

Negligence Law Section

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**News from Our Valued Partner, the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA),
Michigan Chapterⁱ**

“ABOTA - The Annual Summer Conference and National Board Meeting Banff, Canada”

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In July, a contingent of the Michigan Chapter of ABOTA attended the Annual Conference in Banff. The venue was fantastic as the beauty of Banff is unmatched. Take a look:



The invited speakers were varied and phenomenal. Michael Leizerman spoke about “The Zen Lawyer”; Dave Dravecky, the Major League baseball pitcher who lost his pitching arm to cancer, gave a moving talk about finding purpose; and Georgetown Law Professor Steven Vladeck, author of the book “The Shadow Docket,” had a conversation with our group about the Rule of Law, the attacks on our federal judiciary, and our democracy.

We gathered that evening for a barbecue with great food, rousing music, and line dancing — not to mention, a visit from a strikingly handsome eagle.



The National Board meeting was illuminating as to the impact ABOTA has around the country and the world. For example, between 2012 and 2016 contributions of ABOTA members refurbished schools and built a water system for children in the Berber villages near Marrakech, Morocco. During that same time, ABOTA partnered with the International Academy of Trial Lawyers to build a dormitory for a secondary school for girls from the nine mountain villages near Marrakech. Tragedy struck in 2023 when an earthquake severely damaged both the dormitory and the schools. At the 2025 National Board meeting, we learned that ABOTA members once again stepped up and our donations rebuilt these facilities for the children.

There also was a report on the 2025 Civics Conference ABOTA just completed in Pennsylvania. As a part of that conference, ABOTA sponsored a teacher from Troy, Michigan to attend the Teacher's Law School program. The Law School equips teachers with the information and resources to "cultivate an understanding and appreciation of the American judicial systems among their students." <https://www.abotacivics.org/teachers-law-school>. The teachers' reactions were unanimously positive.

Watch this short video recap to see how the experience rekindled their passion for teaching civics to young people: <https://vimeo.com/1100778568>.

In addition, we learned about the upcoming Journalist Law School which will be held at the end of this month in Los Angeles which ABOTA sponsors, as well as the 2025 ABOTA National Trial College which takes place in August. (Take a look at the program planned for the National Trial College here: <https://abotami.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Advanced-National-Trial-College-2025.pdf>.)

At ABOTA's Annual Fall Conference, which will be held in Austin in October 2025, ABOTA will present "The Next Generation Jury Summit: How the 21st Century has Reframed Trials." Every ABOTA member is invited to these annual conferences, and I would urge our Michigan members to head to Texas this Fall and grab a seat at the Summit. National ABOTA also has active committees that focus on Judicial Independence and Amicus opportunities. Of critical note in times like these, the ABOTA Amicus Committee has been planning for briefing in the Perkins Coie case. Please remember that your Michigan Chapter has a Rapid Response Team. Our Michigan Chapter has already stood up and spoken out on your behalf against the repeated efforts to undermine our

federal judiciary. The comments can be found on the Chapter's website at <https://abotami.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Special-Press-Release-Freid.pdf>.

Please contact me or any of the Executive Officers if you learn of unwarranted verbal assaults on our judiciary as ABOTA-MI will continue to directly confront and condemn challenges to the Rule of Law and civility as they arise.

Back to Banff -- there was golf and a cruise, and the evening Gala on the last night of the meeting where the camaraderie among members was more than apparent.

ABOTA is a wonderful organization comprised of only those litigators with the highest skill and the greatest civility. Be proud to be a member. Be active and take advantage of the great opportunities we enjoy. To that end, remember that National is coming to Michigan in July of 2026 for the Annual Summer Conference and National Board meeting. Detroit offers a tremendous venue for music, baseball, dining, and riverfront vistas. The Conference details are not yet confirmed, but please mark your calendars now to attend and welcome National to Detroit. Let's show the folks from the other Chapters around the country what a great group we have here!

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ⁱ “ABOTA is an invitation-only national association of over 7,000 highly experienced trial lawyers and judges dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the Seventh Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right to civil jury trials. ABOTA's primary goal is to educate the American public about the history and value of the right to trial by jury, and it is dedicated to elevating the standards of skill, integrity, honor, and courtesy in the legal profession.” [American Board of Trial Advocates Michigan | To Promote the Art of Advocacy And the Efficient Administration of Justice](#)