

**Federal Bar Association
Eastern District of Michigan Chapter**

**Annual Wade Hampton McCree, Jr.
Memorial Award
March 5, 2012**

**Martin I. Reisig
Attorney**

Martin Reisig, attorney and mediator has served as an Appellate Defender, Federal Defender, Chief of the Economic Crimes Unit of the United States Attorney Office, defense attorney, and adjunct law professor. He is also a past President of the Board and a long time volunteer at the Oakland Mediation Center, as well as past chair of the Oakland County Bar Association's Alternative Dispute Resolution and Criminal Law Committees.

Reisig today is associated with the American Settlement Centers where he guides parties and their counsel towards settling a wide range of civil disputes. At the University Of Detroit Mercy School Of Law he has taught trial practice, evidence, legal ethics and for the last eight years advanced mediation in conjunction with the Mediation Clinic. His students have assisted people in resolving disputes through the Community Dispute Resolution Centers in Wayne, Macomb and Oakland Counties.

Beginning in 1970 at the Appellate Defenders he argued cases before the Court of Appeals and Michigan Supreme Court. In 1972 he joined the Federal Defenders Office representing indigent defendants in federal district and appellate courts. Reisig won the first trial and the first appeal victory for the then new Federal Defenders Office. It was these experiences working with indigent defendants and becoming familiar with prison systems which began Reisig's interest in trying to improve the justice system.

From 1978-84 Reisig served in the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. As Chief of the Economic Crimes Unit he was a recipient of Justice Department special commendations for successful prosecutions of tax, Medicaid, bankruptcy and corruption cases. One significant prosecution led to the conviction of a leading bankruptcy attorney, Irving August, for undermining the blind draw system of selecting judges to bankruptcy cases in our own Bankruptcy Court.

Reisig entered private practice as a criminal defense attorney in 1985. In 1987 he was the first Michigan lawyer honored to be elected a fellow to the American Board of Criminal Lawyers. Reisig has taken on three major causes in pursuit of a fairer justice system.

He began the battle in Michigan to end the draconian "650" mandatory drug lifer law. For over 15 years he was a consistent presence in Lansing, actively educating legislators, organizing colleagues and supporting and giving hope to numerous families of the incarcerated. Almost 90% of those serving life sentences were indigent. Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), a national effort to end mandatory sentencing, began its Michigan effort in his home and then through the efforts of many families, defense attorneys, prosecutors, judges and most importantly then former Governor William G. Milliken the law was finally changed. Reisig in 2003 was presented by FAMM with the Justice Leadership Award for his "...leadership in the fight for sentencing justice in Michigan."

Beginning in 1993 Reisig, as chair of the Oakland County Bar Association Criminal Law Committee, began a highly controversial effort to improve the level of indigent representation in Oakland County. Judges were appointing favored lawyers to cases and many lawyers appeared to receive assignments for avoiding going to trial. Reisig again gathered many colleagues and judicial supporters to lead to significant changes in the assignment system. Today most assignments in Oakland County are based on an assignment system among qualified lawyers. Next Reisig joined the continuing effort to improve indigent representation statewide. The Michigan Campaign for Justice has continued to champion this cause and Reisig was a key drafter of their proposals which included more parity between defense counsel and prosecution resources and increasing the defense role in advocating for programs to reduce recidivism. The American Bar Association and the Michigan Bar Association are actively pursuing the cause of improving indigent representation.

Recognizing the need to slow recidivism Reisig spent years studying Drug Treatment Courts and initiated the coalition in Oakland County to begin Drug Treatment Courts in the county. Today treatment courts are an integral part of the court system throughout Michigan. He was honored as: "The Father of the Oakland County Treatment Court." A plaque presented by the Honorable David Breck (first Oakland County Drug Court Judge) and the drug court team states "...he has persevered in accomplishing that goal (creating a treatment court) and as a result, said Court has been in operation for over a year and had its first graduation ceremony on October 9, 2002...as the conscious of this court, Martin Reisig continues to challenge us. We are eternally grateful to him."

In the category of Alternative Dispute Resolution Reisig is listed in The Best Lawyers in America, Michigan Super Lawyers and Martindale Hubbell (AV- highest rating for last 25 years). He is the recipient of the Oakland County Bar Associations' Distinguished Service Award for 1998 and Leon Hubbard Community Service Award for 2003.

Reisig, a long time Birmingham resident, graduated in 1967 from Oakland University and in 1970 from Wayne State University Law School.