

MSBA CIVIL LITIGATION SECTION GOVERNING COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

December 12, 2008

Location: MSBA Office - Minneapolis, MN

Attendees: Jan Conlin, Dan McGrath, Kevin Curry, Mary Vasaly, Melissa Wedland, Jill Kittock, Mark Delahanty, Charlie Bird, Hon. Jill Halbrooks, Hon. Marilyn Justman Kaman, Edward Matthews, and Brett Olander.

The Council approved the November minutes.

Treasurer' Report: The section balance is \$81,041, which is in safe money market funds.

Statute of Limitations Project: 700 members have joined since the Statute of Limitations project.

District Court Opinion Project: Edward Matthews reports. We are still seeking to increase judicial submissions. As Guen Easley is no longer on the project, we do not know the extent of site usage. Jill Kittock will investigate this matter. Judge Kaman suggested that we call Judge Charles Porter or Susan Miles (Minnesota Dist. Judges Association) to see if we can build support for the project. Bob Blazer in Hennepin County can tell us which judges are on civil dockets. From Fast Case, perhaps we can track 1) new submissions; 2) use by lawyers. Ed Matthews will work with Labor Law Section to combine efforts.

Judicial Directory: Mark Delahanty reports. Our efforts are still focused in southern Minnesota -- we lack a statewide push. The judicial directory subcommittee (Paul Godfrey, Judge Kaman, Judge Halbrooks, Charlie Bird, Mark Delahanty) will meet to discuss the next steps for making a statewide push. The plan is to recruit local lawyers in each district, with good judicial contacts, to reach out to judges. An idea is to hire a part time person to provide support to the project -- perhaps a retired judge.

Judicial Funding: Mary Vasaly reports on the judicial funding event at the capitol. Bottom line: Legislators understand the problem, but their hands are tied by tough financial times. Mary also discussed the joint effort by the MSBA /HCBA to produce a program that can be aired on public television to educate the public. Mary reminded the group to sign up for 1000 Lawyers.

Section Leadership: Dan McGrath attended a meeting of section leaders on 11/18/08. The purpose of the meeting was to 1) increase collegiality and the number of sections working together, and 2) gather information for the MSBA budget. Based on this meeting, the MSBA may reallocate funds.

Section Membership: Jan Conlin reported that the key reasons for discontinued memberships are (1) high dues that do not reflect the benefits received, 2) employers that no longer pay dues, and (3) tough financial circumstances. We must continue to do projects that benefit members.

Annual Meeting: The meeting will be held on April 16, 2009, at the Minneapolis Radisson. The council will meet at noon. At 1:00 pm, there will be a mock trial of *Wilkerson v. Dow* (involving a worker blinded by a chemical explosion). Joe Anthony will represent the Defendant,

Mike Ciresi the Plaintiff (1 hour each). Attendees will view the mock jury deliberations and get 3 hours of CLE credit. A reception and dinner will follow. A panel will comment on the mock case and effective advocacy. Panel members are Ty Bujold, Mary Ann Short, and TBD. The council agrees the CLE should be free for members/judges. Jill Kittock will prepare an email alerting members and the Minnesota District Judges Association. \$50 for non-members.

For our next meeting, consider who gets the Advocates Award. Perhaps Ty Bujold – a good trial lawyer involved in bar activities.

Use of Section Funds: Judge Kaman inquires whether the section can/should support the judicial initiative to establish e-filing. Judge Kaman will invite Chief Judge Swenson to our next meeting to discuss the issue. Cost is the stumbling block to establishing e-filing.

Section Lunches: On 2/3/09, J. Conlin, C. Taylor, M. Delahanty, and Chief Judge Swenson will discuss Nuts & Bolts for New Lawyers. The lunch is being promoted to the New Lawyers Section and law students. On a suggestion by B. Olander, the council agrees to give new lawyers free dues for 1 year. Clay Taylor is in contact with lawyers involved in the Senate vote recount. He is trying to set up a January luncheon ASAP. M. Wedland will follow-up with Clay.

Meeting Adjourned.