

Macomb County LEGAL NEWS

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By Sheila Pursglove

Legal News

Elder Law of Michigan has scheduled two events for the 5th Annual Joe D. Sutton Call to Justice Awards, honoring individuals and organizations that help adults in need and work 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.”

The first ceremony will be a luncheon on Tuesday, May 7 at the Glen Oaks Country Club 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.

The organization is recognizing Mack’s work protecting vulnerable adults, especially those with mental illnesses.

Attorney Sanford Mall, founder and senior partner of Mall Malisow & Cooney, P.C., will receive the Advocacy Award in honor of 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.

Dr. Peter Lichtenberg — the first academic to be honored with one of these awards — will receive the Leadership Award.

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Director of the Institute of Gerontology and the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute at Wayne State University, Lichtenberg is founding director of the Wayne State University Lifespan Alliance.

He also has written several books on aging and served as chair of the Michigan Dementia Coalition and president of the Adult Development and Aging Section of the American Psychological Association.

The Founders Award will honor the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, which was instrumental in helping launch Elder Law of Michigan in 1990.

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, who has supported Elder Law of Michigan for many years, will be honored with the Champion's Award for her work advocating for the rights, health, nutrition and wellbeing of vulnerable adults.

The organization cited Stabenow's support for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which "is critical to elders who are otherwise forced to choose between food and medicine."

The second Call to Justice ceremony is a breakfast event scheduled for Thursday, May 9, at Gordon Food Services Home Office in Wyoming, south of Grand Rapids.

Stabenow and OSA will be honored at this ceremony as well.

Attorney Laretta Murphy from the Miller Johnson law firm in Grand Rapids, where she chairs the Elder Law and Disability Planning Practice Group, will receive the Joe D. Sutton Award.

Murphy will be honored for service on the Elder Law of Michigan's board of directors, volunteer efforts on behalf of the organization as well as pro bono service in her community and throughout the state.

Tom Czerwinski, executive director of the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan, 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 of Kent County, Blanchard 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 or \$500 for a table of eight.

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

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