

# Firm attorneys among legal industry 'Rising Stars'

*Michigan Super Lawyers*  
November 7, 2012

In its annual review of the state's top young attorneys, *Michigan Super Lawyers* magazine has awarded 11 lawyers from Plunkett Cooney, one of Michigan's oldest and largest law firms, its "Rising Star" honor.

Attorneys Hilary A. Ballentine, Celeste M. Dunn, Paul J. Dwaihy; Gary W. Francis, Jeffrey S. Hengeveld, Marc P. Jerabeck, Chiara Mattieson, Megan P. McKnight, Lauren B. McMillen, George A. Netschke, IV and Elaine M. Pohl were recently notified of their "Rising Star" mention in the 2012 edition of *Michigan Super Lawyers* magazine.

Published by Thomson Reuters, *Michigan Super Lawyers & Rising Stars* compiles its annual list of rising stars based upon a rigorous selection process that combines a statewide survey of practicing attorneys with independent research conducted by the publisher's attorney-led research staff. To be considered a Rising Star, candidates must be either 40-years old or younger or licensed to practice for 10 years or less. No more than 2.5 percent of eligible attorneys receive the "Rising Star" designation.

Factors considered in evaluating candidates include, but are not limited to: verdicts and settlements; representative clients; experience, honors and awards; special licenses and certifications; bar and or other professional activity; *pro bono* and community service; scholarly lectures and writings; and other achievements.

A first time Rising Star is attorney Lauren B. McMillen of the firm's Bloomfield Hills office. McMillen concentrates her practice in the area of insurance coverage, which includes such issues as environmental contamination, construction defect and high-exposure product liability claims. She is admitted to practice in Michigan and Indiana's state and federal courts, as well as in Illinois. A graduate of Michigan State University College of Law in 2007,

McMillen received her undergraduate degree from the James Madison College at Michigan State University in 2004.

Hilary A. Ballentine is a member of the firm's Bloomfield Hills office who concentrates her practice exclusively in the area of appellate law with an emphasis on general liability, municipal law, construction liability, constitutional law and medical liability cases. Ballentine is admitted to practice in Michigan's state and federal courts. A *magna cum laude* graduate from the University of Detroit Mercy School of

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Law in 2006, she received her undergraduate degree, *with high distinction*, from the University of Michigan – Dearborn in 2003.

Celeste M. Dunn, a senior attorney in the firm's Litigation Department, focuses her practice in the areas of family law and domestic relations. Dunn has helped clients resolve a variety of family law matters, including, but not limited to, divorce litigation, custody and parenting time disputes, child support, spousal support, change of domicile actions, enforcement and contempt proceedings, personal protection orders and pre and post-nuptial agreements. A member of the firm's Bloomfield Hills office, she is admitted to practice in Michigan's state and federal courts. Dunn received her law degree from Wayne State University Law School in 2000, and she received her undergraduate degree from Michigan State University in 1994.

In the area of medical malpractice, Paul J. Dwaihy has been named a "Rising Star" in 2008, 2010 and 2011, and again this year for his work in this complex area of practice. A member of the firm's Mount Clemens office and Medical Liability Practice Group, Dwaihy concentrates his practice on defending medical malpractice litigation with a particular emphasis on birth trauma cases. A *cum laude* graduate from Michigan State University College of Law in 2003, he received his undergraduate degree from University of Michigan in 2000.

A member of Plunkett Cooney's Labor and Employment Practice Group, Gary W. Francis has once again this year been recognized as a "Rising Star," an honor he first received in 2008. Francis focuses his practice primarily on traditional labor law, employment law and employee benefits (ERISA). A member of the firm's Bloomfield Hills office, Francis received his master's degree in Labor Law from Wayne State University Law School in 2007 and both his undergraduate and law degrees from Michigan State University.

Jeffrey S. Hengeveld has been recognized as a "Rising Star" in 2008, 2010 and 2011 in the area of professional liability: defense. He exclusively represents attorneys, accountants and real estate professionals in professional liability litigation with various types of underlying issues ranging from bankruptcy to motor vehicle no-fault law. Hengeveld is a 2003 *magna cum laude* graduate of Michigan State University College of Law, and he received his undergraduate degree from James Madison College at Michigan State University in 2000.

Previously recognized as a "Rising Star" in 2009, Marc P. Jerabek is a member of the firm's Banking, Bankruptcy & Creditors' Rights Practice Group. Jerabek has particular experience in commercial transactions; creditor's rights; real estate law, including evictions, quiet title, boundary disputes, dangerous building proceedings, curing title defects; commercial litigation and collections. He graduated from Wayne State University Law School in 2004 and received his undergraduate degree from Michigan State University in 2000.

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Chiara Mattieson, a member of the firm's Litigation and Commercial Litigation practice groups, was named a "Rising Star" for the past four consecutive years for her expertise in business litigation and bankruptcy and creditor/debtor rights. Mattieson concentrates her practice on litigation defense in the areas of premises, motor vehicle, general liability, retail law and business law. Her clients include insurance companies, national retail chains, financial institutions and other businesses involved in litigation. Mattieson received her law and undergraduate degrees from Wayne State University in 2003 and 2000, respectively.

Also named a "Rising Star" for the past three consecutive years is Megan P. McKnight, an attorney in Plunkett Cooney's Banking, Bankruptcy and Creditors' Rights and Commercial Litigation practice groups. Recognized for her work in business litigation, McKnight focuses her practice primarily in the area of banking and lender liability disputes. She has extensive experience representing financial institutions and corporate clients in disputes ranging from loan defaults and workouts to complex collection actions and real estate litigation. McKnight received her law degree, *cum laude*, from University of Michigan Law School in 2003 and her undergraduate degree from Kalamazoo College, *cum laude* and with honors, in 1999.

A member of the firm's Construction Law and Banking, Bankruptcy and Creditors' Rights practice groups, George A. Netschke, IV, has been recognized for four consecutive years as a "Rising Star" in the area of construction litigation. Another of his primary practice areas is banking law where he has particular expertise with commercial real estate loan workouts, including mortgage foreclosures, deed in lieu transactions, receiverships, sales through receivers, REO sales and resulting litigation. Netschke received his law degree from Wayne State University Law School in 2001 and his undergraduate degree from James Madison College at Michigan State University in 1996.

Rounding out Plunkett Cooney's list of "Rising Stars" for 2012 is Elaine M. Pohl, a partner in the firm's Bloomfield Hills office. Pohl has been selected as a "Rising Star" for her experience and expertise in the area of insurance coverage. Pohl represents insurance companies in litigation involving complex insurance coverage disputes. A *cum laude* graduate of Indiana University School of Law in 1999, she received her undergraduate degree, magna cum laude, from Villanova University in 1996.

Established in 1913, Plunkett Cooney employs more than 160 attorneys in nine Michigan cities, and one office each in Columbus, Ohio and Indianapolis, Indiana. The firm, which provides a range of transactional and litigation services, has achieved the highest rating (AV) awarded by Martindale-Hubbell, a leading, international directory of law firms. The firm has also been recognized for several consecutive years as one of southeast Michigan's top workplaces.

*For more information regarding Plunkett Cooney's 2012 "Rising Stars," contact the firm's Practice Development Manager John Cornwell, at (248) 901-4008; jcornwell@plunkettcooney.com.*



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