

Society Update

FROM THE MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

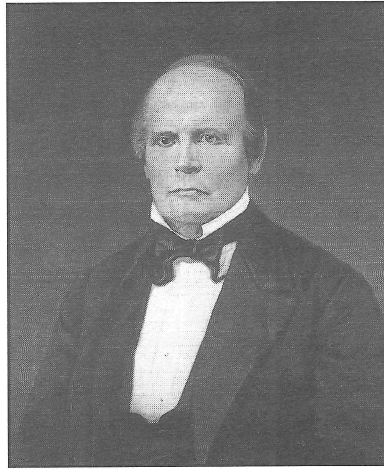
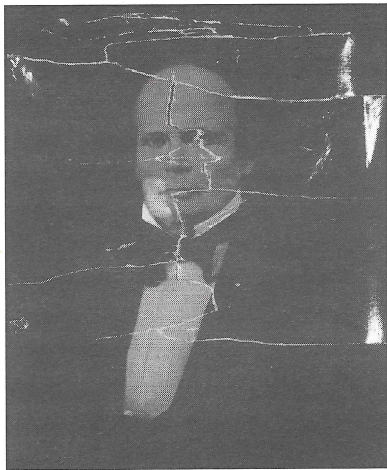
Portrait Rescued From Near Ruin

On Tuesday, October 6, 1998, the Michigan Supreme held their Opening Session in the Old Supreme Court Chambers in the Capitol. At that session, the Society rededicated the portrait of former Justice Nathaniel Bacon. The presentation was made by former Chief Justice Thomas E. Brennan. The following is an excerpt from his remarks:

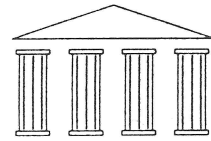
On June 4th, 1901, Mr. Bacon of St. Louis, Missouri presented to the Michigan Supreme Court a portrait of his father, Nathaniel Bacon, one of the circuit judges who served in the original Supreme Court of this state.

Then Chief Justice Robert Montgomery accepted the painting on behalf of the Court and ordered it hung in this very room. How long it remained on exhibit here, no one really knows. But some time during the intervening 97 years, the portrait was taken down and relegated to dusty storage.

Ultimately, it became the victim, if not of deliberate vandalism, at least of gross indifference to its care and preservation. In 1996, the Executive Director of the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, Ellen Campbell, came upon the damaged painting during an inventory of the Court's art works. The canvas was literally shredded in a dozen pieces. The frame was chipped and cracked. But with meticulous professional restoration by Mr. Ken Katz, the portrait has been renewed, and the Society is pleased to be able to return this valuable piece of art to its rightful place of honor. (continued on page 4)



Here are the before and after photos of the Nathaniel Bacon Portrait. The firm of Conservation and Museum Service, of Detroit, spent a year restoring the demolished portrait and frame to their former glory. It is back in the Michigan Supreme Court as part of the historical Court Portrait Collection.



From the President COMMITTEES TAKE SHAPE

It's an exciting time for the Board of Directors, as we continue to develop programs for the Society that sustain our mission — to inform and educate the public on Michigan Supreme Court history — and to preserve the artifacts and historical documents of the Court.

At our last Board meeting held on October 6, 1998, we redefined the Board's committees to make directors more effective in developing and overseeing Society programs. The following committees have been established: Membership & Fund Raising, Court Portraits, Education, Oral History Policy, Long Range Planning, and The Big Four Writing & Research/Coleman Internship. There are three or four Directors on each committee, making work and time more manageable.

In the future, you'll see committee information in the newsletter. If you have suggestions about programing, or would like to serve on a committee, please contact the Society Office. We'd like to hear from you.

Wallace D. Riley

October 1998

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The Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, Inc.
The Michael Franck Building
306 Townsend Street, Lansing, Michigan 48933-2083

THE 1998 COLEMAN INTERN

Jill K. Moore

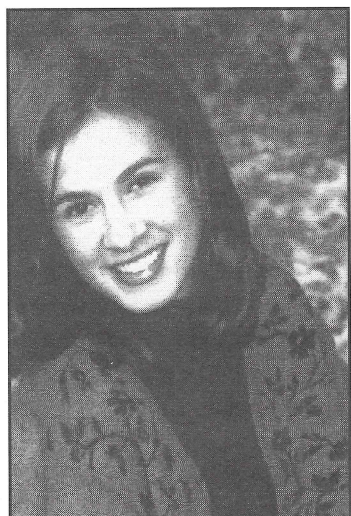
My experience as the 1998 Coleman intern was rewarding in many ways. I am very grateful that the Society provided me with a variety of opportunities to learn about Michigan Supreme Court history, and expand my skills as a historian and writer.

In May, I started my internship duties by helping manage the Society's 10th Anniversary Dinner held in Detroit. I attended the Annual Board Meeting, and met many Society members, including current and former Justices of the Court. I was most pleased and honored to meet Justice Mary S. Coleman, the namesake of my internship program.

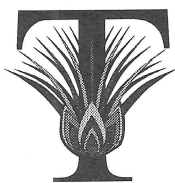
In June, I accompanied Executive Director Ellen Campbell to Washington, D.C. for the 1998 Roundtable meeting of Judicial Historical Societies. This was a wonderful opportunity to learn about the business of running a non-profit historical agency.

Upon returning from the conference, I rolled up my sleeves and began working on my research and writing assignment. I gathered biographical information about all the justices of the Michigan Supreme Court — even the Territorial judges, dating back to 1805! I also researched and gathered photos, updated the Index to Special Sessions of the Court, and created a year-by-year Court chart. It was an interesting and very challenging project. And now, my internship project has been organized into a publication titled, *The Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide*. It's exciting to know that my research will introduce so many people to Michigan judicial

history. In August I returned to school at St. Mary's College, in Indiana, as a Senior. And looking back at my summer internship, I cannot thank the Society enough for this extraordinary opportunity. I know that I've learned a great deal about the Court, and a great deal about myself.



REFERENCE GUIDE MAKES HISTORY



he Society's newest publication, *The Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide* is a valuable and unique publication. Available to Society members at the end of October, the *Reference Guide* assembles

information that Colman Intern Jill Moore gathered for her research and writing project this summer.

The *Reference Guide* is valuable because it contains three sections that analyze Michigan Supreme Court judicial history.

The first section showcases photos of each Justice from 1805 to the present. Along with the photos are thumbnail biographical sketches that give general historical facts about each justice.

The second section is the Index to Special Sessions of the Michigan Supreme Court. This informational table is an index to the *Michigan Reports* which contain every Special Session recorded in the Court. And finally, the third section contains a historical Court chart which shows year-by-year who served on the Bench and in what order of seniority. No matter which section the reader explores, the book provides a fascinating journey through Michigan's state and legal history.

What makes this publication unique is that the information and photos have never been assembled into one publication. So, readers of all ages will enjoy the *Reference Guide*, because it's designed for leisurely reading as well as research.

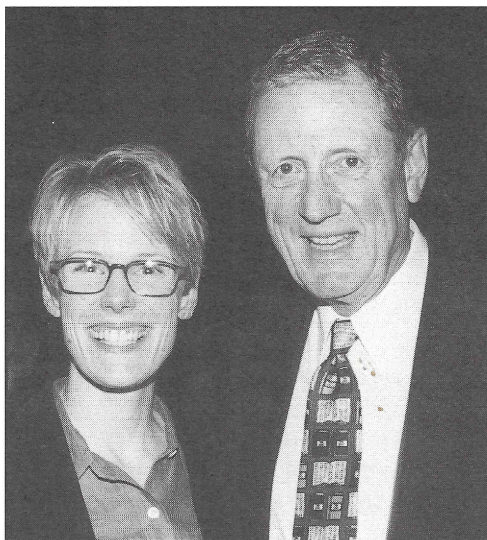
Teachers will find the *Reference Guide* a handy tool for educating students on Michigan's journey from territory to statehood. Legal scholars looking for general research information or quotable remarks from historical speeches will find the *Reference Guide* most helpful. Even those Michiganders who are researching their family trees will find the *Reference Guide* useful.

Of course, this project and the publication would not be possible without the assistance of the University of Michigan Bently Library, Thomas M. Cooley Law School Library, State of Michigan Archives.

To order your copy, call the Society office at 517-346-6419, or e-mail your order to mschs@michbar.org. The *Reference Guide* is available for \$10.00 for Society Members and \$15.00 for non-members.

PASSING OF THE BATON

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HAS "WRIGHT" STUFF



Ellen Campbell with her dad, former Chief Justice Thomas E. Brennan at the Society's 10th Anniversary Dinner.

At the October 6, 1998, Board meeting, our Executive Director, Mrs. Ellen Campbell announced that she will retire from her position with the Society at the end of the year.

Ellen and her husband Peter are expecting a

baby this Spring, and she has decided to stay home full time to care for her family.

Since establishing the position of Executive Director in 1995, Ellen has organized the administration of the office, and created such successful programs as the Court portrait inventory, the society newsletter, historical exhibits, and the Coleman Internship, just to name a few.

"I'm extremely grateful to my dad, Tom Brennan, for supporting my work at the Society. He's always encouraged me to use my creative thinking skills, and using those skills have made this job very interesting for me," Ellen said.

Ellen's brought the Society up to date in many ways, including the leap to the world wide web, and other important informational services.

"Mr. Riley and the Board of Directors have given clear direction to my work. It's been satisfying to achieve some long-term Board goals for the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society," said Ellen.

The duties of Executive Director have been placed in the very capable hands of Mrs. Jill Wright.

"Through our search, we found that Jill has the writing experience, marketing skills, and technology know-how that we're looking for," said Wallace Riley.

"I am thrilled with the opportunity to work with such a dedicated board of directors and enthusiastic body of membership," Jill said. "Many exciting projects are currently underway, and Ellen has done an exceptional job directing the Society. I certainly have big shoes to fill!"

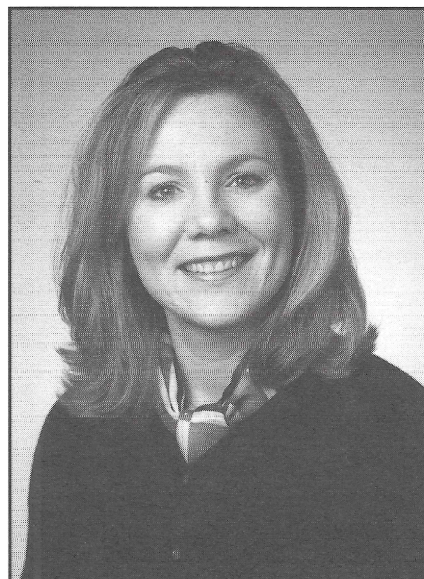
Jill has a bachelor's degree in political science from Ohio State University and has extensive experience producing newsletters, developing web sites and planning events. She was formerly publications editor for the American Cancer Society's Michigan division and communications manager on the Detroit Edison Company's Year 2000 Project Team.

Before moving to Michigan in 1996, Jill was a freelance writer, editor and desktop publisher, as well as office manager for a life insurance company. Over the next few months, Jill will continue to develop the web site, loading it with information and maximizing its interactive capabilities. The web site is scheduled to debut in mid-December.

Her longer term goals for the Society include creating more educational programming, increasing membership and marketing and promoting the newly published *Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide*.

Jill is married to Phil Wright, who is director of creative services, corporate communications, at

Jackson National Life Insurance Company. A doting stepmom to Kelsey, 11, and Nick, 9, Jill enjoys spending time with family, reading mystery novels, jogging and other fitness activities.



*Jill Wright,
Executive
Director*

SOCIETY WEB SITE

Don't let our name fool you — historical societies can be high-tech, too! And high-tech is what we'll be in mid-December, when the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society debuts its web site.

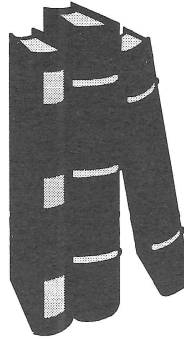
"Providing our members a web site is a natural outgrowth of the Society's mission—educating the public and sharing information," said Wallace Riley, MSCHS president. "With so many schools, businesses and organizations online these days, the Society is well positioned to provide volumes of useful information, in addition to providing a pleasant place to visit on the web."

Here is a quick snapshot of some of the items that will be featured online:

- The Historical Photo Collection, including biographical narratives;
- Special Sessions of the Court;
- Society program information;
- Online membership application and contribution form;
- Much more!

EXHIBIT TOURS LAW SCHOOLS

The Society's traveling exhibit, "A Decade In Review," is touring through all five Michigan law school libraries through May of 1999. Library directors and deans from the law schools are pleased with the idea of exposing their students to the history of the Court. Here's the touring schedule:



Thomas M. Cooley Law School Library
October 6, 1998 - January 4, 1999

Detroit College of Law Library
January 5, 1999 - May 11, 1999

Wayne State Law Library
May 12, 1999 - September 15, 1999

University of Michigan Law Library
September 16, 1999 - December 15, 1999

University of Detroit Law Library
January 2, 2000 - March 15, 2000

PORTRAIT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This is the occasion, if I may beg the Court's indulgence, when men and women of sensibility to historic perspective will find themselves contemplating the threads of human existence that connect this sitting Court to the man whose likeness has been renewed and returned.

Volume 124 of the Michigan Reports, which contains the record of the Bacon portrait presentation ... holds a number of interesting tidbits for us to think about as we connect in this brief moment with our collective past ...

...It is as though this portrait of Bacon had been like that of the fictional Dorian Grey, its visage twisted and corrupted with the passing decades as our state and nation drifted farther and farther from those puritan notions of propriety that Judge Bacon and his contemporaries cherished.

I tender this rehabilitated portrait of Nathaniel Bacon in the hope that its return here in pristine condition might in some way symbolize our own capacity to be renewed and inspire us a common resolve to do whatever we can do to restore popular respect for the dignity of public service.

Society Calendar of Events

JANUARY 19, 1999

Society Board Meeting at the Detroit Athletic Club at 10:00 a.m.

APRIL 22, 1999

Annual Society Board Meeting at the Kent Country Club, Grand Rapids, at 10:00 a.m. followed by the Annual Membership Luncheon & Lecture. Guest speaker, Hon. James L. Ryan

MAY 6, 1999

Charles L. Levin Portrait Presentation at the City County Building, Detroit, at 11:00 a.m.

OCTOBER 5, 1999

Opening Session of Court in the Old Court Chambers, The Capitol, Lansing. A special report from the Society at 9:30 a.m. followed by Society Board meeting at the Michigan Supreme Court.