JUDGE LOUISE ALDERSON

"If you ask my mother, she'd say while I was watching 'Perry Mason,' but I think it was when I was an assistant prosecuting attorney in Clinton County that I knew I wanted to be a judge."

It was during her time with the Clinton County 65A District Court when Judge Louise Alderson was enticed by the trial process, which led her to pursue a career as a judge.

"Judge Randy Tahvonen of Clinton County had so much information — almost an encyclopedic brain, of legal information. Also, his demeanor in court I just really admired."

Now serving as Chief Judge of 54-A District Court in Lansing, she attributes much of her success to Judge Tahvonen, as well as retired Clinton County Judge Jeffrey Martlew.

"It was his ease of communications with young lawyers in front of him on the bench. He really stressed the opportunity to discuss matters of the law."

With both of these esteemed judges serving as her mentors, it's easy to see how Judge Alderson has been so successful as a district judge and as a leader within the Michigan Judicial Institute (MJI), the Supreme Court's educational division. Judge Alderson's passion for sharing knowledge and appreciation for those who came before her illustrates how MJI not only fosters judicial leadership in the courtroom and in the community, but also encourages judges to serves as teachers and mentors among their colleagues.

Judge Louise Alderson

"For MJI, I have been on various educational advisory committees. I have also done some work in training, including presentations for MJI. Most recently, we did one on pretrial release and pretrial bonds."

According to Judge Alderson, the Educational Advisory Committee has the largest impact.

"It's a group of judges who meet together to make decisions on what type of criteria will be at training sessions for the broader scope of

Judge Alderson understands that mentors matter on the career path and on the bench.

judges. Whether at our annual conference or our regional meetings, we look at what's most important in our courts at that time — where are folks struggling, what are new areas of the law that judges may need a refresher or new ideas on."

Staying involved with the MJI is very important to Judge Alderson.

"We are a high-volume court. We are very rote in a lot of things we do. In order to stay involved with what's on the horizon for us, it's very important to partake in the resources of entities such as the District Judges Association and MJI. It keeps me active; it ensures I am learning 'what's next.'"

In Judge Alderson's court, they are continuously making improvements and taking on new initiatives to better their services.

"We just did a Management Assistance Project (MAP), which was a coordinated effort with the State Court Administrative Office. We looked at case management, our master

calendar — a lot of things. More so, the administrative side of what we do here in the court. That has been a 2016–2017 initiative — we're really trying to get our policies and procedures in place so that as changes come, such as e-filing, we are able to assimilate much more easily into the next phase of the 21st Century court process."

The ongoing efforts of jurists such as Judge Alderson ensure that all Michigan judges have access to abundant resources through the Supreme Court and MJI to help them handle issues in the courtroom, develop as leaders in their communities, and prepare for what lies ahead in the judiciary.

Judge Alderson began her own professional education at Michigan State University, where she earned her undergraduate degree in criminal justice. She then earned her law degree from Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

She has been married to her husband, a semi-retired public relations firm owner, for 15 years. They live in Lansing, with his three children, as well as one "Kitty."⚒

(Left to right)
Judge Louise Alderson,
Judge Michelle Rick of 29th Circuit Court, and Judge Thomas Byerley of Eaton County Probate Court educated reporters about the courts as part of the 2016 MSC Law School for Journalists