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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 8, 2016, Lansing

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Jennifer S. Bentley Named Michigan State Bar Foundation Executive Director



“The Michigan State Bar Foundation conducted a national search for its next Executive Director and has found the right leader in Jennifer S. Bentley,” said Foundation President Alfred Butzbaugh. He added, “Jennifer’s background as a public interest lawyer and senior legal aid manager will help the Foundation advance its mission of access to justice for the poor.”

“I am honored the Foundation has selected me as its Executive Director. I am excited about working with the Foundation’s Board and staff and its many partners to continue the Foundation’s excellent work and to explore new opportunities in the future,” said Bentley. She will begin full time duties near the end of January, 2017, a year that will mark the 70th anniversary of the Foundation. “Jennifer will help the Foundation meet new challenges ahead and sustain its leadership role in access to justice in Michigan,” said Margaret Nichols, Chairperson of the Foundation’s Executive Director Search Committee.

For 20 years, Bentley has been a staff attorney and manager in several legal aid programs, most recently serving as chief development officer to lead efforts for expansion and growth for the statewide nonprofit Michigan Advocacy Program. Her work has involved a wide range of administrative duties, program development, policy planning and service delivery innovations. She has been involved in statewide and national work to increase resources for civil legal aid to the poor. She holds a certificate in fundraising management from the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy. She received a J.D. from the Indiana University School of Law and a B.A. from Aquinas College.

“I am thrilled that the Foundation will benefit from Jennifer’s knowledge and commitment to access to justice. Her leadership ability and talent for collaboration are great assets for the Foundation’s future,” said Linda Rexer. Rexer is retiring after 30 years serving as Executive Director of the Foundation. The Foundation provides leadership and funding to advance access to justice for the poor and improve the administration of justice. In 2016, the Foundation awarded nearly \$20 million to nonprofit agencies providing civil legal aid to the poor. The Foundation also administers the Access to Justice Fund, a partnership with the State Bar of Michigan and Michigan’s nonprofit civil legal aid offices to increase resources for civil legal aid for the poor. For more information about the Foundation see www.msbf.org.
