

Senate Resolution

SR-29, As Adopted by Senate, March 24, 2015

Senator Proos offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 29.

A resolution commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Whereas, The Michigan Court of Appeals was created by Article VI, Section 1, of the Michigan Constitution of 1963; and

Whereas, The Court of Appeals began operating on January 12, 1965, when the Michigan Supreme Court transferred 365 cases to the nine original judges on the bench, including Chief Judge T. John Lesinski, Chief Judge Pro Tempore John W. Fitzgerald, and Judges Robert B. Burns, John H. Gillis, Donald E. Holbrook, Thomas Giles Kavanagh, Louis D. McGregor, Timothy C. Quinn, and John D. Watts; and

Whereas, At its opening, the Court of Appeals had 45 staff members, including Clerk of the Court Robert L. Dzierbicki, and comprised offices located in Lansing, Detroit, and Grand Rapids; and

Whereas, Since its inception, 82 men and women have served on the Court of Appeals bench, 41 of whom have been elected and 41 of whom have been appointed by the Governor. Of these distinguished jurists, 13 judges have gone on to serve on the Michigan Supreme Court, and three others have subsequently been appointed to the federal bench; and

Whereas, Dorothy Comstock Riley became the first female member of the Court of Appeals, when she was appointed to the bench by Governor William G. Milliken in 1976. Since her appointment, 19 more women have served admirably as judges on the Court of Appeals; and

Whereas, The Court of Appeals has a history of lengthy and dedicated service, with current Judge David H. Sawyer representing the longest term of service on the bench at 28 years and three staff members--Elizabeth Pyzik, Annie Madigan, and Barbara Buckley--all serving the Court for more than 40 years; and

Whereas, The esteemed judges of the Court of Appeals have been remarkably productive over the Court's first five decades. During that time, more than 325,000 cases have been filed with the court, resulting in more than 151,700 dispositive opinions, including 28,300 published opinions reported in the 306 volumes of the Michigan Appeals Reports; and

Whereas, Since its beginning, the Michigan Court of Appeals has distinguished itself as an innovative institution, and its centralized research staff was the first of its kind when Chief Judge

T. John Lesinski introduced it in 1968. More than 1,000 attorneys have started their careers with the Court and have gone on to prominent careers as practitioners, judges, justices, and court administrators, making a remarkable impact on Michigan jurisprudence; and

Whereas, The Appeals Court has also historically embraced technology, implementing a program to accept electronic case records from lower courts in 2010 and executing a voluntary electronic filing system in 2006, through which over 206,000 documents have been filed in approximately 17,500 cases; and

Whereas, In a 2014 report, the Court was recognized by the National Center for State Courts “as fine an example as we have found of business process discipline in the judicial branch ... It is a well-organized, well-run operation that is, to an outsider, quite extraordinary”; and

Whereas, In its first 50 years, the Michigan Court of Appeals has proven to be an august and innovative body comprised of fair-minded and thoughtful jurists who have served the people of the state of Michigan capably and admirably; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative body hereby recognize the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Michigan Court of Appeals and honor the contributions that the Court has made to the state of Michigan and its jurisprudence.