



WOMEN LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
FOUNDED IN 1919

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

WLAM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Susan Chalgian - President
Nicole Smithson - President Elect
Tanya Grillo - Vice President

Kirsten Silwanowicz - Treasurer
Kristina Bilowus - Secretary
Erin Klug - Past President

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Zenell Brown
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Elyse Culberson
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Jewel Haji Boelstler

Hon. Alyia Hakim
Shelley Kester
Saima Khalil
Tanya Lundberg
Angela Medley
Abril Valdes Siewert
Patricia Woodruff

Regional Representatives

Emilie Lyday, Great Lakes Bay Region
Angela Medley, Macomb Region
Laura Polizzi, Macomb Region
Elizabeth Siefker, Mid-Michigan Region
Rebecca Tetreau, Oakland | WBA Region
Kelley Donnelly, Oakland | WBA Region

Melissa Wangler, Tip of the Mitt Region
Cassandra Musser, Washtenaw Region
Julia Walczak, Wayne Region
Maya Younis, Wayne Region
Melissa Kelleigh, Western Region



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan President's Report

Submitted by Susie Chalgian, WLAM President 2023-2024

Dear WLAM Members,

This year's theme for the Women Lawyer's Association of Michigan was Shaping Connections – building on the natural bonds that members establish in our advocacy and enjoyment together. We saw so much happen in the last 12 months to strengthen the bonds of our members and to strengthen the resource WLAM is when we come together as an organization!

This started with our Annual Meeting at The Graduate in East Lansing on June 2, 2023. We had a statewide showing of members while we networked, honored our awardees, and partied into the night!





Women Lawyers Association of Michigan President's Report

Submitted by Susie Chalgian, WLAM President 2023-2024

We took a short summer break before our committees revved up again in late August with their new or returning Chairs. The State and Regional board members gathered for our annual retreat at Crystal Mountain. There was a lot of meaningful discussion for bettering the connection between the regions and the State board but also a lot of enjoyment in being together.





Women Lawyers Association of Michigan

President's Report

Submitted by Susie Chalgian, WLAM President 2023-2024

After all our brainstorming and encouragement of one another, our committees were ready to hit the ground running. The Leadership Class empowered another amazing group of law students. The Legal Affairs, Legislative, and Candidate Rating & Endorsement Committee (CREC) was kept busy receiving requests for ratings on almost every candidate whenever an appointment or election opened up. The Domestic Violence committee took on a renovation of their purpose. The WLAM Journal and the WLAM Podcast shared excellent interviews and knowledge through new platforms. The Regional Development and Membership committees worked together to find ways to include members from regions not yet represented on their own. The Bylaws, Policies, & Procedures committee did an overhaul so that how our organization functions matched our documents. And then there was all the programming each committee put on and the many events each region hosted.

For all that, I thank our amazing group of leaders who put immense effort and hard work behind those successes while maintaining their own careers and personal lives. We are lucky to have volunteers who passionately support our organization. Specifically, I want to thank our association manager, Hillary Walilko, who has been the hero behind WLAM's ability to function. No president could achieve as much without her knowledge of our history and our data. We are endless grateful to have her on board. I also want to thank the Immediate Past President, Erin Klug, who gives so much to the causes that matter to her. We are lucky to be one and have gained so much from her passion. Finally, I want to thank the board I served with: Nicole Smithson, Tanya Grillo, Kristen Silwanowicz, and Kristina Bilowus. These four women have come up the ranks with me and I have watched them grow into tremendous leaders. I look forward to watching them each take on a presidential year. Nicole is up first, and I have no doubts that she will devote herself to making our organization better through administration and engagement.



Our organization's ability to connect amazing advocates, kind souls, new partners, etc. has a rippling effect that is truly humbling to watch happen in real time. I could not be prouder of my involvement in WLAM and I will always remain active with this group. WLAM, it has been my honor to serve as your President, thank you all for the opportunity.

Susan Chalgian

President (2023-2024), Women Lawyers Association of Michigan



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Kirsten Silwanowicz, Treasurer

2023 Statement of Operations

Revenue from Member Dues: Dues revenue for the year was \$58,914.25. Dues revenue for the last five years has been \$56,890 in 2022; \$49,512 in 2021; \$49,521 in 2020, \$50,977 in 2019, \$45,669 in 2018.

Dues Paid to Regions: Dues paid to regions totaled \$16,018.75 in 2023.

Special Sponsorships: As in years past, we continued to support the regions by offering special project funding. The regions utilized \$2,450.00 of the \$2,800 available to them.

Total Net Revenue: The net revenue for the year was \$12,333.30.

All treasurer quarterly reports for the region were on time this year, allowing us to issue checks to the regions for dues in a timely fashion. This was aided by Hillary sending out email reminders, calendar invites for due dates, and friendly reminders from the Treasurer, in addition to phone calls if reports were not submitted on time. This is highly encouraged next year, as it made it easier to maintain our budget during the year.

All regions submitted a budget for their region this past year, which was recommended, but not required. It is now required under the bylaws changes.

Following is the 2023 profit and loss detail.

Statement of Operations, FY 2023

	<u>Jan - Dec</u> <u>23</u>
Income	
640 Dues	
640.10 Sustaining Member	
640.10.01 Sustaining - State	7,650.00
640.10.02 Sustaining - Region	3,050.00
640.10 Sustaining Member - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 640.10 Sustaining Member	10,700.00
640.20 Attorney 5+ Years	
640.20.01 Attorney 5+ - State	19,012.00
640.20.02 Attorney 5+ - Region	7,050.00
640.20 Attorney 5+ Years - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 640.20 Attorney 5+ Years	26,062.00
640.30 Attorney 1-5 Years	
640.30.01 Attorney 1-5 - State	6,762.50

640.30.02 Attorney 1-5 - Region	2,587.50
640.30 Attorney 1-5 Years - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 640.30 Attorney 1-5 Years	9,350.00
640.35 Attorney Govt/Non-Profit	
640.35.01 Atty Govt/NP-State	6,247.25
640.35.02 Atty Govt/NP-Region	2,375.00
640.35 Attorney Govt/Non-Profit - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 640.35 Attorney Govt/Non-Profit	8,622.25
640.40 Law Student	
640.40.01 Law Student - State	2,456.25
640.40.02 Law Student - Region	843.75
640.40 Law Student - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 640.40 Law Student	3,300.00
640.60 Attorney Retiree	
640.60.01 Atty Retiree-State	187.50
640.60.02 Atty Retiree-Region	62.50
640.60 Attorney Retiree - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 640.60 Attorney Retiree	250.00
640.85 Unlicensed JD	
640.85.01 Unlicensed JD-State	400.00
640.85.02 Unlicensed JD-Region	150.00
640.85 Unlicensed JD - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 640.85 Unlicensed JD	550.00
640.90 Paralegal	
640.90.01 Paralegal-State	60.00
640.90.02 Paralegal-Region	20.00
640.90 Paralegal - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 640.90 Paralegal	80.00
Total 640 Dues	58,914.25
660 Interest Income	1,534.68
680 Other Events/Activities	
680.40 WLAM Apparel/Merchandise	138.98
680.50 State Events	5,265.00
680.70 Leadership Class	4,750.00
680.90 WTN Podcast	<u>1,000.00</u>
Total 680 Other Events/Activities	11,153.98
690 Annual Meeting Revenue	
690.10 Registration - Members	9,025.00
690.20 Registration - Non-Mbrs	2,125.00
690.30 Sponsorships	24,875.00
690.50 Luncheon	100.00
690.60 Reception	<u>100.00</u>
Total 690 Annual Meeting Revenue	36,225.00

Total Income	<u>107,827.91</u>
Gross Profit	107,827.91
Expense	
710 Board of Directors	
710.10 Board Meetings	2,039.02
710.15 Board/Regional Retreat	5,059.05
710.20 Conference Calling	317.79
710.30 President/Officers	935.62
710.40 Directors/Officers Ins.	<u>1,144.00</u>
Total 710 Board of Directors	9,495.48
720 Committee Expenses	
720.20 Membership Committee	
720.20.3 Membership Mailings	347.57
720.20.5 Postage	<u>228.00</u>
Total 720.20 Membership Committee	575.57
720.30 Equal Pay Day	75.00
720.40 Gifts/Event Fees	<u>0.00</u>
Total 720 Committee Expenses	650.57
730 Licenses and Fees	20.00
740 Regions	
740.10 Region Dues	16,018.75
740.20 Special Project Funding	2,450.00
740.30 New Region Development	<u>0.00</u>
Total 740 Regions	18,468.75
750 Communications/Marketing	
750.40 Print/Promotion Material	0.00
750.50 WLAM Logo Merchandise	<u>0.00</u>
Total 750 Communications/Marketing	0.00
780 Other Events/Activities	
780.50 State Events	4,934.63
780.70 Leadership Class	2,630.82
780.80 WLAM Journal	261.60
780.90 WTN Podcast	<u>210.00</u>
Total 780 Other Events/Activities	8,037.05
790 Annual Meeting	
790.01 Speakers	0.00
790.10 Facility	
790.11 Audio/Visual	905.00
790.12 Food & Beverage	13,070.48
790.13 Room Rental	1,750.00
790.15 Hotel Overnights	187.07
790.10 Facility - Other	<u>549.40</u>
Total 790.10 Facility	16,461.95

790.20 Awards	
790.20.1 President	202.80
790.20.2 JLK	366.67
790.20.3 Judge	366.67
790.20.4 Region Member	296.06
790.20.5 Bledsoe Ford	<u>366.66</u>
Total 790.20 Awards	1,598.86
790.50 Meeting Materials/Signs	
790.50.01 Signs	49.47
790.50.02 Program	491.43
790.50.03 Materials	<u>88.10</u>
Total 790.50 Meeting Materials/Signs	629.00
790.80 Give-Aways/Gifts	416.33
790 Annual Meeting - Other	<u>5,316.10</u>
Total 790 Annual Meeting	24,422.24
800 Professional Fees	
800.10 Accounting Services	650.00
800.20 Administrative Services	27,300.00
800.30 Admin/Staff Travel	<u>569.56</u>
Total 800 Professional Fees	28,519.56
810 Dues & Subscriptions	
810.10 NCWBA	300.00
810.20 NAWL	<u>0.00</u>
Total 810 Dues & Subscriptions	300.00
820 Bank Fees	2,487.63
830 Web Resources	
830.10 Website Hosting/Domain	156.18
830.20 Website Development	<u>1,030.88</u>
Total 830 Web Resources	1,187.06
840 Office Supplies	
840.10 Copies	154.77
840.20 Stationery/Envelopes	0.00
840.30 Labels	2.38
840 Office Supplies - Other	<u>0.75</u>
Total 840 Office Supplies	157.90
850 Postage	56.76
860 Telephone	384.00
890 Charitable Contributions	1,071.00
Credit Card Fees	<u>236.61</u>
Total Expense	<u>95,494.61</u>
Net Income	<u>12,333.30</u>



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Technology & Communications Committee
Annual Report
2023-2024

Chair: Kristina Bilowus

Committee: Patricia Woodruff and Nina Prashad-kidd

Charge: The chair of this committee oversees the maintenance of the Association's website and other media sources (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, listserv, etc.), the distribution of the Association's quarterly electronic newsletter (e-Focus), and the distribution of referral emails to members. This committee works to ensure that the Association's media sources are current and up to date with accurate leadership contact information, past event content displayed, and timely information is provided regarding upcoming events.

Summary: Regular communication with Executive Director Hillary Walilko concerning social media posts, updates, programming, and promoting events. The committee would post to our three main channels of social media (LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook) relevant content as it relates to the afore-mentioned action items.



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Awards and Nomination Committee
Annual Report
2023-2024

In 2023, the Awards and Nomination Committee prepared the voted and elected the above referenced Executive Board and Directors at Large and the following awards were presented at the Annual Meeting in Lansing, MI:

Regional Leadership Awards

- Kelley Donnelly
- Paulina Kennedy
- Nina Prashad-Kidd

Mary S. Coleman Award: Hon. Carla G. Testani

Jean King Award: Hon. Elizabeth L. Gleicher

Geraldine Bledsoe Ford Award: Hon. Betty R. Widgeon

In 2024, the Awards and Nominations Committee slated the following women to the Executive Board and Directors at Large:

Directors at Large 2024-2026 (new 2-year term)

- Alex Casperson
- Jennifer France
- Judge Kameshia D. Gant
- Angela Medley
- Melanie Lynn Smith
- Laura Polizzi
- Lindsay LaForest
- Erin Gianopoulos
- Judge Alyia Hakim

Directors at Large 2023-2025 (in the middle of their 2-year term)

- Jacqueline August
- Elyse Culberson
- Zenell Brown
- Melissa Graves
- Shelly Kester
- Tanya Lundberg

Executive Board

- Secretary: Abril Valdes Siewart
- Treasurer: Kristina Bilowus
- VP: Kirsten Silwanowicz
- President-Elect: Tanya Grillo
- Immediate Past President: Susie Chalgian
- President: Nicole Smithson



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Awards and Nomination Committee
Annual Report
2023-2024

Further, the following awards were given to several incredible women in the field of law:

Regional Leadership Awards

- Jacquelyn Dupler
- Melanie Smith
- Lauren Kissel
- Kristin Fernandez

Mary S. Coleman Award: Hon. Mariam Bazzi

Jean King Award: Hon. Kirsten Frank Kelly

Geraldine Bledsoe Ford Award: Hon. Cynthia Stephens

All these items have assisted WLAM with its mission and will continue to the furtherance of the mission for all WLAM members moving forward.

Submitted by,
Erin Klug, Chair



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Candidate Rating & Endorsement Committee (CREC)
Annual Report
2023-2024

Since our last report, the Candidate Rating & Endorsement Committee reviewed 15 applicants who were running for office or seeking appointment by the Governor for open judicial positions throughout Michigan. Please see our website for more information.

<https://womenlawyers.org/about-wlam/candidate-rating-and-endorsement-committee/>

The chairs thank the dedicated members of our committee who generously spent significant time checking references, reviewing application materials, and interviewing candidates. This year's committee consisted of Jacqueline August Kristina Costantino, Kelley Donnelly, Hon. Kameshia D. Gant, Nekia Kelley, Shelley Kester, Amber Libby, Mary Parisien, Nina Prashad-Kidd, Mallory Reader, Melanie Smith, Amber Soler, and Keri Turner.

Submitted by,
Patricia A. Woodruff and Nicole M. Smithson, Co-Chairs



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Diversity & Inclusion Committee
Annual Report
2023-2024

Our major event this year was “Breaking Barriers: The Path to True Inclusivity.” This virtual panel discussion was held on April 23, 2024, and the panelists were from diverse backgrounds and practice areas. The programming met the committee’s goal of raising awareness of the importance of DEI to the legal profession.

Also, this year we continued to work on a listing of Historical Dates and Events involving important Women Lawyers and Judges, focusing on the talented women lawyers and judges from Michigan. We will continue working on this document for the upcoming bar year and collaborate with the Historical Preservation Committee and other committees. Once this project is completed, we will have a database that can be housed on our website for members to freely access.

Submitted by:

Abril Valdes Siewert and Zenell Brown
WLAM DEI Committee Co-Chairs



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Historic Preservation Committee
Annual Report
2023-2024

In celebration of Women's History Month, the committee had several social media posts reflecting on WLAM's more recent past including topics like the 100th annual meeting and regional charitable efforts.

In August 2023, the committee hosted a virtual panel discussion, *Remarkable Leaders: Women Presidents of the SBM—Pioneers & Present*, with Julia Donovan Darlow, Hon. Victoria A. Roberts, and Dana Warnez. Kristina Bilowus moderated the program. In January 2024, the committee presented *Like Father, Like Daughter: Michigan Supreme Court Duo*. This virtual program featured Justices Megan and Michael Cavanagh and was moderated by Lauren Kissel. Both programs were rebroadcast as episodes of WLAM's *Working Towards Nine* podcast.

In May 2024, Lauren Kissel had an article on Justice Mary S. Coleman published in the *WLAM Journal*.

Over the years, the committee has created significant content for WLAM's YouTube channel. Videos include interviews with past WLAM presidents about their time in office, last year's Three Justices program, and the programs mentioned above. Please check out the WLAM YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2OUArBm-uM4L7zyJVwUE6w/videos>

Many thanks to this year's committee members: Asia Adieh, Kristina Bilowus, Jewell Briggs, Saima Khalil, Lauren Kissel, and Carolyn Sullivan.

Submitted by,
Nicole M. Smithson, Chair



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
WLAMom Committee
Annual Report
2023-2024

WLAMom continues to connect our attorney parents through monthly Zoom meetings where members explored what was working and what was not for their work life balance, their personal growth, and their firm accommodations. These conversations lead to a chosen topic for an upcoming panel discussion on how parents can negotiate for better parenting time. We look forward to enjoying that event as well as ongoing Zoom meetings and committee gatherings. We continue to grow in membership and support!

Sincerely,

Susan Chalgian,
Chair of WLAMom Committee



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Leadership Class Committee Annual Report 2023-2024

The WLAM Leadership Class is a WLAM initiative created to further its mission of securing the rights of women in society, advancing the interests of women members of the legal profession, promoting improvements in the administration of justice, and promoting equality and social justice for all people. The Leadership Class is an inclusive program available to all law students, regardless of their gender, race, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or any other inalienable trait. While the Leadership Class is designed to further the WLAM mission, we always have been, and will remain, an inclusive organization.

The Leadership Class benefits law students by providing students with the tools to develop the professional skills necessary for success and leadership positions in law, business, government, the nonprofit sector, and the judiciary. Participation in the Leadership Class greatly enhances participants' business contacts, equips them with the tools necessary for professional development, and provides opportunities that typically do not exist without this program.

In order to be eligible, Class Participants must:

1. Be currently enrolled in law school,
2. Attend a Michigan law school or provide a demonstrated commitment to work in the legal profession in Michigan during the upcoming summer,
3. Complete the WLAM Leadership Class Application located [here](#), which includes providing the following:
 - a. Resume,
 - b. Photo,
 - c. Statement about leadership describing the following:
 - i. What leadership means to you;
 - ii. Why you wish to participate in this Leadership Class; and
 - iii. How you expect to use your experience in this program.
 - d. Interview.

In addition, by applying for the WLAM Leadership Class, applicants committed to the dates as stated in the [WLAM Leadership Class Curriculum](#).

We interviewed candidates and selected 10 students to participate based on their applications and interviews.

For 2024, the Leadership Class was held in a hybrid format, which allowed students to interact with one another in person and allowing for flexibility with events.

The WLAM Leadership Class Curriculum was as follows:

*Leadership Class Retreat – May 18, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Class Participants will attend an all-day Retreat that features various sessions designed to develop their leadership skills. They will also begin the initial groundwork on a group community service project. The seminar is followed by a mixer so that the Class Participant can become better acquainted with each other, program faculty, and class facilitators. The Retreat will feature the following:

- Importance of Branding - Class Participants will receive a professional headshot from [Emma Burcusel](#), while discussing the importance of branding as a woman lawyer.
- Overcoming Obstacles in the Legal Profession Fireside Chat
- DISC Assessment and Presentation
- The Importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Leadership
- Screening of the WLAM Documentary and History about WLAM
- Panel Presentation on Setting Yourself Up for Success
- Tips and Tricks of Effective Leadership from Program Facilitators and Past Class Participants
- A Conversation About How to be an Impactful Leader
- Leadership Class Project Planning
- Happy Hour for the Class Participants to get acquainted with one another and Program Facilitators

Day of Service – June 6, 2024 at 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. and June 27 at 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

June 6: Class Participants will volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House, 4707 St Antoine #2/200, Detroit, MI 48201.

June 27: In conjunction with Lakeshore Legal Aid, Class Participants will provide legal advice with an attorney mentor to clients from Turning Point, 76 S Main St, Mt Clemens, MI 48043.

*Speed Networking – July 18, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

Class Participants will have the opportunity to have one-on-one meetings lasting approximately seven to ten minutes with the participating judges and experienced attorneys.

*Graduation and Project Presentation – August 15, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

Class Participants will graduate and other WLAM Board members will be in attendance to meet. The Class Participants will present their project.

Community Service Project – Ongoing

Class Participants will select, organize, and execute a self-directed project aimed at elevating women in the legal profession. Check out the WLAM website for past Class projects.

*Hosted by Warner Norcross and Judd at 2715 Woodward Ave. Suite 300, Detroit, MI 48201.



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
WLAM Journal
Annual Report
2023-2024

This year's issue of the *WLAM Journal* featured many items of interest to our legal community. Lauren Kissel profiled Justice Mary S. Coleman, Michigan's first female supreme court justice. Lindsey LaForest talked with Justice Megan Cavanagh about the Task Force on Well-Being in the Law's report and its recommendations to improve lawyer well-being. Ki Lee Kilgore's review of *Feminist Judgments: Corporate Law Rewritten* demonstrated the importance of having diversity on the bench and called on law schools to teach students about nontraditional perspectives. Former Dean of the Oakland County Circuit Court, Judge Denise Langford Morris, reflected on her life, her historic career, and her experience as a member of the ABA Criminal Justice Section Women in Criminal Law Task Force. Nicole Smithson examined the recommendations made by the ABA Task Force. Finally, WLAM's regions reported on their exciting projects and recent events.

The editors-in-chief thank board members, Kristina Bilowus, Melissa Card-Abela, Alexandra Casperson, Qamar Enayah, Emily Evers, Jennifer Farenholt, Lauren Giese, Amber Libby, S. Kerene Moore, Chloe Neely, and Mallory Reader for the effort and dedication that they put into the issue.

Respectfully submitted,
Jewel Haji Boelstler, Kirsten Silwanowicz, and Nicole M. Smithson



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Working Towards Nine Podcast
Annual Report
2023-2024

The *Working Towards Nine* podcast has released 28 episodes since June 5, 2023. Episodes have discussed a variety of topics relevant to women in the profession like branding, wellbeing, professional development, and Michigan legal history. Hosts have talked to three current/former MSC Justices, three judges, and Michigan's first Arab American Solicitor General. To learn more about the podcast, please see <https://womenlawyers.org/working-towards-nine/#!form/PodcastAds>.

The Chairs thank committee members Carrie Almassian, Kristina Billowus, Alexandra Casperson, Tanya Grillo, Abril Valdes Siewert for their hard work this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsey LaForest, Kirsten Silwanowicz, and Nicole M. Smithson



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Domestic Violence Committee
Annual Report
2023-2024

This year, I was charged with re-establishing the Domestic Violence Committee after a period of idleness. We started the year by brainstorming potential ideas for projects and setting up monthly meetings.

In the past year, we have met monthly. We discussed ideas including trainings and fundraisers. Ultimately, we decided to plan a training for both practitioners and survivors related to PPOs, including the new ERPOs. We have been working with Regina Beyersdorf from SafeHouse Center in Ann Arbor and Martha Gove from Family Law Project (Legal Services of South Central Michigan) to plan the training.

We are shooting to conduct the training in October in person, with an option to join via Zoom. The first part will be for practitioners only and will focus on trauma-informed interviewing and representation. The second part will be for both practitioners and survivors and will be about the nuts and bolts of PPOs/ERPOs (what they are, how to file, how to serve, how to respond if the PPO is opposed, court etiquette and preparation, etc.). We also intend to use the training to encourage practitioners to sign up for pro bono service, including with the Free Legal Aid Clinic in Washtenaw County.

Our plan is to conduct this training in Washtenaw County initially and then make it duplicable so other domestic violence shelters or services can also host the training and we can encourage practitioners in other regions to sign up for pro bono service.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Hollander
Chair of Domestic Violence Committee



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Gender Equity Committee
Annual Report
2023-2024

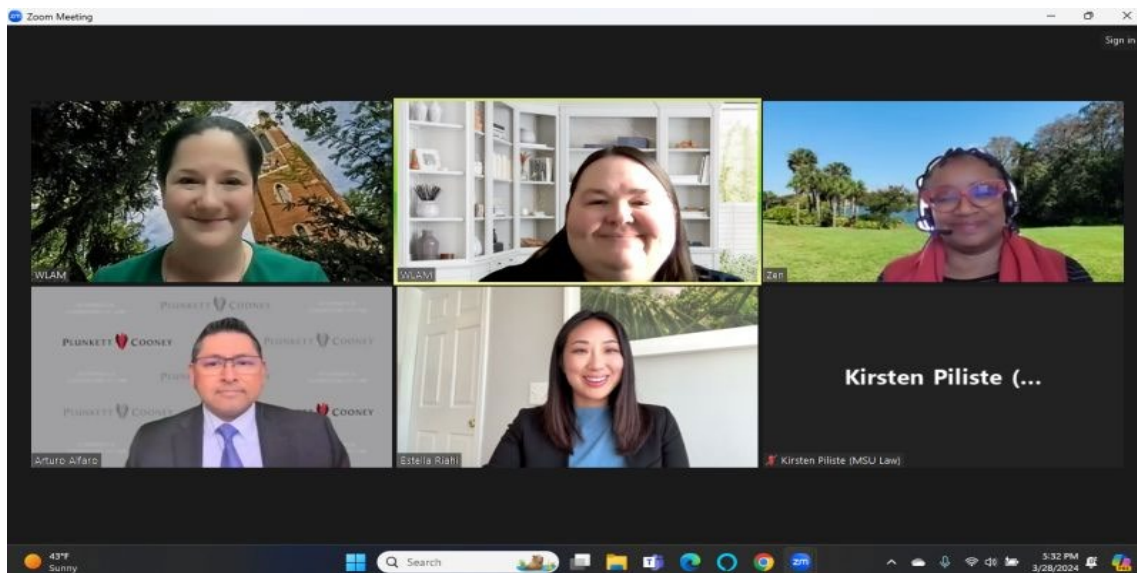
Chair: Kristina Bilowus

Committee: Susie Chalgian, Frances Hollander, Katie Stearns, Nina Lotarski, et al.

Our charge: *“This committee develops programs and services to: (1) assist members in dealing with gender bias; (2) raise awareness among the bench, bar, law schools, law enforcement, state government and/or general public of the continuing problem of gender bias; and (3) attempt to reduce the frequency and severity of the incidents and effects of gender bias on individual lawyers and members of society.”*

Summary: We held quarterly meetings where we outlined goals and discussed relevant issues. We wanted to focus on pathways for women in the law beginning law school, keeping a pulse on women pay equity, and partnering with the WLAMOM Committee.

Additionally, we held a panel discussion in March, during Women’s History Month. The title was *Inspire and Empower: The Role of Mentorship* where various practitioners and a recent law school graduate talked about mentorship, sponsorship, and ways to uplift women in the legal profession.



2023-2024 GLBR ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Members,

We had another fantastic year full of networking and giving back to our community.

Our year began with our annual meeting on June 20, 2023, held at the Saginaw Club in Saginaw, Michigan. At that meeting, the incoming board was sworn in by Magistrate Janey Lamar, a former WLAM GLBR Board Member. In addition, we heard from Judge Brittany Dicken discussing the local judicial system. We also awarded our regional Margaret Louise Rorke award to Judge Janet M. Boes. Judge Boes officially retired in 2023. She has given so much to our region and it was her continuous dedication to our organization that made her a natural pick. Our Liberty Bell honoree was Saginaw County Lieutenant Ebony Rasco. Lieutenant Rasco is incredibly important to our community and she has proven herself to be committed to the American system of freedom under law.

The 2023-2024 Executive Board consisted of Chelsea Brown (President), McKenzie Stone (Vice President), Nancy Samir-Haddad Derleth (Treasurer), Rikki Mays-Reak (Secretary), Makenzie Schaub (Membership Chair), and Emilie Lyday (Immediate Past President and WLAM Regional Representative).

Throughout the year, we hosted Bar Reviews throughout our region. At one of the Bar Reviews, we participated in trivia. Our team did very well and fun was had by all.

We volunteered for the Zoo Boo at the Saginaw Children's Zoo. Members handed out candy to children and ran the straw maze.

We held our annual Holiday party at Stardust, a local bowling alley. Members got to mingle and bowl together.

Overall, the year was very successful and we look forward to continuing to grow our membership in the future and expanding our presence in the community.



WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN MACOMB REGION ANNUAL REPORT – 2023-2024

WLAM Macomb Region 2023 EVENTS:

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Cocktails at 5:00 pm Dinner at 6:00 pm

Filippas Italian Restaurant
45125 Mound Rd, Shelby Twp, MI 48317

All Proceeds from this event will be donated to:



The Healing Nest reaches out to women who are currently undergoing treatment for any type of cancer by offering a variety of nurturing treatments and services, free of charge and administered by licensed, trained and caring volunteers.

2024 Annual Cocktails for a Cause

Almost \$4,000 was raised to benefit The Healing Nest! The Macomb region held its annual meeting during the Cocktails for a Cause event, and the new board members were sworn in.



Board Members
Pictured:

Kim DiBartolomeo,
Kristina Joseph, Jen
Smith, Alecia Golm,
Lori Smith, Norine
Issak.



Holiday Luncheon

WLAM Macomb held its annual holiday luncheon at Testa Barra. A donation was made to The Butterfly Collective, which provides support to domestic abuse survivors.



Fall Mixer

The WLAM Macomb 2023 Fall Membership Mixer took place on November 9th at Cellar 104 in Mt Clemens, and a BOGO was offered to members who encouraged non-members to join.

MID MICHIGAN *Region*

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

Together we raised money to support breast cancer research and awareness.

Some of our members gathered at the Capital and walked to show support for survivors.



Pictured: Aylsh Gallagher, Judge Cynthia Ward, Teddy Eisenhut, Liz Seifkort, & Melanie Smith

2023 Stell Reception

This year's Stell Award was given to attorney Liisa Speaker, Founder and Attorney at Speaker Law Firm, PLLC, pictured below with Judge David Jordan.

Two scholarships were given this year, to 3L students Jordyn DuPuis (*left*) & Estella Riahi (*right*). Each was given a fully paid for bar prep course, in addition to a \$1,500 cash stipend.



Networking

MidMich partnered with Ingham County Bar Association's Young Lawyer's Section for 2 events this spring. First, a networking event in March, where despite being the week of mid-terms, we were delighted to meet the many students who attended, and gain a couple of new mentee applicants.

In May, members from both groups gathered for a Saturday morning yoga class, where donations were collected to support Small Talk Children's Advocacy Center.



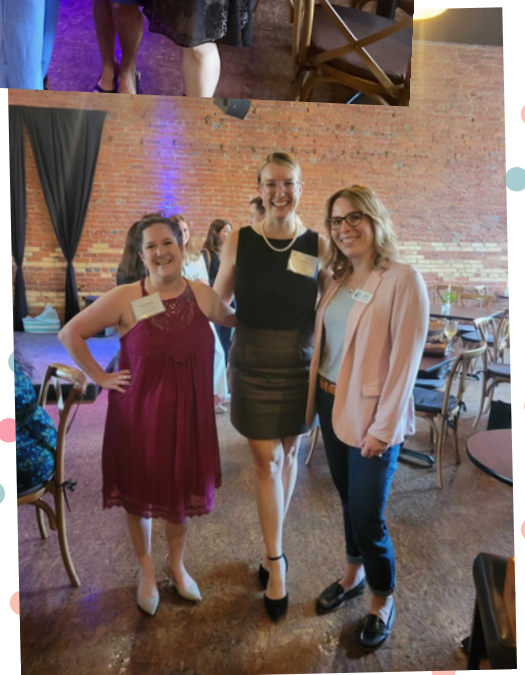
Leadership



We are extremely proud of our three members who received the Regional Leadership Award at this year's State Annual Meeting. From L to R, Board President Melanie Smith, Membership Director Lauren Kissel, Oakland Region's President Kristin Fernandez, and member Jackie Dupler.

Annual Meeting

To end the year, members gathered at Urban Beat and enjoyed live jazz music, fellowship, and food. The Board is currently in the middle of a 2-year term, and looking forward to serving the Region through June 2025. The highlight of the evening was bestowing upon Judge Janice Cunningham of the 56th Circuit Court for Eaton County her *Lifetime Membership Status*, commemorating her decades of dedication to ensuring the equal rights and opportunities of women in the legal profession.





WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN
TIP OF THE MITT REGION
ANNUAL REPORT
MAY 2022-MAY 2023

2024-2025
Board of Directors



Jordan N. Lindsey, *President*



Christina Carroll, *Vice President*



Roxanne Steinhoff, *Treasurer*



Linda Kisabeth, *Secretary*



Melissa Wangler, *Regional Representative*



Lillian Harmon, *Director-at-Large*



Kristina Bilowus, *Director-at-Large*

Ready, Set, HUDDLE!

Several members of the *Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM* represented at the State Board Retreat at Crystal Mountain Resort in Benzie County, MI, this past October. It was a weekend full of opportunity to get connected and acquainted with women lawyers from all around Michigan. We look forward to attending again this year!



Past Events.

August 2023 – Picnic with a Purpose

After taking a few months off from meetings to enjoy the northern Michigan summer with family and friends, members of the Tip of the Mitt and their families gathered at Bower's Harbor Park in Grand Traverse County. The weather was beautiful on the Old Mission Peninsula, the burgers were grilled to perfection, the company was delightful, and the group collected several items for the Women's Resource Center of Northern Michigan Safehouse.

October 2023 – Hike for Hospice

In October, members of the Tip of the Mitt took advantage of the fall foliage and set out together on a "Hike for Hospice". The ladies and their families and friends (four-legged included) met at the Avalanche Preserve Recreation Area in Boyne City and hiked two and a half miles to overlook Lake Charlevoix. Members donated several items, such as cleaning supplies and paper products to Ball Hospice House in Sault Ste. Marie. Our resident Yooper, Jennifer France, was kind enough to deliver the items on behalf of the group.

November 2023 – ToTM in DC

Jennifer France of Sault St. Marie, Amber Libby of Cheboygan, and Melissa Wangler of West Branch represented Northern Michigan in Washington D.C. when members of the Women Lawyer's Association of Michigan were

sworn into the Supreme Court. They had an amazing time touring the city and celebrating with their Michigan colleagues!

January 2024 – Winter Fun Day

January 27th was kids' day! For members of the ToTM, it was "act like a kid day". Members and their children took part in extreme tubing at Hanson Hills Recreation Area in Grayling. Warm temperatures made for slick conditions on the tube hill, and several speed records were broken (but no bones)! Everyone warmed up with hot chocolate in the lodge after the fun. It was a great day to get out and enjoy winter weather in the Tip of the Mitt Region!

February 2024 – Galentine's Day!

On February 15, 2024, the Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM sponsored the 2nd Annual Galentine's Gathering with GTLA WLA in Elk Rapids, MI. The group joined together at Cellar 152 for great food, tasty beverages, and wonderful company. The Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM is geographically vast and this event is purposed to celebrate meeting together for Galentine's in February and to connect with the west side members in Traverse City.



Giving Back.

The Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM participated in the "Food from the Bar" project with a donation to the Manna Food Project in Harbor Springs. At all WLAM events held throughout the past year, members from ***The Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM*** collected non-perishable food items in effort to fight hunger among children in Northern Michigan. ***The Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM*** made multiple donations, with the most recent donation being made following our May Annual Meeting! Thank you to those who participated. Together we can make a difference!



Staying Connected.

Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM conducts monthly zoom Board meetings and welcomes all members to attend! Emails are sent out to members with zoom meeting information each month prior to each meeting.

Annual Meeting.

The Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM 4th Annual Meeting was a success! The Meeting was held at The Queen's Head Wine Pub & Lark Theater in Cheboygan, MI on Saturday, May 18, 2024. Regional members and guests were honored to hear from the keynote speaker – Thomas Grden from the State Bar of Michigan Lawyers and Judges Assistance Program. Mr. Grden spoke about the importance of self-care in the legal profession and shared useful information and resources for attorneys to utilize throughout our careers. Attendees also enjoyed music by the talented Northern Michigan artist and guest musician, Evan Archambo. Guests engaged in networking while enjoying delicious appetizers prepared by the amazing staff at the Queen's Head – Be sure to check this place out if you're ever in the area!

In addition to all that fun, former WLAM Tip of the Mitt President, Amanda J. Skeel, swore in the 2024-2025 WLAM Tip of the Mitt Board of Directors:

President, Jordan N. Lindsey
Secretary, Linda Kisabeth
Director-At-Large, Lillian Harmon
Regional Representative, Melissa Wangler

Vice President, Christina Carroll
Treasurer, Roxanne Steinhoff
Director-At-Large, Kristina Bilowus

The 2023 Emelia C. Schaub Pioneer Award.

Who Was Emelia Schaub?

Emelia Christina Schaub, one of the first women lawyers in our Region and in the state, was born in Leelanau County in 1891. She is credited as the first woman in the country to successfully defend a murder trial; she then became the first woman in Michigan to be elected and serve as a prosecutor and served six terms in Leelanau County. Ms. Schaub served as Secretary and Treasurer of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan in its early years and devoted much of her time to local civic organizations as well. The Tip of the Mitt Region created the Emelia C. Schaub Pioneer Award to recognize women in the Region who are leaders in the practice of law and who exemplify the courage, professionalism and civic involvement for which Ms. Schaub was well-known.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 AWARD RECIPIENT!

The Tip of the Mitt Region of WLAM is proud to announce the 2024 Emelia C. Schaub Pioneer Award Recipient, Amanda J. Skeel!



Meet Amanda J. Skeel!

Amanda J. Skeel is the founding President of the WLAM Tip of the Mitt. When Amanda moved to Northern Michigan, she longed for connection with other female attorneys and founded this chapter of WLAM so that all future women attorneys in Northern Michigan have a community to come

together and be a part of. Amanda lives in Charlevoix with her daughter, Emily, and their new puppy, Maple. Amanda currently works for The Meisner Law Group, P.C., and heads their northern office located in Charlevoix, MI. We are grateful for Amanda's continued leadership and contributions to the WLAM Tip of the Mitt!

Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Oakland Region | Women's Bar Association Annual Report
2023-2024

The Women's Bar Association – Oakland Region had another successful and memorable year. The WBA held in-person and virtual events for our membership and continued to work towards promoting the WBA's mission of advancing the interest of women in the legal profession and promoting equality for all.

The 2023-2024 Executive Board consisted of Nicole Gettler (President), Kristin Fernandez (President-Elect), Elyse Culberson (Vice President), Marissa Wiesen (Recording Secretary), Jacqueline August (Treasurer), Janine Plourd (Communications Secretary), Becky Tetreau (WLAM Representative), Kelley Donnelly (WLAM Representative), and Stephanie Brochert (Immediate Past-President).



Literary Ladies Book Club

The WBA continued its monthly Literary Ladies Book Club. The WBA read a variety of books that spanned many genres and topics, including *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid, *Yellow Wife* by Sadeqa Johnson, *Craigslist Confessional* by Helena Dea Bala, and *The Good Life* by Robert Waldinger, MD and Marc Schulz, PhD.. The WBA looks forward to continuing our Literary Ladies Book Club this upcoming year! In September, the Literary Ladies are excited to be hosting a discussion on Barbara McQuade's book "Attack from Within: How Disinformation is Sabotaging America," via Zoom, which will be open to all WLAM members.

Affinity Bar Charity Challenge

The WBA was excited to participate in the Affinity Bar Charity Challenge on March 7, 2024 at the North End Tavern. The WBA transitioned this event to the Oakland County Bar's BLOC Initiative, which served as the organizer for the event. This event brought together various bar associations to raise money for charities that each bar association chooses, and each bar association had a judicial guest of honor in attendance. This year's event raised over \$4,800 for the charity organizations chosen by the partnering bar associations.



Volunteer Events

In December 2023, the WBA, led by WBA President Nicole Gettler, supported Operation Good Cheer and purchased Christmas gifts for six children. The gifts were due earlier than the previous year, and Nicole did a fantastic job of ensuring that all the wonderful gifts made it in time for each of the children. The WBA has annually supported Operation Good Cheer and looks forward to supporting Operation Good Cheer for the years to come.

Friendsgiving Event

On November 19, 2023, the WBA hosted a Friendsgiving event at The Fed Community, in Clarkston. The event was focused on including law students and providing them a break from their studies to mix, mingle, and break bread with some fellow women lawyers. Kelley Donnelly and Jacqueline August spearheaded this new initiative.

Galentine's Event: Headshots and Dinner:

In February 2024, the WBA hosted a Galentine's event, in conjunction with Emma Burcusel, where members were able to make a minimum donation to Care House of Oakland County (the organization of Ms. Burcusel's choice), in exchange for a mini headshot session. After the photos were completed, the attendees gathered for dinner at a local Plymouth eatery.

Etiquette Dinner

On April 12, the WBA partnered with the Detroit Academy of Etiquette to host their "Best in Business" Class at Hazel's, in Birmingham. This successful even drew a crowd of women lawyers and their guests, who enjoyed a delightful evening of networking, learning proper etiquette and behavior for a business dinner, and delicious food. This new initiative was organized by Elizabeth Erickson.

Table for Eight

In April 2024, the WBA help its annual Table for Eight in person for the second time since the pandemic. This year's featured guest was Marlo Johnson Roebuck. Fourteen attendees enjoyed dinner and candid conversation at Madam, in Birmingham.

Membership

Throughout the year, the WBA hosted a variety of casual events, such as a Group Hike at Proud Lake Recreation Area in Commerce Township, a Halloween-themed Bar Briefs at Weiss Distilling in Clawson, two lunch-and-learn webinars via Zoom with Molly Kremer, Esq (otherwise known as "The Billing Coach") and with Carrie Holland, MD ("Exhausted to Empowered"), as well as some craft meetups at The Needleworks in Birmingham.

On May 2, 2024, the WBA hosted its Annual Dinner and Awards ceremony at the Birmingham Country Club. This year's blockbuster event was a hit, with many attendees commenting on the amazing food, and the fun program. The 2024-2025 WBA Board was sworn in, annual awards were presented, speeches were given, and a few (happy) tears were shed. The Honorable Kameshia D. Gant was awarded the Joan Young Judicial Excellence Award, Ryan Kelly was awarded the Evelyn Forrest Distinguished Advocate Award, the Honorable Jacob J. Cunningham was awarded the inaugural Ally Award, rising third-year law student from Colley Law School, Autumn Loos, was awarded the Sarah Killgore Wertman Scholarship, and Jennifer Cupples was awarded WBA's Member of the Year Award.

New for this year, the Board did a silent basket raffle, with four themed baskets up for grabs: Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Spa Night at Home, Tea for Me, and Made in Detroit.

The WBA is looking forward to another exciting year with our new Executive Board!



WLAM WASHTENAW ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Empowerment and Self-Defense Class

In July 2023, WLAM Washtenaw Region held a self-defense class that explored the culture of violence and taught practical effective skills for personal safety. The event was hosted by Candace Dorsey of the University of Michigan's Department of Public Safety and Security. Participants were educated on a number of self-defense tactics such as developing situational awareness to deter or prevent an attack, verbal skills for assertive communication, evading and setting boundaries, and recognizing and interrupting unwanted behavior.

Summer Party

Jinan Hamood graciously hosted our Annual Summer Family Party. Guests were invited to bring a passing dish and their favorite beverage to share. Children were invited to play in a bounce house. All were invited to take a splash in the pool. The event is a great way for our members to meet the friends and family of other members.

Pictured below left to right: Kristin Davis, Sandy Musser, Jinan Hamood, Alison Love, Parisa Ghazaeri, and Kym London

Summer Picnic

In August 2023, WLAM-Washtenaw Region and the Washtenaw County Bar Association region held a Grill Out and Chill Out Summer Picnic. The picnic was held at Island Park in Ann Arbor, MI. Judge Karl Barr, Judge Arianne Slay, and Judge Charlie Pope were our grill masters. This is always a wonderful family friendly event.

Pictured below left to right:

Tailgate Party

On September 23, 2023, Elizabeth Joliffe hosted a tailgate at her home for WLAM members and family members for the UM vs. Rutgers game in Ann Arbor. Attendees always enjoy Elizabeth's famous cranberry apple coffee cake and breakfast strata.

Pictured below left to right:

Bias Awareness & Inclusion Reception

On October 11, 2023, WLAM-Washtenaw Region, the Washtenaw County Bar and the Vanzetti M. Hamilton Bar Association hosted the 32nd Annual Bias Awareness & Inclusion reception. Stefani A. Carter received the WCBA Martin Luther King, Jr. “I Have a Dream” Award.

Purple Run

On October 21, 2023, WLAM Washtenaw sponsored the Annual Purple Run, a 5K to benefit SafeHouse Center. Members laced up their shoes for the run, then enjoyed donuts and coffee with music from “Soul Practitioners!”

Pictured below left to right:

Book Club

Our first book club meeting took place on November 8, 2023. The participating members read and discussed Notes on an Execution by Danya Kukafka next to a warm fire at Union Rec in Ann Arbor. The event was small and intimate, which we expected for our first book club meeting. In the future, WLAM-Washtenaw Region intends to present at least two books per year.

Annual Holiday Party

We ended 2023 with our Ugly Sweater Holiday Party and presentation of the Mary Foster Award. The award was presented to the Hon. Carol Kuhnke of the 22nd Circuit Court. This event is always our biggest event of the year. Invitees are encouraged to bring a passing dish and wear their favorite ugly sweater. After the Mary Foster Award was presented and accepted, ugly sweater participants had the chance to compete for door prizes.

Pictured below left to right:

Wine Tasting and Galentines

On February 15, 2024, the WLAM Washtenaw Region Treasurer, John Reiser, along with his lovely spouse, Patricia Reiser, hosted a wine tasting event at their home in Ann Arbor. This event was fabulously led by Jorge Lopez-Chavez, Wine Team Leader at Plum Market Ann Arbor North Campus. Mr. Lopez-Chavez provided a wine tasting menu titled “Women in Wine, Lead the Way.” All tastings were exclusively from women-owned wineries. We all enjoyed appetizers and beverages and learned new things as Mr. Lopez-Chaves “nerded out” about the wine and wineries. Every member also had a chance to share their favorite candies, flowers, and more with another member by signing up for our secret Galentine drawing. Members who signed up for the drawing exchanged gifts at the wine tasting event. We give many thanks to the Reisers and Mr. Lopez-Chavez for making this such a wonderful evening for all attendees.

Pictured centered: John and Patricia Reiser

Pictured on the right: Sydney Koch and Jorge Lopez-Chavez



Health and Wellness Event

On February 25, 2024, WLAM Washtenaw Region members were invited to kick the winter blues by participating in a Body Balance class at Powerhouse Gym in Ypsilanti. This class offered attendees a moderate to low intensity combination of Yoga, Tai Chi, and Pilates.

Pictured below left to right: Sydney Koch, Jennifer Lawrence, attendee, and Lillian Saba.



[Eat more Tea charity event benefiting SafeHouse](#)

On March 14, 2024, WLAM Washtenaw members and guests visited TeaHaus in Ann Arbor for a fundraising event. All profits from the event were donated to SafeHouse Domestic Violence Shelter in Ann Arbor. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about SafeHouse while also having a wonderful time networking and enjoying champagne, a variety of teas, delicious treats, and special tea-infused cocktails. The mission of SafeHouse Center is to empower survivors of both sexual and intimate partner violence by providing advocacy, support, and promoting social change within our community. SafeHouse Center provides free and confidential services to survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual assault. Thank you to TeaHaus for teaming up with WLAM Washtenaw Region for this great cause.

Michigan Trailblazer's Panel

On April 24, 2024, Washtenaw region hosted their 3rd Annual Michigan Trailblazers Panel titled "Domestic Violence Impact Panel: What you need to know about Extreme Risk Protection Orders." The discussion was held at Stonebridge Golf Club in Ann Arbor. The panel was comprised of Judge Slay of the 22nd Circuit Court, Judge Longworth of the 44th Circuit Court, and APA Darren Miller of the Appeals Unit at the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office. The panel discussion was moderated by Attorneys Jennifer Lawrence and John Reiser. Panelists shared their life experiences in how they dealt with adversity and resistance in their different fields. The event was co-sponsored by the Washtenaw County Bar's Criminal Law Section.

May 15, 2024 Annual Meeting

WLAM Washtenaw Region held its Annual Meeting on May 15, 2024 from 12 PM to 1:30 PM at Pizza House in downtown Ann Arbor. The full state of candidates was unanimously elected by the membership at the meeting and were sworn in by the Honorable Miriam Perry of the 15th District Court. The New Board of Directors:

President: Frances Hollander

Vice President: Fawn Armstrong

Treasurer: John Reiser

Secretary: Kaylon Wilson

Membership Chair: Sydney Koch

Regional Representative: Parisa Ghazaeri

Immediate Past President: Lillian Saba

Pictured below from left to right:

Charity

In December of 2023, WLAM collected donations to benefit the Mott Toy Store at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. We were able to purchase so many awesome toys to donate to the Mott Toy Store. WLAM-Washtenaw Past President Jinan Hamood spearheaded this event.



Coffee Hours

Throughout the year, WLAM Washtenaw Region hosts several coffee hours for attendees who sometimes do not have time to meet at our events that take place after work and on weekends.

Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Wayne Region Annual Report
2023-2024

The Women Lawyers Association of Michigan – Wayne had a successful year. The Wayne Region held many in-person events to advance women in the legal profession in Wayne County and promote equality.

The 2023-2024 Executive Board consisted of Jackie Thomason (President), Paulina Kennedy (Vice President), Essence Patterson (Treasurer), Becca Zarras (Recording Secretary), Nina Prashad-Kidd (Communications Secretary), Lisa Okasinski (Director of Membership), Lindsey LaForest (Director of Programming), Jailah Emerson (Director of Social Media), Julia Walczak (WLAM Representative), Maya Younis (WLAM Representative), and Kathleen Stearns (Immediate Past-President).

Calendar of Events

9/6/2024 – Book Club (Yellowface by R.F. Kuang)

9/11/2024 - Monthly Board Meeting

9/21/2024 – Wine and Garden Party at the Inn on Ferry Street, hosted by Judge Sima Patel

9/27/2024 – Lunch and Learn with the Wayne Law Women’s Law Caucus

10/10/2024 – Legal Libations - Hamtramck

10/16/2024 – Monthly Board Meeting

11/11/2024 – Fall Fest Membership Drive at Grayhaven State Harbor, Family & Friends Welcome

11/13/2024 – Monthly Board Meeting

11/16/2024 – Book Club (Save Me the Plums by Ruth Reichl)

12/4/2024 – Legal Libations – Detroit

1/8/2024 – Monthly Board Meeting

1/11/2024 – Book Club (A Flicker in the Dark by Stacy Willingham)

1/23/2024 – Virtual Speed Networking with the Wayne Law Women’s Law Caucus

1/31/2024 – Legal Libations – Detroit

2/12/2024 – Monthly Board Meeting

2/15/2024 – Winter Wine Down Lecture on Financial Planning at the Detroit Athletic Club

2/28/2024 – Legal Libations – Gross Pointe Farms

3/11/2024 – Monthly Board Meeting

3/13/2024 – Book Club (Tom Lake by Ann Patchett)

3/21/2024 – Spring Wellness Event – Rage Room in Wyandotte

3/28/2024 – Legal Libations – Dearborn

4/8/2024 – Monthly Board Meeting

4/25/2024 – Annual Meeting, Topic: Women’s Voices in HealthCare at the Gross Pointe War Memorial

Wine and Garden Party

The Wayne Region hosted our annual signature event, the Wine and Garden Party, on September 21, 2024, at the Inn on Ferry Street. Judge Sima Patel served as host for the event. The event was well-attended by members and even further, law students. This event appears to pull many first-year law students. The event was an absolute success with a great venue, location, food, and company.

Fall Fest Membership Drive

The Wayne Region hosted our annual signature event, the Membership Drive, on November 11, 2024, at Grayhaven State Harbor. This event targeted families and more specifically, women lawyers who are mothers. The event received rave reviews for the fall fest theme including a bonfire, food, caricature artist, bounce house, and yard games. The event saw low attendance, but members who often are not able to attend. It targeted an audience that cannot always make events at our “typically” scheduled times.

Winter Wine Down

The Wayne Region hosted our annual signature event, the Winter Wine Down, on February 15, 2024, at the Detroit Athletic Club. This event included a presentation by a financial advisor on financial planning generally and also specifically information on financial planning for women and women lawyers. The event was widely attended by young women lawyers and law students, who actively engaged in conversation and with the presenter. The event was loved by those attended.

Spring Wellness Event

The Wayne Region hosted an additional event this year, a Spring Wellness Event on March 21, 2024. The event included a rage room in Wyandotte. The room was well-attended and has continued to be discussed with positive reviews by those attended.

Annual Meeting

The Wayne Region hosted our annual meeting on April 25, 2024, at the Gross Pointe War Memorial. The event included a presentation by a medical doctor and medical malpractice attorney about women’s voices in healthcare. It was an important and successful conversation, with many questions from the audience. The event was full, and the venue was beautiful.

Book Club

The Wayne Region conducted a bi-monthly book club. Participation was low in 2024-2025 and the new board has revisited how to move forward with this activity.

Relationship with Law Schools

The Wayne Region maintained an excellent relationship with Wayne State Law School’s Women Law Caucus. We hosted multiple events with the organization and hope to continue that path next year. We would like to improve our relationship with the University of Detroit Mercy’s Women Law Caucus.

Legal Libations

The Wayne Region hosted five (5) legal libations/happy hour events this past year to interact with current members, prospective members, and law students. We attempted to cover a variety of areas in Wayne County such as Detroit, Dearborn, Hamtramck, and Gross Pointe Farms. This allowed us to interact with many new members of the community.

**Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Western Region Annual Report
2023-2024**

Walk to End Breast Cancer



From left, Carolyn Sullivan, Narisa Bandali, Elizabeth Kingston-Miller, Kris VandenBerg, Meaghan Clayton, and Chelsea Austin

In October, we held a group outing to the Making Strides of West Michigan walk to end breast cancer. Despite frigid rain and tough conditions, we had a great turnout and raised over \$700 for Making Strides! We hope for better weather next year.

Welcoming New Attorneys

In both November 2023 and June 2024, we joined the Grand Rapids Bar Association in welcoming and celebrating newly admitted attorneys. Our incoming 2024-2025 President, Chelsea Austin, spoke at the regional swearing-in ceremony about our organization and the benefits to joining WLAM.

Annual Holiday Party

In January, we held our annual holiday party in Grand Rapids at the YWCA. We were able to gather, celebrate the season, and look forward to the year ahead.

From left, Meaghan Clayton, Tess Strasser, Laura Danielson, Chelsea Austin, and Courtney Lee



**Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Western Region Annual Report
2023-2024**

“Just Lips”: Celebrity Lip Sync



WLAM Western joined the Grand Rapids Bar Association for its biannual charity event for the Justice Foundation of West Michigan in February 2024. “Just Lips” features members of the legal community performing lip sync performances and unforgettable commentary (and dance moves) by the one and only Judge Sara Smolenski. WLAM Western members showcased their talents on stage and were supported by other members in the audience.

A “Fireside” Chat with Justice Kyra Harris Bolden

At the intersection of Black History Month and Women’s History Month, WLAM Western was honored to host an intimate and inspiring conversation with Justice Kyra Harris Bolden.



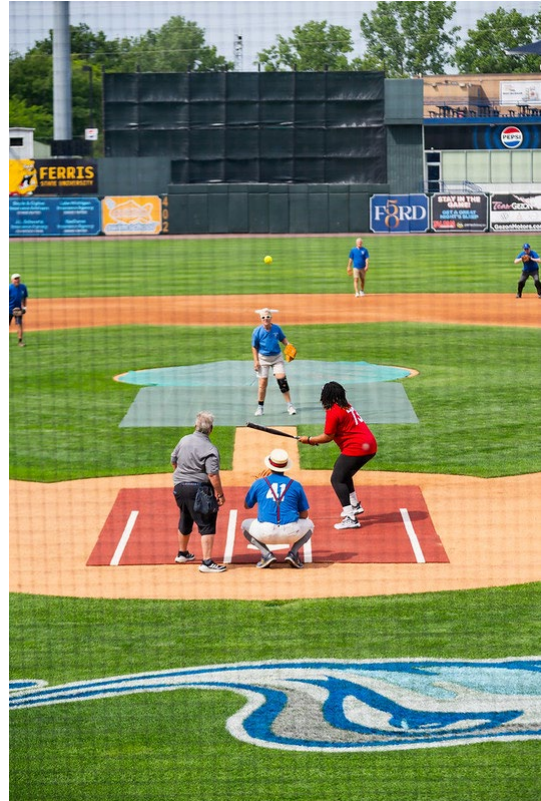
**Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Western Region Annual Report
2023-2024**

40th Annual Women Lawyers vs Judges Softball Game

This year, WLAM Western returned to the LMCU Ballpark for our 40th Annual Women Lawyers vs Judges Softball Game. The Judges beat the Lawyers by a narrow 4-3. Fun and laughs ensued, but most importantly, a lot of funds were raised for the vital work that the YWCA performs in our community in supporting survivors and preventing domestic and sexual violence! Stay tuned for our announcement of our final numbers.



**Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Western Region Annual Report
2023-2024**



**Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
Western Region Annual Report
2023-2024**

Looking Ahead

At our annual meeting at Varnum, we swore in our 2024-2025 Board of Directors:

President Chelsea Austin
Vice President Narisa Bandali
Treasurer Meaghan Clayton
Secretary Carolyn Sullivan
Regional Representative Laura Heldrop
Immediate Past President Liz Kingston-Miller
Directors at Large Jackie Gordon, Kris VandenBerg, Laura Danielson, Brianna Keller,
Bridget Haley, April Li

We look forward to another year of service, networking, and education!



Several 2024-2025 Board Members being sworn in by Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Welch