

## **Recognizing the volunteers who make it work**

**by**

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Reprinted from *Minnesota Lawyer* (January 1, 2007)

The Minnesota discipline system is comparatively unique among attorney discipline systems in the quantity and quality of its lawyer and nonlawyer volunteers, who give thousands of hours of time and expertise to strengthen this profession.

The June 5, 2006, Minnesota Lawyer ethics column entitled, "Who's Watching the Lawyers," provided a general description of these volunteers and what they do. This article puts a face on some of these exceptional people.

In 1997-98 the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board began giving out a "Volunteer of the Year" award to recognize the invaluable role of its volunteers. The first recipient was Jim Noonan, a St. Paul solo practitioner, who served as a probation supervisor for four attorneys for more than 12 years. He willingly undertook difficult probations and provided hundreds of hours helping struggling solo practitioners improve their office management and communication skills.

The most recent recipient, Anthony Palumbo, is an Assistant Anoka County Attorney. Palumbo has given countless hours of personal time to bar association and other volunteer service. He served as a District Ethics Committee investigator for several years, and from 1999-2005 served as chair of the 21st DEC. His leadership and recruitment of new investigators helped this DEC through a period of tremendous growth in the 21st DEC's legal community.

The other recipients of this award have been equally impressive. Tim Gephart, a nonlawyer, works as Minnesota Lawyers Mutual vice-president of claims. Gephart has served on the Hennepin County DEC and several bar committees including the HCBA Professionalism Committee, the MSBA Life and the Law Committee and the MSBA Task Force on the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct. Gephart was an outstanding LPRB member for six years and a generous consultant on planning for practice interruption.

John Koneck, a real estate specialist and bankruptcy attorney, is a partner at Fredrikson & Byron. In addition to his numerous other volunteer activities and pro bono work, Koneck served the discipline system in multiple capacities. As a probation supervisor, he has been given several of the most challenging cases. Koneck supervised at least four attorneys over a period of more than 10 years. He has served on the Fourth DEC and as his firm's ethics advisor. He has been a generous consultant to the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility in areas of his expertise.

Ann Bailly, a nonlawyer, served as a University of Minnesota administrator until her retirement. She served nine years<sup>[Ftn1](#)</sup> on the Fourth DEC and six years on the LPRB (three on the Executive Committee). She was a member of the search committee for the OLPR Director in 2003 and a member of the MSBA Task Force on the Model Rules of Professional Conduct.

William Dolan, an attorney in Litchfield, was the first volunteer from outside the Twin Cities area to receive the award. Dolan began serving as an investigator for the 12th DEC in 1989. In 1997 he began six years of outstanding service as DEC chair.

Lloyd Moosbrugger, now retired from the Attorney General's office, holds the record for service as a DEC chair. Moosbrugger has served the First DEC as chair for more than 20 years.<sup>[Ftn2](#)</sup>

Neil Meyer is the director of the Student Legal Aid Clinic at the University of Minnesota and a shareholder in Meyer & Njus, P.A. Meyer served eight years on the Hennepin County DEC, three years as co-vice-chair. In addition to other outstanding volunteer work, Meyer provided many hours of work on a trusteeship following the disbarment of an attorney for theft of client funds. Meyer is now finishing a second term on the LPRB.

These individuals have been specially recognized, but they represent only a few of the volunteers deserving of thanks.

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<sup>1</sup> Rule 3(a) of Rules on Lawyers Professional Responsibility (RLPR) provides that DEC members serve no more than six consecutive years. As with others who serve more than six years, Bailly had a break in service from 1985-87 and 1990-95.

<sup>2</sup> The Minnesota Supreme Court made an exception for Moosbrugger to Rule 3(a) of the RLPR, which provides that DEC chairs serve a maximum of six consecutive years.