

Kate White Named Liberty Bell Award Winner

The State Bar of Michigan has announced the winners of its annual Liberty Bell Award. This year's winners are Kate White, Executive Director of Elder Law of Michigan and Judy Ellis, Executive Director of First Step, the West and Downriver Wayne County Project on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

This unique award, which began in 1986, is presented each year to recognize outstanding service performed by a non-lawyer citizen who has given of his or her time and energy to strengthen the effectiveness of the American system of freedom under law, in keeping with the spirit of our Constitution. Such service may include activities which promote a better understanding of our form of government, especially the Bill of Rights; encourage greater respect for the law in the courts; educate people in the contrast between totalitarianism and freedom under law; or stimulate the deeper sense of individual responsibility to the end that citizens recognize their duties as well as their rights.

The nomination of Ms. White was sponsored by the Mid-Michigan Region of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan and submitted to the State Bar by Sarah Wohlford, the Region's President. Ms. Wohlford praised Kate White's efforts as "exemplifying the service the award is designed to recognize; she's done immeasurable good for women and other under-served individuals in Michigan. During her 13-year tenure as Executive Director of Elder Law of Michigan, she's taken ELM from a fledgling human services organization to a nationally recognized resource for one of the most vulnerable groups in Michigan."

Kate will formally receive the Liberty Bell Award at a luncheon at the State Bar of Michigan's annual meeting, September 14, 2011, in Dearborn. "I am very honored to be an advocate among so many other advocates who are working to ensure that Michigan's justice system meets the needs of all of our citizens, particularly older adults," she said. "As a community, we have significant challenges ahead on topics like elder abuse, financial exploitation and guardianship. It is my hope that the Liberty Bell Award will serve as an opportunity for people to learn more about Elder Law of Michigan and the important work we are doing, and encourage active participation to help us in assuring that older adults retain their rights, health and economic security."

