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**Profession Mourns Loss of ATJ Advocate**  
**John Cummiskey (1917 - 2002)**

Lawyers throughout the state continue to mourn the October 2002 death of John Cummiskey. Because of his unwavering leadership of the profession and because of the ideals and passion he brought to the access to justice work, John's legacy is firmly established. John's commitment to the ATJ Campaign dated from its inception, and his lifetime of work for access to justice for all is being remembered by scores of donors who have made memorial donations totaling thousands of dollars. For more information on John's career, see <http://www.michbar.org/journal/home.cfm> (select archived issues, and click December 2002.)



*John W. Cummiskey (right) pictured with former State Bar President Alfred M. Butzbaugh, offers words of thanks after being presented with a resolution honoring his commitment to access to justice.*

**ATJ Fund Contributions Exceed \$3 Million**

The State Bar of Michigan, in partnership with the Michigan State Bar Foundation and legal services providers throughout the state, conducted the fifth year of its Access to Justice fundraising campaign during 2002. Nearly \$700,000 in cash and pledges was raised during the calendar year. More than \$3,000,000 in pledges and contributions has been raised to date from 3,645 donors. Over 50% of total gifts are being placed by donors in endowment funds to help provide long-term stable funding for legal aid services into the future. Even so, a higher percentage of donations went to operations during calendar year 2002, a result encouraged by the Campaign to assist programs with current operating money in light of the loss of federal funding in Michigan caused by the shifts of poverty populations nationwide.

For 2002, the Michigan State Bar Foundation distributed \$422,325 in contributions designated by donors to specific programs. In addition, the Foundation made its second round of grants from the ATJ Fund in 2002.

## ATJ Fund Grows . . .

*Continued from previous page*



*Minority Outside Counsel Networking Conference organizers and supporters celebrate the presentation of a \$128,000 gift to Access to Justice. From left to right: David B. Cade, Reginald M. Turner, Nancy J. Diehl, Justice Marilyn J. Kelly, Charlotte H. Johnson, Alison R. Nelson, George W. Madison, Dennis E. Ross and E. Christopher Johnson, Jr.*

Some \$45,000 was awarded to programs that applied for funds from the ATJ Fund for five projects that improved outreach and civil legal services to the poor in Michigan.

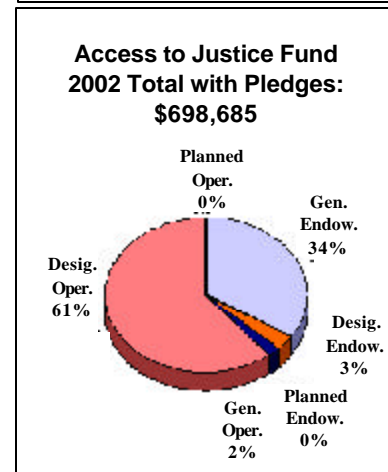
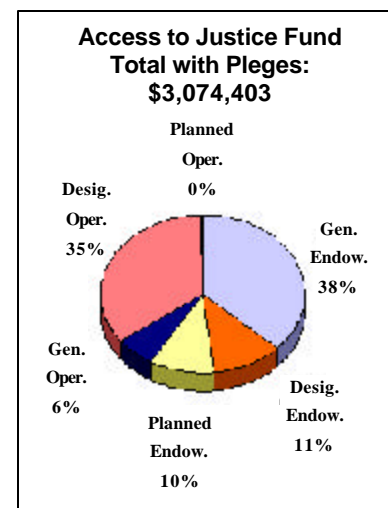
The State Bar's support for the Campaign helps make it possible to assure donors of low campaign costs per dollar raised, even considering the Campaign is still in its start-up years. During 2002 the State Bar's direct costs for the Campaign totaled 17 cents per dollar raised (17%), a figure within the guidelines established for the Campaign by the Internal Cabinet and

well within fundraising industry standards. In calendar year 2002, the Bar Foundation reimbursed some of the direct costs of the Campaign from the ATJ Fund, with the end result that 87 cents of each dollar contributed by donors was invested in direct program services.

Reginald M. Turner, president of the State Bar of Michigan said the Bar was "very proud of the lawyers,

judges and good corporate citizens who have made this success possible." Turner thanked those who made significant personal contributions and inspired others to do so. "This Access to Justice Campaign is on the right track and moving full steam ahead," Turner said.

The Minority Outside Counsel Networking Conference gift of \$128,000 was the largest single gift ever made to the Campaign. The two-day conference was held in Detroit last October to highlight diversity issues



and was the first organized by three major corporate sponsors — Comerica Incorporated, Ford Motor Company and General Motors.

## State Support Center Offers On-Line Tax Help to Low-Income Wage Earners

The Michigan Poverty Law Program is providing links to materials on the Earned Income Credit through its new website for continuing legal education materials available to the public. Both [www.mi.lawhelp.org](http://www.mi.lawhelp.org) and [www.michiganlawhelp.org](http://www.michiganlawhelp.org) went live in February. By using these sites, individuals can produce tax forms (by answering questions written at a 5th grade literacy level) or, if they have their own email address, they can e-

file them directly to get an expedited return. Forms to claim the Child & Dependent Care and Education Credits are also available.

The website runs in both Spanish and Vietnamese, and there is an optional video component that reads the screen for the user. "Hopefully, this program will keep more of the EIC money going to clients, rather than tax preparation services," said Mia Kim, publications attorney at

MPLP. "We have outreach materials for the ICAN e-file site, including a checklist of materials for individuals who want to use the site" said Kim.

MPLP is spearheading Michigan efforts to provide web-based, easy to use legal materials available to lawyers and members of the public. For more information on the MPLP website project, please contact Mia Kim at [miakim@umich.edu](mailto:miakim@umich.edu).

## *Pro Bono* and Client Profile Success Story from Legal Services of Eastern Michigan

Anthony (Tony) Costanzo is a practicing attorney at Fortino, Plaxton, Moskal & Costanzo, P.C. in Alma, Michigan. While Tony primarily does insurance work, he also has experience in different practice areas such as insurance defense litigation, municipal law, general civil litigation, employer labor law and negotiations.

Tony has always enjoyed work in the private practice setting.

Because he has been in family oriented law firms, he has been able to spend time with his growing family. Tony and Teresa, his wife, have an eight year old son, a tenth grade son, a daughter who is a senior in high school, and their eldest son is a junior in college at Central Michigan University where Tony obtained his bachelor's degree. Upon earning a law degree from the University of Detroit Mercy Law School in 1981, Tony worked with the prosecutor's office, and then spent approximately six years with a family-run firm in Dearborn. It was there, with Robert Grenn and his son Fred, that Tony began to involve himself in the many facets of general practice including pro bono work. Tony thinks of all his clients as people who need his help, whether that help is pro bono or not.

Tony says it is a "neat feeling to get to know and become friends with your clients." Often Tony takes on pro bono clients because, "I know they need the help...so I tell them to call legal aid and if they qualify as pro bono, I will handle the case for them." Tony also gives his time to his community. Just this week Tony spoke at a career day at a middle school and answered questions about being a lawyer. The questions were fun and the kids had a great time.

*Legal aid is about helping ordinary people with real-life problems. Client stories from the field illustrate the day-to-day struggles - and victories - of poor Americans seeking justice under law.*

able to pay her debts. Or so she thought. Marcy began receiving notices that she was delinquent on her student loan payments. According to the collection agency, Marcy had borrowed \$5,500 in 1981 from a college in Pennsylvania. Marcy was devastated and was so sure she had paid back her loans, but whenever she contacted the collection agency they told her, "we have heard that story before." After

performing some cursory detective work, Marcy discovered that someone else with the same name had attended a Pennsylvania school, taken out student loans, and never paid them back. At this time, the debt had grown to \$15,000 and while Marcy tried over and over to resolve the matter alone, LSEM was her only hope. LSEM contacted Tony and he said he would be happy to handle the case.

Tony and Marcy both were shocked at how much red tape they had to wade through. Despite the fact the Pennsylvania student had a different social security number, and Marcy was in high school when the Pennsylvania woman took the loan out, creditors still did not believe Marcy's story. Tony helped prove through her driver's license picture, multiple handwriting samples, and talking to dozens of people that Marcy did not take out this loan. Finally Tony found a person who took the time to listen, and Marcy's name and credit were saved. His dedication, support, and guidance truly guided Marcy through her scary ordeal. Now she does not have to worry about losing any of her modest resources to collection agents or having to live with a damaged credit rating because of the \$15,000 that she never owed, and is able to move forward in her life.

Marcy has since graduated from college, and is now doing very well.

Thank you Tony for your helpful and meaningful pro bono work with civil legal aid!

One woman in particular found Tony when she turned to Legal Services of Eastern Michigan (LSEM). When "Marcy" was young she had always wanted to attend college. In order to do so, Marcy had to take out some student loans to pay for her education. It took some time, but Marcy was

### Save These Dates

**September 11, 2003**

ATJ Donor Acknowledgement  
Golden Anniversary Reception  
State Bar Annual Meeting

**September 12, 2003**

Cummiskey Award for exemplary  
pro bono service presented at  
Annual Meeting luncheon

**September 13, 2003**

Race for Justice, Potter Park Zoo  
Lansing, Michigan



Cartoon courtesy of Stu Rees

# 2002 GIVING CLUBS

## Acknowledging donations made during the calendar year 2002

The State Bar of Michigan Access to Justice Campaign and Pro Bono Involvement Committee thank the following donors for their generous gifts:

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