



# Negligence Law Section

## *Negligence Law Section Quarterly*

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### **Pay It Forward**

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For new lawyers, the best teacher is experience. However, an even better teacher is someone who can impart experiences that a new lawyer has not been blessed to have had. As Albert Einstein once said “A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.”

During this pandemic we were arguably all new lawyers, we all learned a way to practice law in the new virtual world. A year after the courts and our practices shut their doors to the public, we’ve all been practicing at home for what seems like a long time.

Some of us were more prepared for this virtual way of law practice than others. Some of us had steep learning curves with software and technology. Some of us had work blend into our family lives and into our private time. Others of us pleasantly discovered that there were easier ways to skin the cat. Virtual hearings and depositions could take place with zero travel time. Some people were more productive at home with zero commute.

By contrast, there were some of us that found certain areas of our practice to be harder. The successful use of technology requires knowledge that takes time to accumulate. Most famously was the poor attorney in Texas who struggled to turn off a Zoom filter that made him physically appear as a cat for a hearing. It was a hazardous tale of letting your young children play with Zoom filters on your work computer. Another case in point was a parolee clearly violating the requirement to remain in the state. The parolee appeared for a Zoom hearing with what he confirmed to the Michigan judge were real palm trees outside his window. Yet another example was the client outside smoking a cigarette while present at the motion for settlement before the judge.

For newly barred attorneys during this time, many still have never physically set foot in a courtroom. This is regretful, as there can be no more valuable learning experience for new lawyers than watching our colleagues argue at motion day and then rubbing elbows with them in the hallway after the fact.

If it was a normal year, we would all look forward to the Negligence Section Annual Social. We would soon all be at Punch Bowl Social in Detroit bowling, playing ping pong and enjoying

libations. Instead, regretfully, we haven't physically been in the presence of our colleagues for too long, and we haven't been able to share a handshake or a drink in what seems like forever.

When I think about the typically joyous annual fete co-hosted by the Negligence Section Young Lawyers, the Michigan Association for Justice and the Michigan Defense Trial Counsel, I am sure that I am not alone when I say that the sense of isolation is profound. Yet there is a crack of light now emerging that perhaps that will be our reality next year. As the vaccine roll out continues, we hold out hope that the end of our isolation is near.

Nonetheless, regardless of your experience level as an attorney, we all learned and experienced something new over the past year -- and we can really benefit from sharing those new experiences with our colleagues. As AngelList investor Naval Ravikant wisely said: "Figure out what you're good at and start helping other people with it; give it away. Pay it forward. Karma sort of works because people are very consistent. On a long enough timescale, you will attract what you project."

So please come share your new experiences with your colleagues and reconnect virtually at this year's Negligence Section Stay at Home Social on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. This year there will be ten breakout rooms on an array of selected educational and fun topics hosted by an array of new lawyers from both the plaintiff and defense bars:

- No show talk...just having fun – Room Host: Kyle Smith
- Electronically Stored Information & New Court Rules - Room Host: Emily Grace Thomas
- New 2020 Michigan Court Rules – Room Host: Thomas Worsfold
- Virtual Mediation – Room Host: Elyse Hyde
- Virtual Depositions – Room Host: Kenneth Lee
- Virtual Motion Practice/Hearings – Room Host: Brandon Schumacher
- Virtual Arbitration – Room Host: Anthony Nardone
- Virtual Case Evaluation – Room Host: Nate Harrington
- Virtual Trials – Room Host: John Hohmeier
- General Networking/Making New Connections – Room Host: David Porter

Members of the State Bar of Michigan Negligence Section can attend for free. If you are not yet a member of the section, for \$50 you can become a section member and join us as we share and learn from each other about our new experiences from this past year. Until then, stay safe and well.

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