



**WOMEN LAWYERS**  
**ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN**  
FOUNDED IN 1919

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## WLAM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

Nicole Smithson - President  
Tanya Grillo - President Elect  
Kirsten Silwanowicz - Vice President

Kristina Bilowus - Treasurer  
Abril Valdes Siewert - Secretary  
Susan Chalgian - Past President

### Directors at Large

Jacqueline August  
Zenell Brown  
Alexandria Casperson  
Elyse Culberson  
Jennifer France  
Hon. Kameshia Gant  
Melissa Graves

Hon. Alyia Hakim  
Shelley Kester  
Lindsey LaForest  
Tanya Lundberg  
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### Regional Representatives

Chelsea Brown, Great Lakes Bay Region  
Angela Medley, Macomb Region  
Shannon Zabolotny, Macomb Region  
Teddy Eisenhut, Mid-Michigan Region  
Rebecca Tetreau, Oakland | WBA Region

Janine Plourde, Oakland | WBA Region  
Melissa Wangler, Tip of the Mitt Region  
Parisa Ghazaeri, Washtenaw Region  
Lisa Okasinski, Wayne Region  
Laura Helerop, Western Region



## Women Lawyers Association of Michigan

### President's Report

Submitted by Nicole M. Smithson, WLAM President 2024-2025

Dear WLAM Members:

Thank you for your support of our organization during its 105<sup>th</sup> year. Our theme this year was Leaders: Past, Present, Future. My hope in selecting this theme was to celebrate the trailblazers who came before us, grow as an organization and as individuals, and support those who will succeed us. The reports that follow will describe how we met these objectives.

The past year was a very interesting time to be president of a bar association. On January 21, 2025, the president issued an executive order stating that the attorney general "shall submit a report to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy containing recommendations for enforcing Federal civil-rights laws and taking other appropriate measures to encourage the private sector to end illegal discrimination and preferences, including DEI." State and local bar associations were among the entities listed as potential targets for enforcement.

At least in Michigan, the practice of law is limited to people who have completed a rigorous legal education, demonstrated moral fitness, and shown proficiency on a standardized exam graded by experts who know nothing about an examinee's identity. Put another way, to get a law license, each of us must show our merit.

When WLAM engages in "DEI activities" like the Leadership Class, supports scholarships for law students, and offers programming addressing issues most acutely felt by the female members of the profession, we push against the invisible barriers that make it difficult for women to enter and remain in the profession.

This is a historic moment. We must remain steadfast to our mission of supporting the advancement of women in law and society, as well as supporting equality and social justice for all.

It has been an honor to serve you.



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
President's Report  
Submitted by Nicole M. Smithson, WLAM President 2024-2025





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President's Report  
Submitted by Nicole M. Smithson, WLAM President 2024-2025





Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
 Treasurer's Report  
 Submitted by Kristina Bilowus, Treasurer

**2024-2025 Statement of Operations**

Revenue from Member Dues: Dues revenue for the year was \$65,028.25. Dues revenue for the last five years has been \$58,914 in 2023; \$56,890 in 2022; \$49,512 in 2021; \$49,521 in 2020, \$50,977 in 2019.

Dues Paid to Regions: Dues paid to regions totaled \$17,684.75.

Special Sponsorships: As in years past, we continued to support the regions by offering special project funding. The regions utilized \$1,250 of the \$2,800 available to them.

Total Net Revenue: The net revenue for the year was \$21,923.46

Following is the 2023 profit and loss detail.

**Statement of Operations, FY 2024-2025**

	<u>Jul '24 - Jun 25</u>
<b>Income</b>	
<b>640 Dues</b>	
<b>640.10 Sustaining Member</b>	
640.10.01 Sustaining - State	10,275.00
640.10.02 Sustaining - Region	3,975.00
640.10 Sustaining Member - Other	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 640.10 Sustaining Member</b>	14,250.00
<b>640.20 Attorney 5+ Years</b>	
640.20.01 Attorney 5+ - State	19,022.25
640.20.02 Attorney 5+ - Region	7,056.25
640.20 Attorney 5+ Years - Other	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 640.20 Attorney 5+ Years</b>	26,078.50
<b>640.30 Attorney 1-5 Years</b>	
640.30.01 Attorney 1-5 - State	5,943.75
640.30.02 Attorney 1-5 - Region	2,281.25
640.30 Attorney 1-5 Years - Other	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 640.30 Attorney 1-5 Years</b>	8,225.00
<b>640.35 Attorney Govt/Non-Profit</b>	
640.35.01 Atty Govt/NP-State	8,342.25
640.35.02 Atty Govt/NP-Region	3,287.50
640.35 Attorney Govt/Non-Profit - Other	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 640.35 Attorney Govt/Non-Profit</b>	11,629.75

<b>640.40 Law Student</b>	
640.40.01 Law Student - State	2,756.25
640.40.02 Law Student - Region	993.75
640.40 Law Student - Other	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 640.40 Law Student</b>	<b>3,750.00</b>
<b>640.60 Attorney Retiree</b>	
640.60.01 Atty Retiree-State	262.50
640.60.02 Atty Retiree-Region	112.50
640.60 Attorney Retiree - Other	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 640.60 Attorney Retiree</b>	<b>375.00</b>
<b>640.85 Unlicensed JD</b>	
640.85.01 Unlicensed JD-State	450.00
640.85.02 Unlicensed JD-Region	150.00
640.85 Unlicensed JD - Other	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 640.85 Unlicensed JD</b>	<b>600.00</b>
<b>640.90 Paralegal</b>	
640.90.01 Paralegal-State	90.00
640.90.02 Paralegal-Region	30.00
640.90 Paralegal - Other	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 640.90 Paralegal</b>	<b><u>120.00</u></b>
<b>Total 640 Dues</b>	<b>65,028.25</b>
<b>660 Interest Income</b>	<b>583.50</b>
<b>680 Other Events/Activities</b>	
680.40 WLAM Apparel/Merchandise	95.82
680.50 State Events	150.00
680.60 Regional Events	0.00
680.70 Leadership Class	0.00
680.90 WTN Podcast	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total 680 Other Events/Activities</b>	<b>245.82</b>
<b>690 Annual Meeting Revenue</b>	
690.10 Registration - Members	5,810.00
690.20 Registration - Non-Mbrs	2,250.00
690.30 Sponsorships	<u>37,950.00</u>
<b>Total 690 Annual Meeting Revenue</b>	<b><u>46,010.00</u></b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>111,867.57</u></b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>111,867.57</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
<b>710 Board of Directors</b>	
710.10 Board Meetings	0.00
710.15 Board/Regional Retreat	3,895.09
710.20 Conference Calling	338.99
710.30 President/Officers	2,609.64
710.40 Directors/Officers Ins.	1,099.33

710 Board of Directors - Other	219.61
<b>Total 710 Board of Directors</b>	<b>8,162.66</b>
<b>720 Committee Expenses</b>	
720.20 Membership Committee	
720.20.3 Membership Mailings	308.56
720.20.5 Postage	191.12
<b>Total 720.20 Membership Committee</b>	<b>499.68</b>
720.30 Equal Pay Day	0.00
720 Committee Expenses - Other	0.00
<b>Total 720 Committee Expenses</b>	<b>499.68</b>
<b>730 Licenses and Fees</b>	<b>20.00</b>
<b>740 Regions</b>	
740.10 Region Dues	17,684.75
740.20 Special Project Funding	1,250.00
740.30 New Region Development	0.00
740 Regions - Other	0.00
<b>Total 740 Regions</b>	<b>18,934.75</b>
<b>750 Communications/Marketing</b>	
750.40 Print/Promotion Material	0.00
750.50 WLAM Logo Merchandise	0.00
750 Communications/Marketing - Other	315.00
<b>Total 750 Communications/Marketing</b>	<b>315.00</b>
<b>770 Member Benefits</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>780 Other Events/Activities</b>	
780.50 State Events	111.31
780.70 Leadership Class	779.83
780.80 WLAM Journal	1,062.65
780.90 WTN Podcast	360.00
<b>Total 780 Other Events/Activities</b>	<b>2,313.79</b>
<b>790 Annual Meeting</b>	
790.01 Speakers	7,950.00
790.02 Entertainment	0.00
790.10 Facility	
790.11 Audio/Visual	275.00
790.12 Food & Beverage	6,111.91
790.13 Room Rental	0.00
790.14 Reception	3,572.85
790.15 Hotel Overnights	304.42
790.10 Facility - Other	0.00
<b>Total 790.10 Facility</b>	<b>10,264.18</b>
<b>790.20 Awards</b>	
790.20.1 President	189.28
790.20.2 JLK	400.00
790.20.3 Judge	400.00

- Treasurer's Report continued -

790.20.4 Region Member	439.37
790.20.5 Bledsoe Ford	400.00
790.20 Awards - Other	<u>400.00</u>
Total 790.20 Awards	2,228.65
790.50 Meeting Materials/Signs	
790.50.01 Signs	186.80
790.50.02 Program	581.00
790.50.03 Materials	483.09
790.50 Meeting Materials/Signs - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 790.50 Meeting Materials/Signs	1,250.89
790.60 Mail Services, Postage	143.31
790.80 Give-Aways/Gifts	1,194.66
790.90 Promotion/Marketing	75.00
790 Annual Meeting - Other	<u>175.00</u>
Total 790 Annual Meeting	23,281.69
800 Professional Fees	
800.10 Accounting Services	1,300.00
800.20 Administrative Services	29,685.00
800.30 Admin/Staff Travel	<u>153.89</u>
Total 800 Professional Fees	31,138.89
810 Dues & Subscriptions	
810.10 NCWBA	350.00
810.20 NAWL	0.00
810 Dues & Subscriptions - Other	<u>140.00</u>
Total 810 Dues & Subscriptions	490.00
820 Bank Fees	
820.10 Credit Card Fees	2,471.17
820 Bank Fees - Other	<u>0.00</u>
Total 820 Bank Fees	2,471.17
830 Web Resources	
830.10 Website Hosting/Domain	241.00
830.20 Website Development	<u>1,193.44</u>
Total 830 Web Resources	1,434.44
840 Office Supplies	
840.10 Copies	122.95
840.20 Stationery/Envelopes	0.00
840.30 Labels	<u>4.50</u>
Total 840 Office Supplies	127.45
850 Postage	40.06
860 Telephone	384.00
890 Charitable Contributions	<u>330.53</u>
Total Expense	<u>89,944.11</u>
Net Income	<u><u>21,923.46</u></u>





# WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

## WLAM Membership Committee Meeting

### Annual Report 2024-2025

*Submitted by Kirsten Silwanowicz, Chair*

*WLAM is dedicated to 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.*

#### **I. Membership Committee Members**

Kirsten Silwanowicz

Roquia Draper

Tanya Grillo

Laura Helderop

Natasha Rao

Melissa Wangler

Roshundra Simmons

Julianne Pastula

#### **II. Annual Report**

- a. Campaign to update your profile
- b. Email Notices
  - i. ALL Lapsed Members Quarterly
  - ii. New/Freshly Lapsed/Renewed Members Daily
- c. Membership Shout Out
  - i. in weekly emails once a month
- d. Membership Award – WLAM Members to Watch
  - i. created
  - ii. only for members - not board members
- e. Updated Member Benefits on the website
- f. Surveys – Tanya
  - i. Lapsed Members
    1. Sending each day with lapsed members.
    2. Sent the survey in a separate email.
  - ii. Current Members
    1. [Survey Results](#)
    2. [Survey Report](#)
  - iii. Sustaining Members

1. Survey [Results](#)
- g. Membership Drive Coordination
  - i. Oak and Mac did a joint event
- h. Why WLAM?
  - i. Ask your Board members why they are a member of WLAM.
  - ii. Posted all over socials for Women's History Month
- i. How to Retain Members:
  - i. Targeted outreach for people to join a committee
    1. Plug it during the Annual Meeting
      - a. At the annual meeting at registration, have sign up for committees
      - b. QR codes will be on the tables
    2. Plug it during membership drives
    3. Personal emails to new/lapsed/renewing members asking them to join a committee and include the link of our documentary
  - ii. Documentary screening encouraged
- j. Sustaining Members
  - i. Survey [Results](#)
  - ii. If you are a sustaining member as of the Annual Meeting date, then you get to attend a special VIP session for only Sustaining Members at the Annual Meeting
    1. Maybe a happy hour, or meet and greet with the Keynote speaker
    2. Still working out details with Tanya
- k. Increase in Gov't Attorney Dues
  - i. Up to \$75 - Motion Passed at November Board Meeting
- l. Membership Dues Structure
  - i. [Research and Report for the WLAM January Board Meeting](#)
- m. WhatsApp Group
  - i. Sent out to all members and Board members and Regions
  - ii. Is "opt in"
  - iii. Will showcase at Annual Meeting in a QR code to encourage members to join.
- n. New Member Orientation - November and January
  - i. Held Twice - 10 attorneys then 8 attorneys
- o. WLAM Office Hours
  - i. unsuccessful - no one showed up
  - ii. tabling it for now
- p. Shamrocks and Strategic Success - March 6, 2025
  - i. A virtual Zoom panel discussion with all the law students to connect them with WLAM members with various years of experience.
  - ii. 40 registered, 20 showed up
- q. Membership Discounts – Roquia
  - i. Tabled for next year

- r. Summer Soiree with Law Students - Laura Helderop, Natasha Rao, and Julianne Pastula
  - i. Tanya volunteered to host in August
- s. Unlocking the Power of WLAM - Julianne Pastula - April 9, 2025
  - i. Panel Discussion with Judge Bazzi, Kristin Fernandez, and Jacky August.
  - ii. Julianne will coordinate with Hillary and the panelists to reschedule and send out the invite to the SBM list that we received.
  - iii. Will push this event to new members in lieu of having a New Member Orientation

**III. Goals for 2024-2025**

- a. Connect with every individual member – via email
- b. Creation of the WLAM Members to Watch List
- c. Member Shout Out in the weekly newsletter – once a month



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
Programming Committee  
Annual Report 2024-2025  
*Submitted by Nicole M. Smithson, Chair*

The Programming Committee kicked off 2025 with a vision board workshop led by our incredible director, Zenell Brown.

For Women's History Month, we co-hosted a statewide book club with WLAM's historic preservation committee for *Loverly One* by Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. Judge Shauna Dunnings was a special guest at this event.

The association year may be over, but we're still working! We have three events coming up in May and June.

For Lawyer Wellness Week, Tom Grden of the State Bar of Michigan's LJAP will help us learn about *Managing Life's Trials* on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. This virtual event is co-sponsored by the Ingham County Bar Association, the Macomb County Bar Association, and the Oakland County Bar Association.

We will celebrate AAPI month on May 28<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. when we will have a virtual book club to discuss the memoir, *Everything I Learned, I Learned in a Chinese Restaurant* by Curtis Chin. The memoir tells the story of Chin's time growing up as a gay Chinese American kid in 1980's Detroit. We are pleased to have remarks from Roland Hwang, Professor of Asian Pacific American history in the Department of American Culture, A/PIA Studies at the University of Michigan. This event is co-sponsored by the Michigan Asian Pacific Bar Association.

On June 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. Mayim Meyers of Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit will teach us about suicide prevention. In this important presentation, Meyers will teach us about what leads people to consider suicide, warning signs, appropriate language to use when engaging with someone considering suicide, and resources to connect people with if they are having suicidal thoughts.

Many thanks to this year's committee members: Jen France, Stefania Gismondi, Melissa Graves, Diana Lazar, Janine Plourde, Natasha Rao, Roshundra Simmons, and Lauren Walker.



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
Programming Committee  
Annual Report 2024-2025  
*Submitted by Nicole M. Smithson, Chair*





Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
Candidate Rating & Endorsement Committee (CREC)  
Annual Report 2024-2025

*Submitted by Jacky August, Kristina Joseph Costantino, and Melanie Smith,  
CREC Co-Chairs*

For the 2024-2025 year, the Candidate Rating & Endorsement Committee reviewed and interviewed sixteen candidates who were running for office or seeking appointment by the Governor for open judicial positions throughout Michigan. The candidates were running for or seeking appointments for positions at the District Court, Circuit Court, Probate Court, and Court of Appeals.

This year, CREC updated the application and reference questions. The application was updated to better structure and streamline the questions, making the application easier for applicants to complete. The updated reference questions allows CREC members to have a more meaningful and efficient conversation with the references about the candidates.

The Chairs thank the dedicated members of CREC who generously spent significant time checking references, reviewing application materials, and interviewing and rating candidates. This year's committee consisted of Carrie Almassian, Alex Casperson, Alena Clark, Peggy Costello, Elyse Culberson, Kelley Donnelly, Kristin Fernandez, Lori Grigg Bluhm, Hon. Kameshia Gant, Frances Hollander, Hon. Marilyn Kelly, Shelley Kester, Gabrielle Lawrence, Tanya Lundberg, Lynda McGhee, Donna Mackenzie, Mary Parisien, Ashleigh Russett, Kirsten Silwanowicz, Roshundra Simmons, Amber Soler, Roxanne Steinhoff, and Suzanne Sukkar.

For more information about CREC, please visit:

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



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
Legal Affairs and Legislative Committee  
Annual Report 2024-2025  
*Submitted by Alexandria Casperson – Chair*

The Legal Affairs and Legislative Committee (LALC) worked to create a comprehensive policy and procedure for “Making Formal Statements on Social, Legal, or Legislative Issues”. This policy was created in attempt to make sure any statements issued by the WLAM Board have been evaluated to make sure they are in line with the mission of WLAM and are decided upon in a uniform manner. The policy has not yet been voted on/approved by the Board to enact.

Prior to creating this policy, the LALC advised the Board on whether or not WLAM should adopt the statement of the Michigan Chapter of the ACLU regarding Michigan Department of Attorney General criminally charging University of Michigan students for activity associated with protests against the war in Gaza. Ultimately LALC and the Board declined to adopt the ACLU’s letter or make a formal statement on the Attorney General’s charging decisions.



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee  
Annual Report 2024-2025

*Submitted by Abril V. Siewert, Zenell Brown, Kristin Fernandez: Co-Chairs*

*WLAM is dedicated to 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.*

**I. Committee Members**

Abril Valdes Siewert  
Zenell Brown  
Kristin Fernandez  
Natasha Rao  
Lanita Carter  
Carolyn Almassian  
Susie Chalgian

Roquia Draper  
Qamar Enayah  
Kameshia Gant  
Kirsten Holz  
Amber Kipfmiller  
Denise Medina  
Natasha Scruggs

Angela Sherigan  
Roshundra Simmons  
Dana Warnez  
Marissa Wiesen  
Viola King

**II. Annual Report**

- Navigating Disability in the Legal Profession – March 27, 2025
- “Take Their Feet Off Our Necks” Overcoming Obstacles in Leadership Panel - November 20, 2024
- Joint meeting and program with BWLAM in May or in 2026 Bar Year

**III. Goals for 2024-2025**

- a. Promoting DEI in changing political climate – DEI is not going away but it may look different than it did in 2020.
- b. Library for Panel Event Recordings
- c. Providing resources to small firms/businesses that are committed to DEI but find difficulty in reflecting this in practice;
- d. Intergenerational women lawyers (i.e., experience in passing down wisdom, sharing resources, being sponsors/mentors, etc.); and



## **Women Lawyers Association of Michigan**

### **WLAM Journal Board Committee**

#### **Annual Report 2024-2025**

*Submitted by Angelita M. Martinez*

#### **Journal Board Members**

- Jewel Haji Boelstler, Co-Editor-in-Chief
- Alexandria Casperson, Co-Editor-in-Chief
- Angelita M. Martinez, Co-Editor-in Chief
- Kristina Bilowus, Editor
- Lydia Fields, Editor
- Qamar Enayah, Editor

#### **Events**

The Journal Board publishes the WLAM Journal. The Board published one issue in May 2024 and anticipates the publication of another issue in April 2025.



Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
Historic Preservation Committee  
Annual Report 2024-2025  
*Submitted by Nicole M. Smithson, Chair*

The Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) was very pleased that the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame accepted our nomination of WLAM Past President Julia Donovan Darlow for the hall of fame. Julia is the first woman to become president of the State Bar of Michigan (SBM). From 1987 to 1989, Julia chaired the Michigan Supreme Court Task Force on Gender Issues in the Courts. The Task Force studied Michigan's courts and suggested revisions to rules, procedures, and court administration to eliminate gender bias. The Task Force also exposed judicial attitudes prevalent at the time about domestic violence and sexual assault. Many of the Task Force's recommendations were implemented. In addition, Julia was the reporter and principal drafter of the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act. She is a former chair and regent emerita of the University of Michigan Board of Regents. Additionally, Julia has actively served in leadership roles in numerous organizations supporting women and girls.

The HPC hosted the second installment of its series featuring conversations with female former presidents of the SBM, *Remarkable Leaders: Women Presidents of the SBM*. In this program, Carolyn Sullivan spoke with legal titans Nancy Diehl and Julie Fershtman. The program will be released as an upcoming episode of the *Working Towards Nine* podcast.

In honor of Women's History Month, the committee had social media posts featuring each woman who has led the SBM. We also co-hosted a statewide book club with WLAM's programming committee for *Loverly One* by Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. Judge Shauna Dunnings was a special guest at this event.

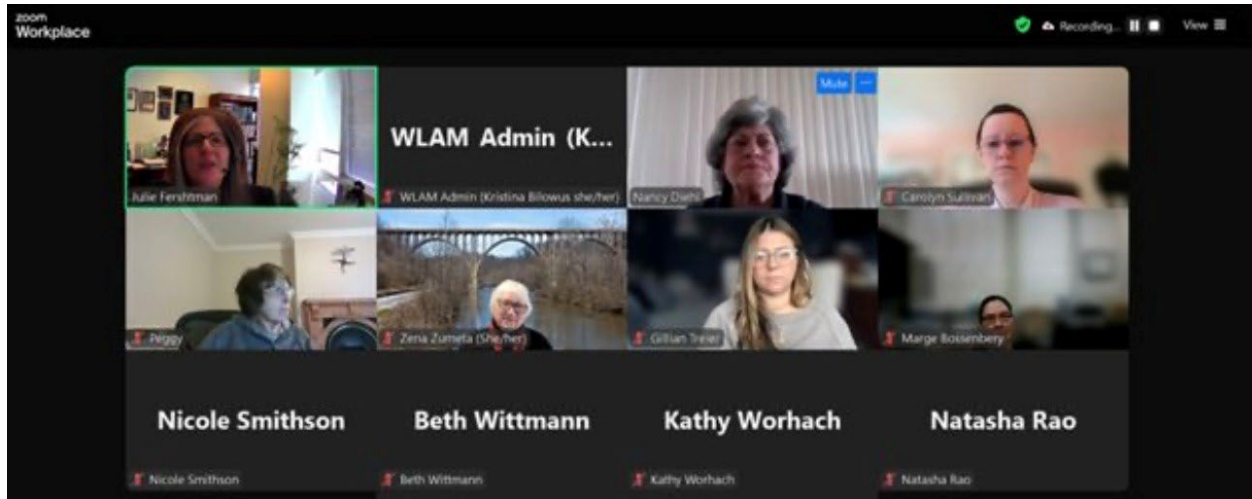
Over the years, the committee has created significant content for WLAM's YouTube channel. Please check out the WLAM YouTube channel.

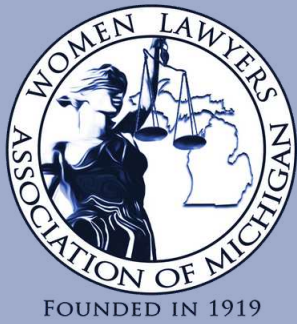
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2OUArBm-uM4L7zyJVwUE6w/videos>

Many thanks to this year's committee members: Kristina Bilowus, Lori Grigg Bluhm, Lauren Kissel, Janine Plourde, Brianne Risner, Hon. Angela Sherigan, Kelsey Simasko, and Carolyn Sullivan.



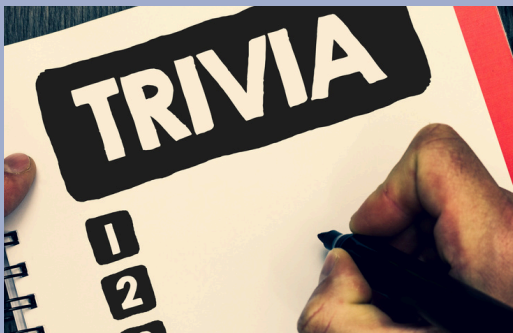
Women Lawyers Association of Michigan  
Historic Preservation Committee  
Annual Report 2024-2025  
*Submitted by Nicole M. Smithson, Chair*





# Great Lakes Bay Region

This year has been busy for the Great Lakes Bay Region, which consists of Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Mecosta, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties. We are always exploring opportunities to give back to our community and the legal profession. We hosted a number of events this year.



We continued our monthly Bar Review events. Specifically, we attended Trivia Night at a local family run restaurant and tap house, Bayne's Apple Valley. The theme ended up being the hit television series The Office, which really stumped most of our members. Regardless, we had fun and were able to bond over great cider and food.



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This year we decided to take a different approach for our holiday party. We know how difficult it can be to make events scheduled in December with the holiday season, so we pushed ours out until January. Members met to sip drinks and create personalized wood signs and other décor at a local studio, Board & Brush. It was a great experience, and many members indicated that they would like to see the event repeated in the future.



Our biggest event this year was brunch held at the home of Judge Julie Gafkay in March. Laura Swanson, a documentarian, and the current director of Michigan Forensics Examiners, was present to talk to our members. Ms. Swanson made a documentary on human trafficking, Break the Chain, which the group watched and discussed over brunch. We thank Ms. Swanson for her time and Judge Gafkay for hosting the event!

*Save the Date*

We are gearing up to host our annual meeting, which will be held in June of this year at the Midland County Club. We will have a guest speaker, present numerous awards, and swear in our new board. It is our best-attended event each year and we are looking forward to it!



# Macomb Region

In September, WLAM-Macomb and WLAM's Domestic Violence Committee participated in Turning Point's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Tara's 5K Run & Walk.



WLAM-Macomb Hosted its Annual Holiday Luncheon in December, benefitting The Bottomless Toy Chest. It was a great turn out!



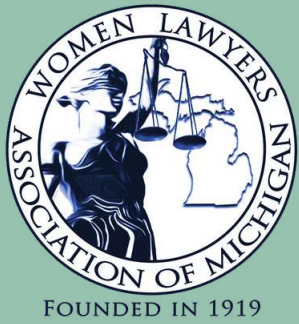
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In March, WLAM-Macomb partnered with other local bar associations for the Affinity Bar Challenge. WLAM-Macomb raised \$686 for I Support the Girls -Detroit, a local charity that collects and distributes bras, underwear, and menstrual products to people in crisis.



WLAM-Macomb is very excited to announce the establishment of the Tracey A. Yokich Scholarship! Judge Yokich and her mother are truly delighted to kick off the fundraising efforts with a donation of \$10,000! Thank you to Judge Yokich and her mother!

Upcoming:  
Cocktails For a Cause  
May 15, 2025, at Fillipa's in Shelby Township



# Mid-Michigan Region

2024-2025 has been a year of growth and achievement for WLAM Mid-Michigan (Ingham, Eaton, Clinton, and Shiawassee Counties). Our members continue to inspire us by embodying the theme of our upcoming regional Annual Meeting - Keep Going, Keep Growing. Here's what we've been up to lately...



This year's Carolyn Stell Award was presented to the Honorable Judge Cynthia Ward. As her nominator stated, Judge Ward "has been an advocate for other women in the legal profession and actively supported throughout her career different populations that were vulnerable." We are proud to have Judge Ward as a member of our region and a leader in our community! The Carolyn Stell Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Liberty Turner. Liberty's accomplishments thus far are extremely impressive and we are excited to see what's next for her as she begins her legal career! Congratulations to both of these incredible women!

On November 2, Mid-Michigan members cheered on MSU at our co-hosted tailgate with ICBA-YLS.



On March 20, we co-hosted a St. Patrick's Day celebration with ICBA-YLS as well. Members spent the evening polishing up on their axe throwing skills at High Caliber Karting.



# Ingham County Bar Association Top 5 Under 30

We are proud to announce that three of the five award recipients of this year's ICBA Top 5 Under 35 were Mid-Michigan members. This prestigious award recognizes exemplary character, integrity, judgment, legal scholarship, service, and professionalism.

On October 23, we raised \$2,731.96 in support of survivors of domestic violence through the generosity of our members at our Happy Hour for Hope event. Proceeds and personal care items were donated to the Capital Area Response Effort.

On February 13<sup>th</sup>, Mid-Michigan members celebrated Galentine's Day with a night of fellowship and fun creating unique works of art at Playing Picasso!

On April 5, Mid-Michigan members participated in our annual day of service by volunteering at the Capital Area Humane Society.





# Oakland Region



## **Oakland Region Board Members:**

- President, Kristin Fernandez
- Immediate Past President, Nicole Gettler
- President Elect, Elyse Culberson
- Vice President, Jacqueline August
- Treasurer, Marissa Wiesen
- Recording Secretary, Kelley Donnelly
- Communications Secretary, Elizabeth Erickson
- WLAM Representative, Janine Plourde
- WLAM Representative, Rebecca Tetreau





The Women’s Bar Association hosted and participated in a multitude of events this year. Some highlights were: WBA Annual Dinner, Great Lakes Legal Conference, Summer Retreat and Planning Meeting, Friendsgiving, two DEI Panels, Affinity Bar Challenge (raised \$1,281 for the Ruth Ellis Center), and Table for Eight featuring Erin Klug.



Upcoming - WBA Annual Dinner: May 15, 2025 @ Birmingham Country Club



# Tip of the Mitt Region

The **2024-2025** bar year of the Tip of the Mitt Region (“TOTM”) has been actively working toward increasing membership, putting on relevant programming, and engaging across our wide geographic space.

The year kicked off on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Queen’s Head in Cheboygan, Michigan, with the Annual Meeting. There was live music, a brunch, lunch, and informative conversation with Thomas Grden from the Lawyers and Judges Assistance Program from the State Bar of Michigan. President Jordan Lindsey, Vice President Christina Carrol, Treasurer Roxanne Steinhoff, Secretary Linda Kisabeth, Directors-at-Large Lillian Harmon and Kristina Bilowus, and Regional Representative Melissa Wangler, were the elected officers. Amber Libby was celebrated as the Immediate Past President and Amanda Skeel was honored for her work as a founder and longtime President of WLAM TOTM. Ms. Skeel was presented with the Emelia C. Schaub Pioneer Award for her dedication, hard work, and leadership of the region. Emelia Schaub was a longtime Leelanau County resident and “Michigan’s first female prosecuting attorney; as well as the first woman in the country to successfully defend a murder suspect.”



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As the year got underway, and monthly meetings were held, the Board worked diligently to brainstorm and implement meaningful ways of engaging memberships. Virtual events, in person events, and opportunities to connect with law students were discussed. Vice President Carroll designed, solicited feedback from the Board, and implemented a member-wide survey. The survey detailed options for members to select preferences such as in person events v. virtual ones. Additionally, there were opportunities to weigh in on small meet ups v. large member-wide events. Vice President Carrol collected the answers and shared with the Board to assist with planning and meeting the needs of the Region's constituents.



Treasurer Steinhoff diligently and successfully implemented the budget as well as keeping communication with WLAM State Board to ensure a seamless transition with financials. Directors-at-Large Harmon and Bilowus planned various opportunities to engage others. Director Harmon suggested ways for small meetups to occur, as well as engaging the upper peninsula. Bilowus started coordinating efforts for a virtual mentoring sessions with law students and women attorneys from northern Michigan. The Board also discussed ways that the WLAM website leadership site can be a landing page for TOTM members to collaborate and plan.

Under President Jordan's leadership, the Annual Meeting for 2025 is slated for Saturday, May 17, 2025, in Traverse City. The event will be at Living Beyond Yoga (LBY) at the studio, with Schmeltzer Law being a sponsor and providing brunch. All are welcome and the event will be a restorative and refreshing way to end the bar year with an eye for the future.



FOUNDED IN 1919

# Washtenaw Region

WLAM Washtenaw has had a wonderful year full of events. We kicked off the year with a summer party on July 20, 2024 at the Hon. Jinan Hamood's lovely home. Attendees brought dishes to share and enjoyed the summer weather. On August 22, 2024, WLAM Washtenaw and the Washtenaw County Bar Association (WCBA) held a summer picnic potluck at Burns Park. The Grill Masters included the Hon. Joseph Burke, Hon. Julia Owdziej, and Hon. Tracy Van den Bergh. Everyone had a wonderful time.



On September 14, 2024, WLAM Washtenaw and the WCBA held a joint tailgate hosted at Elizabeth Joliffe's home for the University of Michigan Homecoming football game against Arkansas State. As always, the tailgate spread did not disappoint. Go Blue!

On October 17, 2024, WLAM Washtenaw partnered with the WCBA and the Vanzetti Hamilton Bar Association for a strolling reception in celebration of the 33rd Annual Bias Awareness and Inclusion Week. The event was held at Weber's Inn with keynote speaker, Phil Black who addressed the crowd with an inspiring speech regarding Confronting our Biases: Trauma-Informed Counseling for Lawyers. Phil Black is the founder of The Manhood Project (TMP) which is a social-emotional learning development program designed to maximize the positive qualities of under-served youth, while minimizing their temptations to engage in at-risk behavior.

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WLAM Washtenaw has continued its support of SafeHouse Center through two events focused on raising funds and awareness. On October 19, 2024, WLAM Washtenaw co-sponsored the Purple Run 5K for the benefit of SafeHouse Center with other local organizations. On March 14, 2025, WLAM Washtenaw held a charity event at TeaHaus/Eat More Tea also benefiting SafeHouse.



On December 12, 2024, WLAM Washtenaw held a Holiday Hoedown at the Hon. Jinan Hamood's home, where members dressed in their finest western attire. At the event, Delphia Simpson was awarded with the Mary Foster Award for her leadership, talent, and significant contributions that have positively impacted women in our legal profession and benefited our general community as a whole. It was very well deserved.



WLAM Washtenaw's Annual Meeting will be held on May 14, 2025 at Pizza House. Other upcoming events include a self-defense class and a panel discussion regarding the changing landscape of immigration policies and the impact on other areas of law. We hope to see you at an event soon!



FOUNDED IN 1919

# Wayne Region

The Wayne Region of Women Lawyers Association of Michigan had a great year! The Wayne Region continued to host successful yearly events like the Wine and Garden Party, which was hosted by Judge Michelle Rick and held at Windmill Pointe Park in Grosse Pointe; the Fall Membership Drive, which was held at Secret Garden Art Café in Detroit and featured great food and a tarot card reader; and Winter Wine Down, which was held at Batch Brewery in Detroit and featured “Ethics Trivia,” in which members joined teams and competed to answer questions related to professional responsibility and legal ethics.



Numerous members from the Wayne Region were recognized as “members of the month” for their contribution to women and the legal profession, including Savanna Polimeni, Macie Gaines, Adrienne G. Scruggs and Kaleigh Belz.

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In addition to formal events, members of the Wayne Region also got together on a regular basis for a variety of social events, including happy hours (“Legal Libations”), a viewing of the Barbie movie, coffee, and a cookie exchange. The Wayne Region launched its “WLAM Wayne Social Club” this year, which serves to bring members together on a regular basis for various social activities in Wayne County. The Wayne Region continues to offer support to law students and the Women’s Law Caucus through participation in lunch and learn seminars, speed networking, and a feminine hygiene drive.



The Wayne Region is looking forward to its Annual Meeting which will be held on May 8, 2025 on Belle Isle.  
Join us!



# Western Region



The Western Region has been bustling with activity, hosting events that celebrate women's history and provide valuable legal insights. On March 28th, the Western Region organized a delightful walking tour in Grand Rapids, in collaboration with GR Tours. Participants enjoyed a beautiful day exploring women-owned establishments and learning about the rich history of women in Grand Rapids. The tour was filled with engaging trivia questions about women's history in the city, making it both educational and fun for everyone involved.

The celebration of women's history was a resounding success, with attendees expressing their appreciation for the opportunity to connect with the community and learn more about the influential women who have shaped Grand Rapids. The event highlighted the importance of recognizing and honoring the contributions of women in our local history, fostering a sense of pride and inspiration among participants.



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Continuing the momentum, on April 2nd, the Western Region teamed up with the Federal Bar Association to host an insightful presentation by MSU College of Law Professor, Phil Pucillo. The timely talk focused on presidential powers and the authority to remove agency officials, diving into the precedent set by Humphrey's Executor. Professor Pucillo's in-depth analysis provided attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the history of presidential powers and how the current Court might approach this significant legal issue. The presentation was available both in-person and virtually, ensuring accessibility for all interested members.



Looking ahead, the Western Region is excited to host the annual Women Lawyers vs. Judges Charity Softball Game on June 7th at LMCU Ballpark. This beloved event sees women lawyers from across the city lacing up their cleats to compete against the formidable judges' team. The game supports the efforts of the YWCA and offers a fantastic opportunity for colleagues to have fun while contributing to a great cause. Mark your calendars for a day of camaraderie, competition, and community spirit!