

"Gov. Rick Snyder has announced the appointment of Michael Chupa of Warren to the 37th District Court, which serves the cities of Warren and Center Line.... Chupa replaces Judge Jennifer Faunce, who was appointed to Macomb County circuit court. He will have to run for election in November 2014 for a full six-year term."

[Full story](#)

### **Macomb County Legal News: Spotlight shines on Child Welfare Award winners**

"The Foster Care Review Board has announced the recipients of its 2013 Child Welfare Awards, which recognize exceptional service to children and families in the state's child welfare system. Michigan Department of Human Services Director Maura Corrigan presented the awards at the FCRB's annual awards ceremony [last month] in Bay City."

[Full story](#)

### **The MLW Blog: Genesee circuit judge named to civil rights commission**

"Judge Duncan M. Beagle, a Genesee Circuit Court judge assigned to the family division, has been appointed to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. The politically balanced eight-member board investigates discrimination complaints. Beagle is an independent. Beagle has been a Circuit Court Judge for 22 years."

[Full story](#)

## **Muskegon County Legal News: Institutional Knowledge: Judge shares court's core values, culture of service with Ugandans during visit**

"... In the Ugandan legal system, that sense of trust and fairness has been lacking among its citizens, whether legitimately or only in perception. One of Michigan's most respected judges, the Hon. Cynthia Stephens, was invited recently to help turn around that perception."

[Full story](#)

## **Muskegon Chronicle: Final vote in Muskegon County exempts district court from new public defender system**

"Muskegon County's district court will be exempted from the launch of a new public defender system in the county, scheduled to begin Jan. 1, 2014. Muskegon County commissioners at their Thursday, Dec. 19 meeting voted to finalize a decision that will allow the 60th District Court to keep its current system through at least September 2014. The court has kept four lawyers under contract to represent defendants who cannot afford a private lawyer."

[Full story](#)

## **Muskegon Chronicle: Letters: Muskegon has been ahead of the curve in providing mental health help**

Richard Rienstra writes "Congratulations on your informative and enlightening series about the many who are working together in the mental health system in Muskegon County. One highlight among many was how the Muskegon area has experimented and became one of the first counties in the state to oversee the benefits of a mental health court. Muskegon County should be justifiably proud of the innovative ways that it has undertaken over the years to provide mental health care."

[Full story](#)

## **Saginaw News: Police: Former Saginaw attorney who served prison time threw dead animals into Thomas Township couple's yard**

"When former Saginaw attorney Steven E. Eimers was sentenced to prison in 2008 for 10 crimes, he said his sentencing judge would never see him in court again. About 11 months after he gained parole, however, the 52-year-old Eimers now finds himself back in jail awaiting a court appearance on a new felony charge."

[Full story](#)

## **Saginaw News: Former Saginaw Mayor Wilmer Jones Ham McZee wants felony insurance fraud conviction expunged**

"Saginaw's first woman mayor is asking [Saginaw County Circuit Judge James Borchard] to expunge from her record a felony insurance fraud conviction related to the burning of her vehicle. Wilmer Jones Ham McZee in November filed an application to set aside her December 2007 conviction related to the March 2006 burning of her 1986 Mercedes-Benz.... A jury convicted Ham McZee, who served as mayor of Saginaw from 2001 to 2005, of insurance fraud but acquitted her of arson after a five-day trial."

[Full story](#)