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Detroit LEGAL NEWS

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By Sheila Pursglove

Legal News

Elder Law of Michigan will host two events for the 5th Annual Joe D. Sutton Call to Justice Awards, honoring individuals and organizations around the state that have made inspiring, significant contributions to the needs of vulnerable adults and have worked towards health, safety, fairness, and justice for vulnerable people.

“Judges, lawyers, academics, policy makers, professionals and volunteers are critical to our ability to understand, support and empower vulnerable adults,” said Kate White, president & CEO of Elder Law of Michigan. “Our honorees are known for their ideas, energy and leadership to solve problems and to lay the foundation for a better future for us all. Please join us in thanking them for their contributions to the fields of law and aging.”

The first ceremony will be a luncheon held from noon to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7 at the Glen Oaks Country Club, 30124 West 13 Mile Rd. in Farmington Hills.

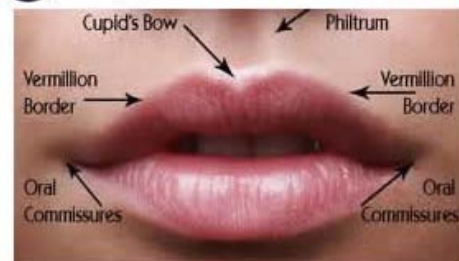
Wayne County Probate Court Chief Judge Milton Mack Jr., is this year’s winner of the Judicial Award for Contributions in Law and Aging. His unyielding work protecting vulnerable adults, especially those with mental illnesses, has contributed to improved treatment for those who need it most.

Attorney Sanford (Sandy) Mall, founder and senior partner of Mall Malisow & Cooney, P.C., a Holistic Elder Care Special Needs & Estate Planning law firm in Farmington Hills, will receive the Advocacy Award honoring his work as an advocate for laws, regulations and protections for older adults and people with disabilities, as well as his work as an attorney in private practice and generous pro bono service.

Peter Lichtenberg, Ph.D. — the first academic to be honored with one of these awards

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— will receive the Leadership Award. Director of the Institute of Gerontology and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute at Wayne State University, he is the Founding Director of the Wayne State University Lifespan Alliance, author of several books on aging, and has held office in several professional organizations including Chair of Michigan Dementia Coalition and President of the Adult Development and Aging Section of the American Psychological Association.

The prestigious Founders Award will honor the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, instrumental in helping to launch Elder Law of Michigan in 1990 and a staunch advocate and partner in its growth, development and successes.

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, who has supported Elder Law of Michigan and its efforts for many years, will be honored with the Champion's Award for her principled work advocating for the rights, health, nutrition and wellbeing of vulnerable adults. Her support for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is critical to elders who are otherwise forced to choose between food and medicine.

The second Call to Justice ceremony is a breakfast set for 8-10 a.m. on Thursday, May 9, at Gordon Food Services Home Office, 1300 Gezon Parkway, in Wyoming, south of Grand Rapids. Stabenow and OSA will be honored at this ceremony as well.

Attorney Laretta (Laurie) Murphy from the Miller Johnson law firm in Grand Rapids, where she chairs the Elder Law and Disability Planning Practice Group, will receive the marquee Joe D. Sutton Award. Murphy, a renowned elder law and Medicaid expert in Michigan, is being honored for her service on the Elder Law of Michigan's Board of Directors, her heroic volunteer efforts on behalf of the organization and its clients, her commitment to justice for vulnerable adults, and her pro bono service in her community and throughout the state.

Tom Czerwinski, executive director of the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan, has helped AAAWM build one of the strongest aging network advocacy programs in the state. He will receive the Leadership Award for his work as a leader and innovator in the field of aging.

Ginni Blanchard of Senior Neighbors, is the recipient of the Community Service Award. Director of the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Kent County, she has matched close to 1,000 volunteers with various agencies and organizations.

Both events are offered in cooperation with the Access to Justice Campaign, the Detroit Metropolitan Bar and the Grand Rapids Bar Associations. Net proceeds will benefit Elder Law of Michigan through the Access to Justice Fund.

Tickets are \$65/person, includes a \$25 charitable donation; or \$500 for a table of eight, includes a \$185 charitable donation.

For more information, visit www.elderlawofmi.org or contact Sarah Titus at (517) 853-2370 or stitus@elderlawofmi.org.

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