



*Funding and Leadership for Justice Since 1947*

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## **Foundation Honors Three Exemplary Lawyers with Awards**

The Michigan State Bar Foundation is pleased to announce our 2017 Award Recipients. The Founders Award recognizes lawyers who exemplify professional excellence and outstanding community contributions. The Access to Justice Award honors persons who have significantly advanced access to justice for the poor in Michigan.

The Founders award will be presented on behalf of the Foundation at the September 27th State Bar Awards Banquet during the NEXT Conference, the State Bar's Annual Meeting, and the Access to Justice Award will be presented on September 27<sup>th</sup> during the 2017 Michigan State Bar Foundation's Fellows Reception.

### **FOUNDERS AWARD**



#### **Linda K. Rexer**

For almost three decades, Linda Rexer directed the Foundation in its mission to provide leadership and funding to improve access to justice, particularly through civil legal aid for the poor, and for improvements in the administration of justice. Ms. Rexer served as the first Executive Director of the MSBF. During her tenure, the Foundation grew to an entity that has awarded up to \$11 million annually. Established in 1947, the Foundation has since made more than 1,950 grants and distributed over \$190 million. Ms. Rexer provided state and national leadership for access to justice. Ms. Rexer was a founding member of the State Bar of Michigan's Access to Justice Task Force in 1997 and even though she is retired, she is completing her term as co-chair of the Committee on Justice Initiatives (CJI). One of Ms. Rexer's many legacies and proudest accomplishments, was the creation of the national award winning Michigan Legal Help Program. Ms. Rexer had the visionary

leadership and fortitude to understand the continuum of services needed and the necessity of a statewide online resource for pro se litigants to access information. Ms. Rexer received many national awards and State Bar of Michigan Awards. In 2016, Ms. Rexer received the State Bar's highest award, the Roberts P. Hudson Award, honoring her legacy overflowing with long-lasting improvements to access to justice for all in Michigan.

### **ACCESS TO JUSTICE AWARDS**



#### **Angela Tripp and Michigan Legal Help**

Ms. Angela Tripp has devoted her career to serving the poor. After receiving her law degree from Northeastern University School of Law in 2003, she immediately started working as a staff attorney for Prison Legal Services of Michigan (PLSM). In 2005, she was hired by Legal Services of South Central Michigan as a staff attorney and in 2012 became the co-director of the Michigan PLP, the entity that administers several statewide advocacy organizations including the Michigan Poverty Law Program. Ms. Tripp also is the Director of the Michigan Legal Help Program and has been involved since inception and led implementation. The Michigan Legal Help Program is responsible for the statewide

website ([MichiganLegalHelp.org](http://MichiganLegalHelp.org)) for self-represented litigants and its affiliated Self-Help Centers around the state of Michigan. Since the public launch of the Michigan Legal Help website and through June 30, 2017, the website has had over 11.4 million page views; 3.78 million visitor sessions and in June, 2017, visits to the website averaged 28,000 per week. Ms. Tripp has been invited to speak nationally about the Michigan Legal Help Program and was a presenter in 2015 at Legal Services Corporation's Fourth Annual White House Summit on Increasing Access to Justice. Ms. Tripp has received many awards but most recently she was nominated for the Michigan Lawyers Weekly Leader in the Law.



**Ari Scharg and Edelson PC**

Edelson PC is a consumer privacy and technology firm that actively promotes and advocates for access to justice. In 2017, low income individuals in Michigan benefited from two large *cy pres* awards that were directed to the Access to Justice Fund by Ari Scharg, a partner at the firm. The cases were both federal class action lawsuits involving the personal privacy rights of Michigan residents. Mr. Scharg is proud to support access to justice in his home state of Michigan. Edelson PC has been recognized as “pioneers in the electronic privacy class action field” and for its unwavering commitment to access to justice by the Chicago Bar Foundation and the Illinois Bar Foundation. Mr. Scharg co-chairs the firm’s Case Development and Investigations Group, sits on the Executive Oversight Council for the Array of Things, and chairs the Illinois State Bar Association’s Privacy and Information Security Section.

The Michigan State Bar Foundation is very pleased to recognize the contributions of these award recipients. Foundation President Hon. Alfred Butzbaugh said “These award recipients represent the highest traditions of the legal profession through their dedication to their profession, their community and to access to justice.”

Past recipients of the Founders Award have included Dennis Archer, Wallace Riley, Charles Rutherford, Judge Julian Cook, Patrick Bruetsch, Kim Cahill (posthumously), Judge Avern Cohn, John W. Cumiskey (posthumously), Hilda Gage (posthumously), Hon. Harold Hood (posthumously) Jon Muth and George Googasian. Past recipients of the Access to Justice Award have included Robert Gillett, Candace Crowley, Hon. Chad Schmucker, Michael C. Chielens (posthumously), Holli Wallace (posthumously) and Marilyn Mullane.

The Michigan State Bar Foundation provides leadership and grants to improve access for all to the justice system, including support for civil legal aid to the poor, law-related education, and conflict resolution. For more information, visit [www.msbf.org](http://www.msbf.org).

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