

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



MENTOR  ET

Taking Networking to New Heights

February 13, 2020

Castle Boardroom (Room 343)

5:00 p.m. Check-In

5:30-6:00 p.m. Mingling and Hors d'oeuvres

6:00-7:30 p.m. Students meet with mentors
for 6-minute increments

Sponsored by

National Association of Women Judges
Michigan State University College of Law

COLLEGE OF LAW

MENTORJET PROGRAM CHAIR

HONORABLE MICHELLE M. RICK

29TH CIRCUIT COURT CLINTON AND GRATIOT COUNTIES

MENTORJET PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

ERNSCIE AUGUSTIN

Chalgian & Tripp Law Offices PLLC

KRISTINA BILOWUS

Kizy Law

AMANDA DERNOVSHEK

Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C.

HONORABLE CARMEN FAHIE

Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR)
Benefit Services Division (BSD)

BOBBY A. FICKLIN JR.

Myler Disability

The Ficklin Law Firm, PLLC

JOEL FINNELL

Sinas Dramis Law Firm

EMILY JEFFERSON

Department of Attorney General, State of Michigan

KELLY KANE

Clark Hill PLC

KATHERINE NEPTON

The Nepton law Firm, PLLC

JARED A. ROBERTS

Fraser Trebilcock Davis & Dunlap P.C.

ALEXANDER S. RUSEK

White Law PLLC

HILARY STAFFORD

Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C.

Mentor Biographies

HONORABLE MICHELLE M. RICK

29th CIRCUIT COURT - CLINTON AND GRATIOT COUNTIES



The Honorable Michelle Rick was appointed to the bench in 2007. Judge Rick worked briefly in private practice before becoming a public employee. Her public service career began in 1993, when she became an assistant prosecutor in Livingston County, followed by service to the State of Michigan as an assistant attorney general and then as deputy legal counsel to Governor Granholm.

Judge Rick is Chief Judge Pro Tem of the 29th Circuit Court, which includes Clinton and Gratiot Counties. Judge Rick hears family, criminal, and civil cases. Judge Rick presides over two (2) problem solving courts: a high-risk felony prison diversion court; and Journey Court, a drug treatment court for women. Judge Rick is a former District Director for the National

Association of Women Judges, and is currently its Michigan Chair. Judge Rick is an officer of the Michigan Judges Association (MJA), where she serves as Secretary. She previously co-chaired MJA's Outreach and Conference Planning Committee. In 2015, Judge Rick was appointed by Governor Rick Snyder to the Human Trafficking Commission. In 2015, the Women Lawyers Association of Mid-Michigan awarded Judge Rick the Carolyn A. Stell Award. Judge Rick is an active member of the Clinton County Community Corrections Board. Judge Rick is an emeritus Board Member for SafeCenter. Judge Rick is a member of the Michigan Bar Association Limited Scope Representation work group, and she serves as an advisor to the State Bar Affordable Legal Services committee and the Task Force on Jails and Pretrial Release. Judge Rick is active with several other state bar committees that work to promote diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. Judge Rick is a member of the State Bar of Michigan Judicial Council, and a former member of the Limited English Proficiency Steering Committee.

Judge Rick teaches Access to Justice at Detroit Mercy Law School. In 2019, Judge Rick created a traveling expungement clinic called Project Access, connecting courts, law students, lawyers, and local community partners. Project Access impacted over 10 communities, and provided expungement relief to low income residents. Judge Rick has previously served as an adjunct law professor at MSU Law and Cooley Law Schools. Judge Rick is a frequent guest speaker and lecturer at various statewide and local law-related events. [In January 2019, the Michigan Supreme Court recognized Judge Rick as a judge who gives back and makes a difference.](https://courts.michigan.gov/News-Events/press_releases/Documents/News%20release%20for%20Judges%20Giving%20Back_FINAL.pdf) https://courts.michigan.gov/News-Events/press_releases/Documents/News%20release%20for%20Judges%20Giving%20Back_FINAL.pdf.

Judge Rick is a Michigan State Bar Foundation Fellow and an American Bar Foundation Fellow. Judge Rick is married to her college sweetheart, Matthew, and they have four children.



Ernschie Augustin
Chalgian & Tripp Law Offices PLLC

Ernschie Augustin is a graduate of Michigan State University College of Law. Ms. Augustin is originally from Florida. Ms. Augustin earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science Pre-Law and her Masters Degree in Human Development and Family Studies from Michigan State University.

In her free time, Ms. Augustin enjoys spending time with family and traveling.



Kristina Bilowus
Kizy Law

Kristina Bilowus is an experienced family law attorney who specializes in all types of family law cases. She is known for being a passionate and hardworking advocate. Upon joining Kizy Law, Kristina has had the opportunity to expand her practice with criminal defense, a career goal of which she has been in pursuit. She is committed to achieving great results for her clients and for ongoing communication throughout the case.

Prior to becoming an attorney, Kristina realized how daunting, and often intimidating, it is for anyone going through the legal process. As such, she has made communication and explaining the process to her clients a priority in all of her cases. One of the most rewarding aspects of her job is to be a sound legal guide to clients as they navigate through complex legal matters. Kristina considers it an honor to be entrusted with her clients' confidence and to be their confidant through their individual legal experiences. In addition to her work as practitioner, Kristina is an adjunct professor at WMU Cooley Law School where she teaches practical skill classes to second and third year law students. By teaching the practical application of the law, she empowers her students to be more confident advocates upon entering the legal field.



Amanda Dernovshek
Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C.

Amanda is a member of Foster Swift's business and tax practice group. She helps business and organizations of all sizes and at all stages of development grow and solve problems. She provides practical advice on issues related to federal taxation, employee benefits, intellectual property, and executive compensation. Amanda is an MSU Law alum, and she has served on its International Law Review and in the Student Bar Association. She also served as a judicial extern with the Honorable David McKeague on the Sixth Circuit before beginning her career with Foster Swift.



Honorable Carmen Fahie
Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)
Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR)
Benefit Services Division (BSD)

The Honorable Carmen Fahie is a Senior Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) for LARA-MOAHR-BSD, with over 15 years of experience as an ALJ. As a senior-level ALJ, she is assigned to conduct complex administrative hearings for the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) and issue Beneficiary, Child Day Care Licensing, Child Welfare Licensing, Adult Foster Care Licensing, Expunction/Child Protection Services, Adoption Subsidy, Title IV-E, Medical Assistance (MA), and State Disability Assistance (SDA) case type

hearing decisions in accordance with the applicable federal regulations, rules, policy and/or statutory authority. She obtained her Bachelor of Science, Master's in Public Administration, and Juris Doctor degrees from Michigan State University.

Before joining LARA-MOAHR-BSD, Judge Fahie worked as an information technology project manager and policy analyst for DHHS. She decided to pursue her longtime dream to become an attorney after a DHHS lawyer persuaded her that there was no time like the present



Bobby A. Ficklin Jr.
Myler Disability
The Ficklin Law Firm, PLLC

Bobby A. Ficklin Jr. is associate attorney of Myler Disability, where he handles social security appeals hearings throughout the state of Michigan and northern Ohio. He is also the principal and managing attorney at The Ficklin Law Firm, PLLC, located in Lansing. He primarily practices in social security disability appeals, criminal defense, divorce and small business and nonprofit startup.

Mr. Ficklin serves on the State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section Executive Council, which he joined in March 2017. He also serves as the District XII president of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, International, the Ingham County Bar Association, Young Lawyers section and was formerly the secretary of the Davis Dunnings Bar Association. Mr. Ficklin is very active in the Greater Lansing community as a volunteer mentor for The Turning Point of Lansing youth male mentor program, as President of the Lansing Graduate Chapter of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., and as a praise team and choir member of Union Missionary Baptist Church amongst various community service efforts. Mr. Ficklin received his B.A. and Master of Public Administration degrees from Valdosta State University in Valdosta, GA; MBA from the University of Phoenix, Western Michigan Campus, East Lansing, MI; and J.D., Michigan State University College of Law, East Lansing, MI. He is admitted to the State Bar of Michigan and the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan.



Joel Finnell
Sinas Dramis Law Firm

In 2011, Joel Finnell joined Sinas Dramis Law Firm and quickly excelled at appellate law, earning a favorable published decision in the first appeal he handled out of law school. Today, he primarily focuses his practice on representing clients in the Michigan Court of Appeals and Michigan Supreme Court.

As the firm's appellate attorney, he works very closely with its most senior attorneys to develop successful legal strategies that will withstand an appeal all the way up to the state's highest court. Other attorneys at the firm also call upon Joel to provide additional tactical legal support in heavily defended and more complex cases. Joel's role at the law firm is very unique, and it is one that often sets Sinas Dramis Law Firm apart from other firms. Many firms do not have an in-house appellate specialist like Joel, who possesses the knowledge and expertise required to provide top tier representation in Michigan's appellate courts.

Joel's dedication and success in this role makes him a vital member of the firm, and his practice helps fellow attorneys stay ahead of complex legal issues that arise in auto no-fault, semi-truck, catastrophic injury, and wrongful death cases. In Joel's words, what he enjoys the most about his practice is: "Having the opportunity to do very meaningful work to help others while working with some of the most talented lawyers in the state."

Joel earned his law degree, cum laude, from Western Michigan University's Thomas M. Cooley Law School and his undergraduate degree from Eastern Michigan University where he graduated with honors, magna cum laude. He is admitted to practice in the state courts of Michigan, as well as numerous federal courts including the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan, United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and the Supreme Court of the United States.



Emily Jefferson
Department of Attorney General
State of Michigan

As Assistant Attorney General in the Licensing & Regulation Division (April 2019- present), Emily Jefferson advises and represent various bureaus within the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulation Affairs.

As an Assistant Attorney General in the Public Service Division (July 2018 -March 2019), Ms. Jefferson advised the Public Service Commission regarding enforcement of state and federal regulations and work with utilities, renewable energy providers, and other entities to achieve compliance and implement regulatory solutions.



Kelly Kane
Clark Hill PLC

Kelly Kane is an associate in the Construction Practice Group of Clark Hill PLC, where she represents a variety of owners, suppliers and contractors in civil and commercial construction disputes.

Kelly graduated from Michigan State University College of Law, magna cum laude. While in law school, Kelly was an Assistant Articles Editor for the Michigan State University International Law Review, and was a member of the Geoffrey Fieger Trial Practice Institute, a two-year litigation-focused certificate program. Kelly also served as a student clerk in the Corporate Oversight Division for the Michigan Department of Attorney General, where she aided attorneys in the prosecution of violations of the Michigan Consumer Protection Act and Public Health Code. Kelly's student note, "The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Agreement: What Happens in the Great Lakes Won't Stay in the Great Lakes," was also published in the Michigan State International Law Review in 2017.

Prior to attending law school, Kelly graduated with honors from the University of Guelph, in Ontario, Canada. Upon receiving her Bachelor's degree, Kelly accepted a position as a human resources assistant at the Sunset Produce, the largest greenhouse produce grower in North America. While working at Sunset, Kelly was responsible for recruitment, training, workers compensation, and employee relations at the Canadian headquarters.



Katherine Nepton
The Nepton law Firm, PLLC

Katherine received her B.A. in International Relations & Political Science; J.D. from Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School. As a solo practitioner, she can limit her cases, taking those that move her heart. She is an owner of Toy Trucks, LLC and Tax Resolutions, LLC. She is also working on publishing her first book. Katherine is a candidate for

State Senate.



Jared A. Roberts
Fraser Trebilcock Davis & Dunlap P.C.

For nearly 20 years, Jared Roberts has concentrated his practice on civil litigation and dispute resolution, from out-of-court settlement and negotiation through trials and appeals on all levels. These disputes often concern commercial transactions, contracts, real property law, disputes between property owners and governments (including property tax appeals), professional licensing defense and intellectual property. His clients include individual professionals, entrepreneurs and entities of all sorts, some of Michigan's leading real estate brokerages, commercial and residential property owners,

Jared A. Roberts (cont.)

firms and programmers, a parts designer and manufacturer, a building trades association, a television production company, and many others. Jared also handles transactional work including real property transactions, leasing and related transactions, intellectual property transfers and licensing, trademark and copyright registration, maintenance and overall branding, and he provides general business and legal governance counseling to a variety of firms and individuals. Jared's transactional work and representation of property owners is also informed by his ownership of a growing portfolio of Downtown Lansing rental apartments and multi-family buildings. His litigation work is informed by his many years as an Adjunct Professor at the Michigan State College of Law, where he taught research and writing for twelve years and remedies for three years. He attributes his creativity and courtroom poise in part to many years spent as a professional pianist and keyboard player.



Alexander S. Rusek

White Law PLLC

Alexander Rusek is an associate attorney with White Law PLLC in Okemos, Michigan. Mr. Rusek's practice focuses on complex mass action and class action civil litigation, business law & litigation, criminal law, and appellate law. Mr. Rusek has represented established businesses, new businesses, non-profits, professionals, and individuals involved in multi-party, mass action, and class action litigation. Mr. Rusek is a graduate of Oakland University and Michigan State University College of Law, cum laude. Mr. Rusek is currently a Director of The Army of Survivors, Inc., board member of the Ingham

County Bar Association, Past-President of the Ingham County Bar Association Young Lawyers Section, board member of the Michigan State University College of Law Alumni Association, Chairperson and former Treasurer of the Ingham County Board of Commissioners Equal Opportunity Committee, member of multiple local and national bar associations, and Democratic Precinct Delegate for Lansing's Ward 1, Precinct 6. Mr. Rusek is a 2018 recipient of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce's "10 Over the Next 10" Award, a 2018 recipient of Oakland University's Young Alumni "10 Within 10" Award. He authored multiple articles that appeared in American Bar Association publications, and the Ingham County Bar Association's BRIEFS.



Hilary Stafford

Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C.

Hilary Stafford is a member of Foster Swift's General & Commercial Litigation practice group where she assists other attorneys on a wide range of general and commercial disputes. A graduate of the Michigan State University College of Law summa cum laude, Hilary served as the Articles Editor for the Michigan State International Law Review while earning her law degree. In addition to graduating with a litigation-focused certificate from the Geoffrey Fieger Trial Practice Institute, she studied abroad in Croatia, focusing on intellectual property law. While in law school, Hilary worked as a State Operations Law Clerk for the Michigan Department of the Attorney General. Hilary earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan, where she achieved University Honors.