I would like to begin by thanking the conference committee and the other members who made our annual conference such a success. The speakers were informative and engaging. I received many compliments on the substance of the conference and the beautiful accommodations provided by the H Hotel.

It was announced at the conference that we will be traveling north to the Inn at Bay Harbor for the conference next year. The 2020 conference will be held May 20th through May 22nd. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us. I am excited for our membership to experience a new venue coupled with the usual great speakers that our conference committee acquires.

For those of you unable to join us this year, I would like to acknowledge two long-time RAM members and outstanding referees. Shelley Spivack from Genesee County and Zaira Maio from Macomb County both shared their plans to retire with me. Both plan to retire early in 2020 making this year their last RAM conference. These two amazing women have contributed in countless ways to the success of our organization. I hope you will join me in wishing them the happiest of retirements.

With the departure of some long-term members, the RAM Board has identified a need within our organization for some longevity planning. I am hoping to find a better way to encourage member participation within the organization. If you have never attended a Board meeting, I would encourage you to do so. Our next meeting dates are July 18, 2019, September 20, 2019 and November 7, 2019 at 10:00 am at the State Bar of Michigan office in Lansing. We do provide bagels and coffee/tea service at meetings to entice you to attend.

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Currently the Board is seeking volunteers to assist on the Law & Court Rule Committee, a workgroup to promote engagement, and contributing writers and editors for our publication, the Referees Quarterly. We are also in need of some juvenile referee input on current issues. If you have any interest in any of these volunteer opportunities, please email me at Kristi.drake@lenawee.mi.us, call me at 517-264-4722 or attend a meeting.

In closing, I would like to remind you that we have members representing our organization on many committees and workgroups including ethics, child support formula review, e-filing, forms review, and diversity and inclusion just to name a few. If you have input on any issue, please let us know and we can get you in touch with the member involved with the committee or workgroup. I am proud to be representing RAM at the Bar Leadership Forum on June 14th and 15th. I look forward to reporting back to you about the forum in the next issue. Enjoy your summer and I hope to see you at a meeting.

Kristi

The Inn at Bay Harbor, site of the 2020 RAM Conference.
Each and every one of us is affected by mental illness in some way. Whether it be ourselves, a member of our families, co-workers, or friends, someone we care about has struggled with their mental health. Every one of us knows someone personally that needs medication in order to handle what this world has to offer. If left untreated, mental illness can unfortunately lead an individual down a road that results in entry to the criminal justice system.

Eleven years ago, in Genesee County, a number of caring individuals in the community came together to form the first mental health court in the State of Michigan. This initiative was based on the philosophy that the community can better serve its mentally ill population. A joint initiative between the Sheriff’s Department, Genesee Health System, and the courts, created the initial mental health court program for adults in the community. A juvenile program followed soon after in April of 2009.

The Juvenile Mental Health Court program is designed for juveniles that have been charged with delinquency behavior as a result of their mental illness. The juvenile must meet certain eligibility requirements for entry into the program. Eligibility is determined following a screening process that examines clinical diagnosis, type of offense, and potential behavioral risk among other factors. If accepted into the program, the juvenile and the juvenile’s parent(s) or guardian(s) must agree in writing to participate and cooperate with the program.

The program is 100% grant-funded through the Michigan Mental Health Court Grant Program. The program grant requires a comprehensive application with the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), including a Local Administrative Order and Memorandum of Understanding signed by the program’s team members. Any juvenile mental health court operating in the state of Michigan must be certified by SCAO.

Like other problem-solving courts, juvenile mental health court takes a collaborative approach to address the underlying mental health, family, and social issues involved in a juvenile’s life that lead to criminal behavior. Participants are assigned a case worker and/or a therapist during their time in the program. The court holds weekly status review hearings to track participants’ progress and provide support, guidance, and, if necessary, sanctions for failure to follow through with program expectations. Instrumental in making the program work is the partnership with Genesee Health System and Jill Bade, a juvenile probation officer who has been with the program since day one.

The collaborative, team-centered approach allows for some creativity in how a “case” is handled. For example, sanctions for poor effort in a given week may include taking away the participant’s cell phone for the following week (most participants would prefer prison!). Reports of a bad attitude with a case worker or therapist might result in court-ordered volunteer work at the local soup kitchen. Not attending school on a
regular basis has resulted in me picking the participant up in the morning and dropping him off at the school’s front doors – which is quite the sanction!

On the other side, good grades on a report card could earn a reward as a program incentive, such as free movies passes or increased computer privileges at home. Group recognition in front of peers and other participants often goes a long way. The overarching goal is to put the juvenile in a position where he/she can manage mental illness and get on the right path to avoid recidivism.

To date, the Genesee County Juvenile Mental Health Court has had 164 participants, with 106 successfully graduating from the program. Successful completion of the program can result in a dismissal of charges or successful completion of probation depending on the basis for referral to the program.

The practical effect of this juvenile program is finishing high school, going on to college or employment, and not being trapped in the cycle of going on and off medication with the resulting calamities. Long-term, it is hoped that the adolescent will not reenter the criminal justice system and will have learned effective, healthy strategies to continue to manage their mental health.

Judge Jennie E. Barkey is the Presiding Judge for the Genesee County Probate Court. She is assigned to the Adult Mental Health Court, Juvenile Mental Health Court, and Veterans Treatment Court. Prior to her appointment to the bench in 2006, Judge Barkey worked in private practice and was a Referee until her appointment as the Friend of the Court. She has served as President of the Friend of the Court Association and is currently involved in the Michigan Probate Judges Association and the Genesee County Bar Association.
35th ANNUAL RAM TRAINING CONFERENCE WRAP UP

by Lorie Savin, Oakland County

Sahera Housey, Kate Weaver and their Conference Committee planned a fabulous conference this year at the H Hotel in Midland. While this year’s presentation topics were quite serious in nature, the weather was pleasant during the evenings providing an opportunity to enjoy camaraderie and the fresh air.

The relatedness of the topics combined with presenters that sat in the other speaker’s presentations, served the attendees well. Speakers were able to draw on the information previously presented to further the conversation on their given topics. The conference was kicked off by Zoe Lyons and Jaclyn Caroffino from the Department of Health and Human Services, explaining the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study, resiliency, and how to be more effective in working with adults and children that have had adverse childhood experiences.

We then moved on to Kate Thomson’s presentation about everything we might ever need to know about cannabis including its anatomy and components, different delivery methods and resulting effects, and the legal landscape, including regulation (or the lack of it). Ms. Thomson is the COO of The Farm in Boulder, Colorado, but spent her early career in Ann Arbor working for various Zingerman’s entreprises!

Former Judge Jodi Debbrecht Switalski shared with us her insight into substance use disorder through her own work on and off the bench. Judge Switalski’s practical knowledge about how substance use can dramatically impact a person’s life, factors that contribute to addiction, and solutions that can help those with a substance abuse disorder was timely and necessary information to disseminate to everyone working in the legal system. She also emphasized the connection we often see between substance abuse, mental health, and violence, and dispelled myths about who is really using what substances.

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Fellow referees Michelle Letourneau-McAvoy and Dale Murney led a well-received best practices round-table discussion, which could have gone on for twice as long if we had enough time. And the conference would be incomplete without Ed Messing providing his annual case law update.

We were fortunate to welcome several judges to the group dinner Wednesday night, including Justice Brian Zahra, Judge Mark Switalski, Judge Tracey Yokich, and Judge Mary Ellen Brennan. We wrapped up the conference honoring the following members for their efforts in serving this organization:

- **LYNN PERRY, Presidential Award**

  In recognition of Lynn Perry, Kent County, for her outstanding leadership and dedicated service to the Referees Association of Michigan, as nominated by President Kristi Drake.

- **TARA HOFMEISTER, Service to the Board Award**

  In recognition of Tara Hofmeister, Tuscola County, for her exemplary service to the Membership Committee and the Referees Association of Michigan for her efforts to increase membership.

- **ILYSSA CIMMINO, Valuable Member Award**

  In recognition of Ilyssa Cimmino, Oakland County, for her exemplary service to the Conference Committee and the Referees Association of Michigan for her continued assistance with conference activities.

- **ZAIRA MAIO, Recognition Award**

  In recognition of Zaira Maio, Macomb County, for her many years of service to the Referees Association of Michigan.

- **SHELLEY SPIVACK, Outstanding Recognition Award**

  In recognition of Shelley Spivack, Genesee County, for her many years of dedicated service to the Referees Association of Michigan and the children and families of Genesee County.

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Welcome to the start of the 2019-2020 legislative session and the 100th Michigan Legislature. Bills that are being introduced now have until the end of 2020 to be signed into law. Any outstanding bills from the last session will need to be reintroduced in this legislative term.

The House has selected the members of the Policy and Appropriations subcommittees for the next two years. The most relevant to our fields are the Chairs and Minority Vice-Chairs of the following committees:

**Senate Judiciary and Public Safety**
- Pete Lucido (R) Committee Chair, Shelby Twp
- Stephanie Chang (D) Minority Vice-Chair, Detroit

**Senate Families, Seniors and Veterans**
- John Bizon (R) Committee Chair, Battle Creek
- Marshall Bullock (D) Minority Vice-Chair, Detroit

**House Judiciary**
- Graham Filler (R) Committee Chair, Dewitt
- David LaGrand (D) Minority Vice-Chair, Grand Rapids

**House Families, Children and Seniors**
- Kathy Crawford (R) Committee Chair, Novi
- LaTanya Garrett (D) Minority Vice-Chair, Detroit

Governor Whitmer unveiled her 2019-2020 budget, framing the budget as needing to fill state deficiencies in education, water, infrastructure, water quality, and skills training. Generally, the Legislature has historically completed budget negotiations by mid- to late-June but can extend into the summer.

The following has been introduced in this new legislative session:

**NEGLIGENCE/DELINQUENCY**

**HB 4133-4146, 4443, 4452: “RAISE THE AGE”**

This tie bar group of bills, known as the “Raise the Age” (RTA) legislation, are intended to treat individuals who are 17 years of age as juveniles in criminal proceedings rather than automatically treating them as...
adults, provide a funding mechanism to provide juvenile justice services to those individuals 17 years of age adjudicated as juveniles, and create the Raise the Age Fund. Each bill would take effect October 1, 2021, with the exception of House Bill 4146, which would take effect 90 days after enactment.

Michigan is one of only four states that will automatically try 17-year-olds as adults, sentence them as adults, and send them to adult jails or prisons. Advocates for raising the age of who would be treated as an adult from 17 years of age to 18 point to research that overwhelmingly documents that adolescent brains do not fully develop until closer to 25 years old.

**Status:** This tie bar group of bills has been referred to the House Judiciary and Public Safety committee. RAM may want to look at this to take a position.

**HB 4017: AMEND THE YOUTH TOBACCO ACT**

This bill would amend the Youth Tobacco Act to prohibit the sale of electronic cigarettes or any oral device that provides vapor nicotine to minors.

**Status:** This bill has been referred to the House Committee on Regulatory Reform.

**HB 4109: AMEND THE PROBATE JUVENILE CODE**

This bill would amend the Probate Juvenile Code to include stepchildren in the definition of sibling.

**Status:** This bill has been referred to the House Families, Children and Seniors Committee.

**DOMESTIC RELATIONS**

**HB 4003-4005: AMEND THE MARRIAGE LICENSE ACT**

This tie bar group of bills has been presented to amend the Marriage License Act to require a minimum age of 18 to marry. The proposed bill includes no exception to the minimum age of 18.

**Status:** This tie bar group of bills has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

**HB 4074: AMEND THE CHILD CUSTODY ACT**

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This bill would amend the Child Custody Act to remove the exemption allowing a person convicted of cer-
tain criminal sexual conduct offenses to be granted custody.

**Status:** This bill has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

**HB 4304/4305: AMEND THE SUPPORT AND PARENTING TIME ENFORCEMENT ACT AND THE FRIEND OF THE COURT ACT**

These bills would amend the Support and Parenting Time Enforcement Act and the Friend of the Court Act, respectively, to revise the law concerning the provision of health care coverage for a child in a judgment of divorce. Among other things, the revisions would account for public health care coverage that is not a ben-
efit of employment or bought from an insurer.

**Status:** This bill has passed the House and has been referred to the Senate Families, Seniors and Veterans Committee.

All of the above legislation can be accessed at: [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/)
DOMESTIC RELATIONS CASE LAW UPDATE

Cases can be accessed by docket number at the Court’s website at http://courts.mi.gov/opinions_orders/opinions_orders/pages/default.aspx

By Ed Messing, St. Clair County

A stipulation to parenting time by child’s mother and presumed father does not waive their claim that Plaintiff, an alleged father, committed fraud in his pleadings in a ROPA action according to Burnett v Tracy & Ahola, _Mich_ (2019) #158531 1/23/19. The trial court determined that Defendant-husband was not the child’s father, that Plaintiff was the child’s biological father and entered an order of filiation. Plaintiff had alleged that he did not know the Defendants were married at the time the child was conceived. Defendants then entered into agreements with Plaintiff to expand his parenting time and stipulated to a shared equal parenting time order. Defendants later moved to set aside the court’s previous orders, alleging that after entry of the order of filiation, Plaintiff admitted to knowing that Defendants were married at the time the child was conceived. The trial court and Court of Appeals found that the Defendants’ agreements to expand Plaintiff’s parenting time and for a shared equal parenting time order, waived the issue of fraud and collaterally estopped them from raising fraud during the ROPA proceedings. The Michigan Supreme Court reversed, ruling that Defendants did not waive their claim that the ROPA order was obtained by fraud as neither Defendant “knowingly and voluntarily relinquished their respective right” to raise that issue, and that collateral estoppel does not apply to previous decisions in the same civil action.

A parent who petitions to terminate the other parent’s parental rights and for their spouse to adopt the child, must have custody pursuant to a court order pursuant to In re AGD, _Mich App _ (2019) #345717 3/14/19. The Respondent was established as the child’s legal father pursuant to executing an affidavit of parentage with the Petitioner-mother. Respondent father initially filed a complaint to establish custody, parenting time, and child support. Petitioners responded by filing a petition to terminate Respondent father’s parental rights and for step-parent adoption alleging that the father had not seen the child since 2015, and had a history of heroin abuse. The trial court denied Petitioners’ petition, interpreting MCL 710.51(6) to require that the petitioning parent have custody pursuant to a court order, as well as on the merits of the petition. The Court of Appeals affirmed based upon a clear reading of the statute, rather than considering statutory analysis. MCL 710.51(6) was amended by 16 PA 143 after the decision in In reAJR, 496 Mich 346 (2014), and requires that the parent petitioning under the statute must have custody pursuant to a court order.

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Although Pakistan has now acceded to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Convention), it is not yet a “party” to the Convention for purposes of MCL 722.27a(10) Safdar v Aziz, _Mich App_ (2019) #344030 3/7/19. The COA held that the trial court properly denied Defendant mother’s motion for a change of domicile finding that as the United States has not yet accepted Pakistan’s accession to the Convention, the protective rules and procedures are not binding between Pakistan and the United States. Therefore, Defendant is prohibited from exercising parenting time or custody in Pakistan. Although Plaintiff has substantial income from the World Bank and Defendant is not employed, the trial court properly denied Defendant’s motion for attorney fees under MCR 3.206(C)(2)(a) as Defendant has not demonstrated Plaintiff’s ability to pay or her inability to pay her own attorney fees.

The language in the Uniform Spousal Support Order (USSO) must be read together with spousal support language in the divorce judgment to determine whether spousal support is modifiable, according to Smith v Smith, _Mich App_ (2019) #342200 5/16/19. The divorce judgment specifically incorporated the USSO and provided that Plaintiff’s spousal support amount was subject to modification upon a change in his base amount of income. The USSO did not include any provision as to whether it was modifiable. Plaintiff filed a motion to modify spousal support 20 months after the divorce on the basis that he had retired. The trial court denied the motion on the basis that the USSO was non-modifiable, and even if it were modifiable, Plaintiff’s retirement was not a change in circumstance to warrant a change in spousal support because his retirement would have been contemplated at the time of the divorce. The Court of Appeals reversed. The divorce judgement must be read together with the USSO and as the USSO did not clearly state it was non-modifiable and the judgment clearly stated spousal support was modifiable, the parties clearly intended spousal support to be subject to modification. Further, retirement would reduce Plaintiff’s base pay, and under the terms of the judgment this may be the basis for modification. The court remanded the case back to the trial court to determine whether Plaintiff’s retirement was a change in circumstance that warranted a modification of spousal support, after considering whether a change would be just and reasonable, after balancing the incomes and needs of the parties, without impoverishing either party.

Plaintiff promised to pay $50,000 to Defendant pursuant to the Mahr provision in the parties’ Islamic
marriage certificate in Seifeddine v Jaber, _Mich App_ (2019) #343411 4/16/19. In the parties’ subsequent divorce, Plaintiff argued that the Mahr agreement was unenforceable because it would require the court to decide a religious doctrinal matter in violation of the First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution. Pursuant to Jones v Wolf, 443 US 595 (1979), civil courts may not decide religious doctrinal matters, but a civil court may review religious documents if the court is applying neutral principles of law. While each party presented testimony from an imam regarding the Mahr agreement, the trial court in this case made it clear that it did not rely on religious precepts but based its decision on common law contract principals and a valid civil marriage certificate. The appellate court found that the trial court did not err when enforcing the terms of the divorce judgment based on contract law.

After remand from the Michigan Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals held that the trial court erred when refusing to declare the child to be born out of wedlock in Taylor v Taylor, Unpub Ct App #346299 5/9/19. The child had always known the biological father as her father, and at the Plaintiff-mother’s request the Defendant-husband, never had a parental relationship with the child despite his status as the presumed father. Defendant filed his motion to revoke paternity after Plaintiff filed to divorce Defendant. The trial court denied Defendant’s motion based upon the biological father’s extensive criminal history and inability to financially support the child. Although financial harm to the child is a relevant best interest consideration, the only relevant link between Defendant and the child was the financial support Defendant provided to the child. Therefore, the court erred by refusing to declare the child born out of wedlock and the decision was reversed.

In the unpublished case of Boyd v Friskey, Unpub Ct App #341660 2/28/19, the child’s acknowledged father was a necessary party to Plaintiff’s ROPA action, and the statute of limitations required dismissal of the action as it was filed more than 3 years after the child’s birth. The trial court erred when granting Plaintiff, the alleged father, an extension to file the action beyond the statute of limitations as he did not file an affidavit setting forth a legal basis for an extension at the time he filed his motion. The fact that the paternity issue had been raised during a previously dismissed divorce did not preserve Plaintiff’s claim.

Finally, the trial court in Urka v Urka, Unpub Ct App #343302 4/23/19, did not err when following the Friend of the Court recommendation imputing to Defendant an annual income of $66,000 based upon the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook’s farm manager income. At the hearing on the objection to the recommendation, Defendant’s mother testified that Defendant worked full-time for the family farm she and Defendant’s father owned and that Defendant was not paid for his services. Defendant referred to himself as the farm manager. The farm took care of his needs such as electricity, food, housing, water, clothing, and fuel for his vehicle as a benefit of his labor, and he had a business credit card for his personal use. Plaintiff testified that while the parties were married, she received $1,200 a month as a benefit for the children. The Court of Appeals affirmed the trial court’s imputation under 2017 MCSF 2.01(G), although considering the “imputed” income as the value of Defendant’s non-monetary compensation for work on the farm under 2017 MCSF (D) and (E).
JUVENILE CASE LAW UPDATE

By Ariana Heath, Genesee County

Abuse/Neglect Published

In re Piland, May 23, 2019, SC No. 157918, COA No. 340754, Ingham Circuit Court – The Michigan Supreme Court, in lieu of granting leave to appeal, affirmed the holding of COA that MCL 722.634 applies to child protective proceedings. The Court further agreed with respondents that the availability of a jury instruction based on the statute does not depend on whether the respondents’ failure to provide specific medical treatment for a child is characterized as an act of neglect or an act of refusal. The Court did vacate the ruling from COA that the trial court must instruct the jury that a parent legitimately practicing their religious beliefs, who thereby does not provide medical treatment, cannot be considered neglectful for that reason alone. SC said this part of the judgment was premature because the entitlement to the jury instruction depends on the evidence presented at the adjudication trial. On remand, the trial court must provide an instruction consistent with MCL 722.634 if it is requested and if a rational view of the evidence supports the conclusion that the failure to provide medical treatment was based on a legitimate practice of religious beliefs.

Unpublished

In re P.B. Campbell, April 25, 2019, COA No. 344885, Wayne Circuit Court – This case arose out of a petition seeking termination at initial disposition. Respondent Father was convicted in Maryland of sexual abuse and rape of TDB, resulting in the birth of the minor child at issue in the case. TDB was also respondent’s biological daughter. Respondent raised the following issues on appeal: one, the trial court read all of his criminal convictions to the jury pool; two, the trial court’s decision to strike TDB’s testimony and deny respondent’s request for a mistrial; three, the trial court’s decision to allow TDB’s LGAL to continue after she acknowledged an attorney-client breakdown; four, the use of the term “rape” in front of the jury; and five, issues relating to collateral estoppel.

As to argument one, COA ruled respondent failed to argue or establish how reading his convictions to the
In regards to arguments two and three, TDB testified she did not believe respondent would be a danger to the child. LGAL objected to the testimony and informed the trial court she believed TDB was perjuring herself. LGAL requested a mistrial. Respondent requested an evidentiary hearing and then a mistrial based upon the interruption of his examination of TDB. The next day, petitioner requested the trial court strike TDB's testimony based on witness intimidation. Trial court found, based on evidence presented, no direct evidence of witness tampering but did find evidence of threats to witnesses and attorneys. Trial court concluded there was evidence of tampering and struck the testimony TDB had already given. COA ruled the exclusion was appropriate and even if it was not, the exclusion was harmless due to the substantial evidence against respondent. COA further ruled it was not inappropriate to allow TDB’s LGAL to continue because she did not claim a breakdown in the relationship with TDB but a conflict. The conflict was resolved when TDB's testimony was stricken. As to arguments two and three, COA ruled respondent failed to establish plain error.

As to argument four and the word “rape” being used in front of the jury, COA stated respondent failed to show where it was used improperly in front of the jury. COA stated respondent used it himself frequently and since he contributed to the problem, so he cannot claim reversible error now.

COA further addressed issues of collateral estoppel and agreed the trial court erred by applying the doctrine in this case. COA ruled the error was harmless and did not affect respondent’s substantial rights. The trial court had ruled the issue of whether respondent raped TDB had been litigated in the prior Maryland action and it could not be re-litigated. The COA said the following: first, the doctrine of collateral estoppel should not have been applied because respondent had appealed his conviction and it was still pending. Second, when the doctrine is used offensively, as it was here, mutuality of estoppel is required. Mutuality did not exist here because if respondent had been acquitted in his criminal case, petitioner would not have been bound by that decision since a NA case involves a lower burden of proof. Third, TDB’s recantation provided a new fact that precluded the application of collateral estoppel. COA ruled that although the trial court should not have applied the doctrine of collateral estoppel, the evidence of respondent’s guilt was overwhelming (as DNA proved he was the biological father of TDB’s daughter) and the error was harmless.

Affirmed

In re Johnston and Jenkins, April 18, 2019, COA No. 345016, Lenawee Circuit Court – Termination of parental rights was conditionally reversed and remanded for compliance with the notification requirements in ICWA and MIFPA. This case presents a good reminder that the court file must contain the necessary documentation of notice to the tribes and the documented responses. The trial court’s file must contain the original or a copy of each notice served or sent via registered mail, and a copy of the return receipt or other proof showing delivery of the notice.
MEMBER VOIR DIRE
by Susan G. Murphy, Jackson County

This newsletter’s spotlight is on one of the most interesting people I know: Shelley Spivack. Shelley shared with me that RAM has been an integral part of her life as a referee. She can’t imagine what it would have been like without the support and friendship of everyone in our organization. For those new to our organization, Shelley served as RAM’s president from 2012 to 2014 and was on the Board from 2009 to 2017. Shelley has been a Referee in Genesee County since 2002, but the rest of her life and what she has accomplished is just amazing and so worth the read.

Shelley was born in Atlanta, but was raised in New Jersey. She chose to attend Rutgers, earning her degree in English. She then went on to Brooklyn Law School. In the Fall of 1980, she came to Flint to work as a public benefits attorney for Legal Services of Eastern Michigan. She was drawn to accept the job because she was happy to be earning some income, but most importantly she had just seen the movie “With Babies and Banners.” If you don’t know that movie, it is about the Women’s Emergency Brigade that formed in Flint during the 1936-37 Flint Sit-Down Strike. Shelley was drawn to meet some of those women who were so instrumental in what was then a revolutionary movement.

Knowing the impetus that brought Shelley to Flint explains so much about her personal energy and life’s focus. She was in private practice for 18 years, focusing in the criminal defense, juvenile, and social security arenas. But one of the greatest opportunities she had, was to be co-counsel in an ACLU case in which a local judge had issued an injunction preventing a woman in a divorce case from terminating her pregnancy. They fought the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court - and won!

This was the first of many extraordinary gifts Shelley has provided to her community. During her tenure in Flint, she also obtained a Master of Arts of Social Sciences in Women and Gender Studies from the University of Michigan-Flint. Her drive to help combat gender issues for girls and women has been paramount these past two decades. In 2003, she began teaching at UM-Flint in the Criminal Justice and Women and Gender Studies Department. She is the co-founder and co-director of “Youth Arts: Unlocked,” a non-profit that offers art and humanities workshops for youth in detention and on probation. This program was a direct result of her work focusing on gender-based art for youth offenders. Her work in that area was documented in the book she co-authored entitled “Implementing a Gender-Based Arts Program for Juvenile Offenders,” which was published in 2014 by Anderson Press. She is also known for her work co-founding the Genesee County Girls Court.

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Shelley has served in many editing capacities over the years including her current commitments to the 
*Genesee County Bar Beat*, the *Michigan Family Law Journal*, the *Referees Quarterly*, and two upcoming 
special editions of the Michigan Bar Journal - Domestic Violence (July 2019) and Children’s Law (November 
2019). But her life as a lawyer and editor, is not her sole focus.

If you have a chance, before she retires, get Shelley to tell you her fun and exciting travel stories. Shelley has 
traveled to Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, England, Holland, France, Italy, Spain, Iceland, Austria, and the Czech Republic. She has cycled in the Canadian Rockies, Vancouver, Canada; San Juan Islands, Washington; Natchez Trace, Mississippi/Tennessee; Great Allegheny Passage, Maryland/Pennsylvania; La Route Verte, Quebec, Canada; Cuba; Colombia; Vietnam; Cambodia; Thailand; Sri Lanka; Germany; New Zealand; and Wisconsin. During her trips, Shelley enjoys taking beer photos because beer is the 
common denominator, but she jokes that the numerator differs everywhere you go.

For fun, Shelley reads contemporary fiction typically written by women and authors from Third World coun-
tries. She loves watching foreign crime dramas on Netflix and MHZ. She finds joy in teaching and watching 
her students find their way. She loves attending the “Youth Arts: Unlocked” workshops to watch the kids be 
free and happy, even if it is just for those 90 minutes. Finally, Shelley has reached the status of Second De-
gree Black belt – Karate and loves teaching karate to kids.

Once she retires in 2020, Shelley is off for a seven-week Coast-to-Coast bike trip from San Diego to St. Au-
gustine, Florida. She also has cycling trips planned to the Northwoods of Wisconsin, the Erie Canal, and 
Hungary. One thing is certain, Shelley will not be slowing down any time soon. Once the advocacy prohibi-
tion is lifted, we may very well find her in the middle of women’s and gender-based issues throughout the 
country. We wish you all the best in your retirement, Shelley. Send us updates!
UPCOMING EVENTS

- RAM Board Meeting
  Thursday, July 18, 2019
  10 a.m., State Bar of Michigan
  Lansing, MI

- RAM Board Meeting
  Friday, September 20, 2019
  10 a.m., State Bar of Michigan
  Lansing, MI

- RAM Board Meeting
  Thursday, November 7, 2019
  10 a.m., State Bar of Michigan
  Lansing, MI

- RAM Board Meeting/Holiday Lunch
  Friday, December 6, 2019, TBD
MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1984, the Referees Association of Michigan (RAM) is a special purpose bar organization recognized by the State Bar of Michigan that consists of attorneys who serve as juvenile and domestic relations referees throughout the State. RAM's primary focus is to educate its members through an annual training conference, its publication, *Referees Quarterly*, and a listserv. RAM's mission is also to contribute to the improvement of the legal system by appointing members to serve on numerous State Bar and State Court Administrative Office committees, and by offering comments to proposed legislation and court rules.

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