Dear Referee:

SIGN UP

Fall brings another year for the Referee Association of Michigan. I urge you to renew/join the organization. The organization is presently involved with many issues affecting Referees as a whole, such as, a proposed referee rule submitted to the Supreme Court Commissioners, proposed Domestic Relations Code, endorsement of judicial candidates, interference with referee's decisions by the Department of Social Services, and possible legislation dealing with interest on arrears.

I realize that not everyone has the time to devote to these activities, but everyone can lend support just by becoming a member.

Please take time to complete the application at the end of this Newsletter and send your dues to Robert Martin, Treasurer, RAM.

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At the annual meeting held in conjunction with State Bar Convention September 13, 1990, the Referees passed the attached resolution in response to threatened State and Federal budget cuts. The resolution was mailed to the Michigan Congressional Delegation. Also, the Association contributed $250.00 to the Family Law Section's SMILE project. Our contribution confers upon us the estimable distinction of being the first organization financially to support the project. The meeting concluded with a presentation by the State Court Administrator's office on the workings of the 21st Century Commission on the Courts.

TRAINING

MJ1 announcements are out for Probate Court referees training at Higgins Lake and Circuit Court referees training at Big Rapids. Space is limited. Sign up early.

INTER ALIA

At its October 18th meeting in Lansing, the Board considered a dues increase. Per our Constitution, Article 6, dues may be changed by the membership at a general membership meeting. The Executive Board must provide a recommendation concerning the change in dues at the general membership meeting. Please give us your input on the dues form.

Post majority support bills have been signed by the Governor. See Gongwer News Service, Inc. Report attached.

The Board unanimously voted to formally endorse Laura Cheger Barnard, Linda S. Hallmark, and Patricia Morse in their bids for judgeship. Good luck to Ron Foon running in the Free Press Mazda International. Welcome Bob Martin, new Treasurer. A huge thank you and special commendation to Laura Cheger-Barnard for her financial expertise, prudent advice, and meticulous record keeping in serving as Treasurer for the past ___ years.

Sincerely,

Marie A. Johnson
President
Referees Association of Michigan
COURT REFEREES ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

1990-91 DUES STATEMENT

[    ] New Membership
[    ] Renewal

Name_________________________ Phone_________________________
Address_________________________ Fax_________________________

I am interested in working in the following area(s)_________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Considering that new programs are expensive, qualified training speakers make a significant dent in the treasury, and we're worth it;

[    ] I support an increase in dues to $25.00 per year.
[    ] I support an increase to $_________ per year.
[    ] But everything else is going up, no increase.

Return this statement with your $10.00 dues payment to:

    ROBERT MARTIN, TREASURER, RAM
    Oakland County Juvenile Court Referee
    1200 North Telegraph Road
    Pontiac, Michigan 48053-1090
REFEREES ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

ANNUAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 13, 1990
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the Michigan Friend of the Court system collected over $714,000,000.00 in child support in 1989, and

WHEREAS Michigan ranks first in the nation in the collection of child support and has been a recognized leader in the enforcement of child support since 1919, and

WHEREAS Referees are a vital part of the Court system for ensuring that both payers and recipients of support are afforded expedited judicial process, and

WHEREAS The Friend of the Court and Referee systems depend on Federal financial participation to sustain their efforts, and

WHEREAS the Federal Budget Summit Committee has considered cutting Federal financial participation for support enforcement efforts from 66% to 50% (an approximately 25% cut in the participation) and said cut would be devastating to the effectiveness of Referees and Friend of the Court offices, and concomitantly on the health and welfare of children and families throughout the Nation,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Referees Association of Michigan unanimously, categorically and emphatically opposes any cut in Federal financial participation for funding child support activities presently being considered by the Federal Budget Summit Committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Referees Association of Michigan publish this Resolution, and mail copies of it to every member of the Michigan delegation to the United States Congress.

Date

Jon T. Ferrier, Secretary,
Referees Association of Michigan
GOVERNOR SIGNS CHILD SUPPORT PACKAGE

Governor Blanchard has signed into law a package of bills providing for the continuation of child support for up to a year and a half for children over the age of 18 as long as specific conditions of continuing a high school education are met.

The key measures in the package include HB 5286 (PA 243, immediate effect) and SB 902 (PA 237, immediate effect) allowing a court to order parents to pay support for a child over age 18 who is regularly attending high school on a full-time basis with a reasonable expectation of completing sufficient credits to graduate.

In addition, the legislation requires the child to be residing full-time with the parent providing the support or at an institution. All support responsibility would end no later than the child reaching the age of 19 1/2 years.

The acts respond to a 1989 state Supreme Court order (in Smith vs. Smith) that held that the Age of Majority Act—establishing 18 as the age of adulthood for all purposes—supersedes provisions of the divorce laws allowing a court to order support for a child beyond that age. The court also ruled that the Age of Majority Act preempts a court rule that calls for ordering support through age 18 or high school graduation, whichever is later.

Implementing the support provisions in other acts include: SB 903 (PA 238, immediate effect) amending the Emancipation of Minors Act; SB 904 (PA 239, immediate effect) amending the Friend of the Court Act; SB 905 (PA 240, immediate effect) amending the Support and Visitation Enforcement Act; SB 906 (PA 242, immediate effect) amending the act providing for the collection of alimony and the support and maintenance of minor children; HB 5649 (PA 244, immediate effect) amending the Age of Majority Act; and HB 5650 (PA 245, immediate effect) amending the Paternity Act.

The governor also signed a related measure (SB 715, PA 241, immediate effect) allowing probate courts to deviate from amounts established in a state guideline if the parties agreed, the judge determines the guideline would otherwise be unjust or inappropriate and certain statements are provided on the record. Current provisions of the Revised Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act simply authorize the parties to agree to an amount of support different from the guideline amount.

The new act further designates the Office of Child Support within the Department of Social Services as the state's interstate central registry for receiving, forwarding and responding to inquiries about interstate child support actions. It also authorizes the Friend of the Court to receive and disburse child support payments from a payer in another state to a payee in Michigan in cases that did not constitute a formal interstate enforcement of support action.