

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LORRAINE H. WEBER OF DETROIT NAMED DIRECTOR OF ACCESS AND FAIRNESS FOR MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT; EFFORTS TO FOCUS ON IMPROVED ACCESS TO COURTS, PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN JUSTICE SYSTEM

LANSING, MI, August 3, 2009 – Improvements to civil and criminal legal aid for the poor are among the goals for Detroit attorney Lorraine H. Weber, the new Director of Access and Fairness with the Michigan Supreme Court’s Office of the Chief Justice, Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly announced today.

“Through this new position, we hope to promote greater public access to, and confidence in, the justice system, particularly for the poor and others who have encountered barriers based on their race, gender, or ethnic identity,” said Kelly. The chief justice, who co-chaired the State Bar of Michigan’s Open Justice Commission from 1999 to 2003, also serves on the governing board of the National Consortium for Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts.

Weber’s position will be funded by the Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program, which supports law-related charitable projects, Kelly said.

Kelly added, “Lorraine Weber has an impressive record of achievement on access to justice issues. I am very pleased that someone of her caliber will be helping us work with other justice system leaders toward improved access and fairness for those most in need.”

Weber, who has served as executive director of the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association since 2003, was responsible for implementing a number of community service programs for the DMBA, such as the Wayne County Pro Bono Summit and the Wayne County Project Permanency program. For her work – which includes serving as executive director of the Michigan Supreme Court Task Forces on Gender and on Racial/Ethnic Issues in the Courts – she received the State Bar’s Champion of Justice Award in 2007. Her work experience includes serving as a special advisor to the State Bar’s Open Justice Commission.

An honors graduate of the University of Michigan and Boston College of Law, Weber began her career in private practice. She later served as a probate division attorney, juvenile and probate register, court administrator, and juvenile court referee for Wayne County Probate Court.

Weber’s professional activities include serving as a faculty member of the National Judicial College, the National Center for State Courts, the Michigan Judicial Institute, the Michigan Institute for Continuing Legal Education, and the Institute for Court Management.

A past president of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, Weber was a member of the State Bar's Task Force on Children and Justice. She has been honored by the National Consortium for Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts and has received the Community Service Pride Award from the Triangle Foundation.

A Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation, Weber has served on the State Bar Board of Commissioners and as chair of the bar's Representative Assembly. She is a member of the board of directors of the American Red Cross, Southeast Michigan division.

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