

Report on the December 11, 2009 Meeting of the MSBA General Assembly

Jennifer Wright, Elder Law Section delegate

1. Two awards were presented: the Elmer Wiblshouser Award for the best article in Bench and Bar by a member of the MSBA Assembly went to Christopher Camardello for his article "Understanding Foreclosures on Real Property"; and the new Citizen Lawyer Award for promoting civic education to Justice Paul Anderson.
2. President's Report
 - The dues increase to pay for indigent defense is in effect and will sunset in two years.
 - The ABA suit challenging the inclusion of lawyers in the Red Flag rule was successful on summary judgment.
 - Legislative efforts around ensuring adequate funding of the justice system and seeking judicial election reform have already begun, together with a coalition of non-lawyer groups.
 - The MSBA has hired a full time government relations director to work with Lloyd Grooms, the lobbyist.
3. Treasurer's Report
 - We have lost only a handful of members this year, after record losses last year.
 - MSBA investments gained \$153,000 this year.
 - The projected deficit last year was \$350,000. This year, the projected deficit is \$32,000, but the treasurer expects we will come close to breaking even.
 - \$1 million in short term funds were moved from U.S. Bank to Bremer Bank.
4. Items of Interest from the Committee Reports
 - The creation of the Corporate Counsel Section was approved.
 - The ABA did a pricing study, which concluded that if they cut their membership dues in half, their membership would double. The ABA is seriously considering a very substantial dues cut, especially for solos and small practices. The MSBA may be reviewing its dues structure as well.
 - The Assembly endorsed legislative proposals from the Business Law Section, the Family Law Section, the Real Property Law Section, the Probate and Trust Law Section, the Tax Section, and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section. The Assembly approved a general allocation of the legislative counsel's time as 75% to judicial election reform, adequate court funding and sales tax on legal services, and 25% to everything else. The Executive Committee can reallocate legislative counsel's time in response to events as they develop during the session.

Details on all the proposals address at this meeting can be found at <http://www2.mnbar.org/governance/assembly/09Dec/Agenda.html>.