

FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Newsletter of the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit

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**FHCMD TO RECOGNIZE
HON. JULIAN A. COOK, JR.,
ATTORNEY JUDITH LEVY,
AND ATTORNEY STEVE TOMKOWIAK
AT FOURTH ANNUAL
ATTORNEY APPRECIATION RECEPTION
APRIL 6, 2011**

There has been no shortage of members of the legal profession who have come forward to help support and enforce state and federal fair housing laws. This year the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit (FHCMD) will honor three of those persons whose efforts have helped to ensure fair and equal housing opportunities in the metropolitan Detroit area. They will be honored at the FHCMD's Fourth Annual Fair Housing Attorney Appreciation Awards Reception to be held Wednesday evening (5:30 - 7:30 PM), April 6, 2011 at the Detroit Historical Museum in Detroit.

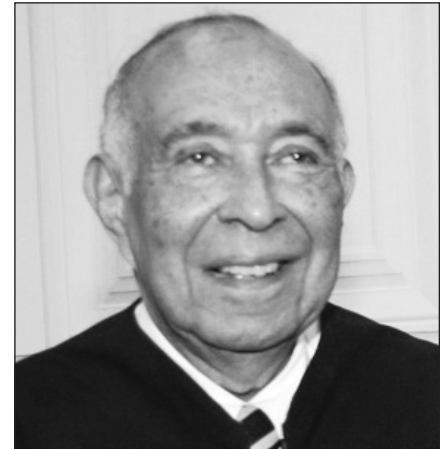
The honorees are:

- **Julian A. Cook, Jr., Senior Judge, United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.**
- **Judith Levy, Assistant U.S. Attorney and Director of the Civil Rights Unit for the Eastern District of Michigan.**
- **Steve Tomkowiak, a Solo Practitioner, FHCMD Cooperating Attorney and Instructor at the National Fair Housing Academy.**

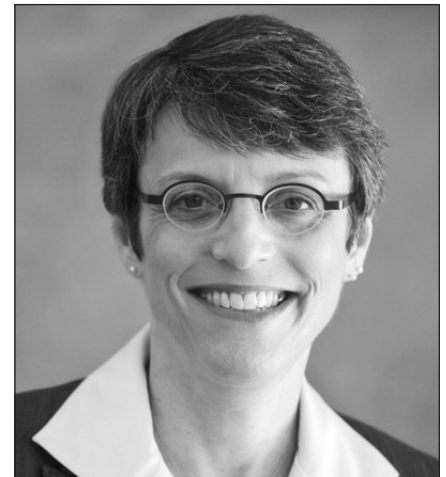
Previous Attorney Appreciation Receptions have honored two Federal Judges; Hon. Damon J. Keith and Hon. Victoria A. Roberts, two law firms; Miller Canfield Paddock and Stone, PLC, and Lewis & Munday, PC, and three private practice attorneys; Saul A. Green (now Deputy Mayor of Detroit), Mark H. Magidson a Solo Practitioner and Abraham Singer, Senior Partner at Pepper Hamilton LLP.

The FHCMD has recognized that without assistance from members of the legal profession fair housing laws would be nothing more than statements of good intention. Thanks in large part to the persistence of members of the legal profession fair housing laws are being enforced, persons who have suffered from the unlawful discrimination by some housing providers are recovering some of their damages, and housing providers are learning that fair housing laws need to be respected and followed.

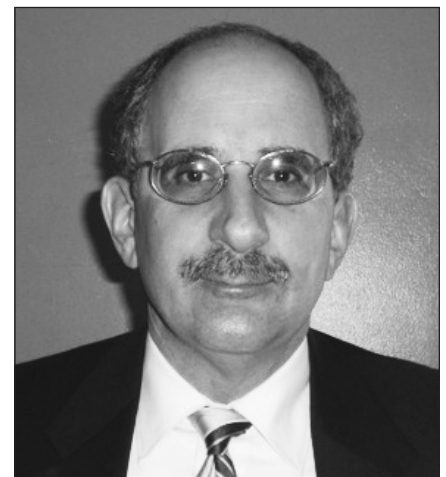
Persons wishing to attend the Reception can reserve a ticket (at \$50/person) by contacting the FHCMD by phone (313-963-1274), FAX (313-963-4817), Email (fhcdet2@yahoo.com) or by mail at the address noted on the first page of this newsletter. There is plenty of free parking at the Detroit Historical Museum (at 5401 Woodward in Detroit) and light, but very tasty refreshments prepared by Golden Spice Catering will be available for those attending.



Hon. Julian Abele Cook, Jr.



Assistant U.S. Attorney Judith Levy



Attorney Steve Tomkowiak

FHCMD CASE UPDATES

The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit (FHCMD) extends its thanks and appreciation to the plaintiffs, testers, witnesses and attorneys who have assisted the cause of fair housing by participating in the following litigations. It is understood that in all cases reported in this newsletter the defendant, unless noted otherwise, denies the allegations of discrimination made by the plaintiff and, in "settled" cases, the parties have agreed to resolve the case without a final determination by a jury or court. Some of the tests and investigations conducted by FHCMD were paid for with funds made available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

CLOSED CASE

Anonymous v Siepierski

FHCMD Cooperating Attorney Chui Karega has informed FHCMD that the plaintiffs in this case, an inter-racial couple that has asked that their names not be used in this newsletter, have accepted a \$100,000 offer from the defendants and their complaint has been dismissed. The plaintiffs had alleged that they were denied the opportunity to purchase a house in Grosse Ile, Michigan owned by the defendants, because of race (see *FH News*, Vol. 32, #1). Grosse Ile is an island in the Detroit river, a suburb of Detroit, part of Wayne County and, according to the 2000 Census, a community with 10,894 residents, 10,374 (95.2%) of whom are white and 39 (0.4%) are African American.

After making a full price offer (in excess of \$200,000) the plaintiffs alleged that the defendants informed them that the house was not going to be sold, but would be rented, but not to the plaintiffs. Testing by the FHCMD disclosed that the house was still available for sale to both an African American and white tester, but at a significantly lower price with a lower down payment amount for the white tester. A lawsuit was filed in Federal District Court before Hon. David M. Lawson.

Negotiations for a settlement proceeded, but were not successful until a few weeks after the FHCMD testers were deposed by the defendant's attorneys. The very significant \$100,000 settlement soon followed. Congratulations to the plaintiffs, to Attorney Karega, and to FHCMD Board member, Evelyn Caise, who referred the plaintiffs to FHCMD.

NEW CASE

Counterclaim to

Lakeridge Condominium Association, Inc. v Lynn Dazer

FHCMD Cooperating Attorney John Obee, a Partner in the Wood, Kull, Herschfus, Obee and Kull law firm, has informed FHCMD that he has filed a Counterclaim to an eviction proceeding against Lynn Dazer in Michigan's 16 Judicial Circuit Court. Ms. Dazer alleges in her complaint that she is a person with a disability who has need for a service animal (a dog) in order to live at the Lakeridge Condominium Association on an equal basis with other residents. In 2004, shortly after Ms. Dazer moved into her unit she was informed of a "no pet" policy. Ms. Dazer produced a letter from her therapist confirming the need for the service animal, prompting, as Ms. Dazer remembers, a phone call from a Condominium Board member advising her that the Association would allow her to continue to have her dog with her. In spite of that verbal assurance, the Association continued to threaten her with eviction and request additional medical support, which she provided, for the need for a service animal.

Readers of this newsletter may recall that in 2009 the plaintiffs and defendant in *Lindner and Cambridge v Lakeridge Condominium Association* (see *FH News*, Vol. 32 #1) settled a similar "assistance animal" disability discrimination lawsuit brought against the same Condominium Association that is now trying to evict Ms. Dazer. Besides paying an undisclosed payment to the plaintiffs, the Association agreed to a change in the Association's policy in relation to requests for "assistance animals" for person with disabilities. According to Attorney Obee, the Association is now claiming that Ms. Dazer does not have a disability and therefore an "assistance animal" is not needed. The litigation, before State Circuit Court Judge Peter J. Maceroni, continues.



Award recipients Vernon Shadd, Doretha Ardoin, Lawrence Walls, and for Village Green, Mirriam Livingstone

FOUR HONOREES RECOGNIZED AT FHCMD's 13th ANNUAL FAIR HOUSING LEADERSHIP AWARDS RECEPTION September 21, 2010

The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit (FHCMD) was pleased to recognize the fair housing actions of four honorees at the Center's 13th Fair Housing Leadership Awards Reception on September 21, 2010. The four recipients were:

Doretha Ardoin, a Realtor with Re/Max Sun Quest and one of the pioneers of fair housing training for members of the real estate sales industry. Since she received her real estate license in 1978 Ms. Ardoin has provided fair housing training in the Grand Rapids area and throughout Michigan, while increasing employment opportunities for minorities and women within the housing industry. The Award was presented to Ms. Ardoin by FHCMD Board members, Dr. E'toile Libbett and Attorney John Obee.

Vernon Shadd, a former researcher for the Michigan Speaker of the House and a former employee of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, recently retired from his position with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) where he directed that agency's fair housing and equal opportunity program. He worked closely with the Michigan Fair Housing Center's to encourage housing providers associated with MSHDA to follow fair housing laws. The award was presented to Mr. Shadd by his former supervisor at MSHDA and current FHCMD Board member, Attorney Margaret L.M. Brown.

Village Green is a 90 year old firm that manages over 35,000 rental units in 140 communities in 14 states, that is proud of its long commitment to fair and equal housing opportunities. Since 1993 FHCMD has provided fair housing training to over 2,000 Village Green employees, and three Village Green executives have been members of the FHCMD Board of Directors. Current Village Green Vice President and FHCMD Board member, Mirriam Livingstone, accepted the award for Village Green, presented by FHCMD Board Vice-Chairperson, Attorney Emily C. Hall.

Lawrence Walls, a retired Detroit Public School teacher and a retired FHCMD tester was presented with a Marvin Thomas Service Award, presented to former FHCMD testers who performed outstanding testing services for FHCMD. Mr. Walls was a tester in well over 100 FHCMD tests, with evidence from several of those tests critical to the successful resolution of at least five housing discrimination lawsuits. FHCMD Board member Bradley Hoth presented the award to Mr. Walls.

FHCMD Board Chairperson, Attorney Noel J. Saleh, served as the Moderator for the Reception, and extended special thanks from FHCMD to the following sponsors of the Reception:

(continued on page 4)

"THANK YOU" TO 2010 SUPPORTERS OF THE FAIR HOUSING CENTER OF METROPOLITAN DETROIT

The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit (FHCMD) expresses its thanks and appreciation to the many individuals, organizations, foundations, businesses, housing providers, financial institutions and government agencies that provided support, in many ways, to the work of the organization in 2010. This "Thank You" has been extended in previous years but only listed the names of organizations and contractors as supporters. This year the list of supporters now includes many of the individuals who have made financial, or other significant contributions to the work of the FHCMD. The contributions and contracts for fair housing services makes it possible for FHCMD to make a positive impact for fair and equal housing opportunities in the metropolitan Detroit area. THANK YOU!!!

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FHCMD ANNUAL MEETING, BOARD AND STAFF NOTES

The Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit (FHCMD) held its 34th Annual Meeting on October 27, 2010. Recognized with Certificates of Appreciation at the meeting were the Honorary Co-Chairpersons of the FHCMD's 2010 Membership/Contribution Drive Anthony J. Barker, Sr., CEO of Barker Associated Management and Robert Beale, President and Owner of Premier Property Management. Re-elected to three year terms on the FHCMD Board of Directors were: Attorney Margaret L.M. Brown; Benjamin Davis, III; Louistine Larry, J.D. and Board Secretary; Dr. E'toile L. Libbett an Executive Committee member; and John (Jack) C. Schwab. At its November, 2010 and January, 2011 meetings the Board, with thanks and appreciation for her assistance to FHCMD, reluctantly accepted the resignation from the Board of Attorney Michelle P. Crockett and elected the following people to Board positions: Angelita Espino, Hector Hernandez, Lucy Maddox, Freda Sampson and Vernon Shadd. These persons join the following as members of the FHCMD Board of Directors for 2011: Attorney Noel J. Saleh, Chairperson; Attorney Emily C. Hall, Vice-Chairperson; Mirriam Livingstone, Treasurer; Kae Bradley, Executive Committee; Bradley Hoth, Executive Committee; and additional Board members James Bush, Evelyn Caise, Attorney John Obee, Dr. David Snider, and Terry Ward.

Many members and friend of the FHCMD have learned of the serious illness of FHCMD Legal Services Coordinator, Michael Olshan. He was hospitalized in October, 2010 with lung/breathing problems, spent one month in Intensive Care at Harper Hospital in Detroit and a second month at a rehab hospital associated with Sinai Grace Hospital in Detroit. After surprising almost everyone, including the medical staff at Sinai Grace, Mike has resumed breathing without artificial support and, in January, 2011 returned to his home with his wife Faye and has returned to work, via phone and inter-net, with the FHCMD. Faye Olshan, as readers of this newsletter may recall, was seriously ill in December, 2009, and Mike provided assistance in her recovery. Mike now credits Faye for his amazing recovery. Mike can be reached via Email at: mickey.ocean@gmail.com. The FHCMD extends Best Wishes to Mike and Faye.

In other staff news, for some unexplained reason the FHCMD learned in October, 2010 that the FHCMD Coordinator of Investigations and Testing, Albert Young, married his fiancée of three years, Kelley Boddie, in July, 2010. Why the three month delay in informing his FHCMD friends? Ask Al. Al is a very lucky husband. The FHCMD extends Congratulations to Al and Kelley.

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