

AAML President's Award for Professionalism Award



During the summer of 2014 the Professionalism and Collegiality Committee was formed by then President-Elect Jim McLaren. This Committee was newly established to study and make recommendations and to present CLE's on professionalism and collegiality. The original Chair of that Committee was Richard Victor, which was Co-Chaired by Tom Ausley. This is the first Academy Committee to address Professionalism and Collegiality.

The Committee began its work in earnest on October 13, 2014 when they adopted a two (2) year plan, with a focus to first present a professionalism and civility CLE at the Panama meeting in March of 2015 and, second, to create an AAML Lawyer's Creed or Pocket Creed to address professionalism and civility issues.



At the Panama 2015 Spring Meeting, a CLE was presented on "Using Better Communication Skills and Techniques to Promote Professionalism and Civility". The Committee worked in conjunction with the CLE Chair, Mitch Karpf. The program coordinators were JoAl Sheridan and Ron Tweel. The presenters were JoAl Sheridan, Richard Victor, Susan Myres, and expert Dan O'Conner, a tactical communications expert.

At the initiative of President Joslin Davis, the Board of Governors, at the Bahamas Spring Meeting in March of 2015, approved the annual presentation of the President's Professionalism Award.

The Committee then worked on soliciting nominations for the first President's Professionalism Award, to be awarded at the Annual Meeting in November of 2016. The general criteria included:

"The recipient of the AAML Professionalism Award is an AAML Fellow who consistently demonstrates a commitment to the practice of Matrimonial Law in a principled manner that is at all times civil, cooperative and respectful to opposing counsel, witnesses, third parties, and the Court.

This Attorney advocates for their client's legitimate interests without using the litigation process as a tool to harass or demean others, and does not respond in kind when others behave acrimoniously. He or she is able to achieve successful results for their clients while maintaining professionalism and civility.

The award recipient is a person of their word, who is trusted by members of the profession and the judiciary alike to practice law with decency and who enjoys a reputation in the community as an attorney of excellent character whose behavior elevates our profession."

Nominations were sought during the ensuing months. Sixteen (16) nominations were made. A sub-committee reduced those 16 excellent nominees down to a final group of five (5) nominations. A report was submitted to the President and Immediate Past President to make the final selection. That selection was made.

At the Open Membership Meeting in Chicago on November 4, 2016, Michigan Fellow Richard Victor was presented with the First Annual President's Professionalism Award. The award was presented by President Joslin Davis, Immediate Past President, Jim McLaren, and Professionalism Committee Chair, JoAl Sheridan. Richard was most gracious in his acceptance remarks, crediting Fellow Cheryl Hepfer for the fine example she set for him and her guidance and mentoring.

In presenting the award to Richard, Immediate Past President Jim McLaren summarized the reasons Richard was selected for the award:

- Richard is the lawyer's lawyer:
- ...the lawyer from whom advice is sought and readily given.
- Richard is Professional and Collegial in every manner.
- Richard is highly regarded by his Chapter, and the Fellows of the Academy.
- Richard always find the time to give back:
- Richard has championed the rights of Grandparents. In 1978 Richard founded the Grandparents Rights Organization;
- Richard founded SMILE (Start Making It Lovable for Everyone);
- "You and Me Make Three"
- Richard's AWARDS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
- 1999 Lifetime Achievement Award (Michigan Family Law Section);
- 2004 Champion of Justice – Michigan State Bar's highest honor;
- AAML CLE Chair, 2004-2007
- 2006 AAML Fellow of the Year;
- Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers;
- Meritorious Service to Children of America Award, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court and Judges;
- Diplomate, American College of Family Trial Lawyers
- 2014 – Chair, AAML Professionalism and Collegiality Committee; and
- Author, Michigan Family Law and Practice.

PERSONAL ACHEIVEMENTS:



Richard has been a dedicated lawyer for the past forty (40) years. Richard has been married to his lovely bride, Denise, for thirty-eight (38) years. Richard is father to three (3) wonderful children and the proud grandfather of three (3) beautiful grandchildren.