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## PROFILE IN BRIEF

By JOHN MINNIS  
Legal News

### Rita Kostopoulos Fresh Start



Rita  
Kostopoulos

Unlike the movie, Warren attorney Rita Kostopoulos's story doesn't end with a *Big Fat Greek Wedding*. She had already been married and divorced before starting college.

"At age 32," she recalls, "I found myself wondering what I was going to do with the rest of my life."

Working at her family's Greek Coney Island, Kostopoulos put herself through Wayne State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in management (cum laude) and then through Wayne State Law School.

"I always found it a fascinating field," she says when asked why she went into law.

At age 39, Kostopoulos found herself a proud member of the bar. She clerked for Macomb County Circuit Judge James Biernat for a year and looked for a full-time position — and she looked and looked.

"I looked for quite a long time," she says, "but I couldn't find an opening. I thought it was my age."

Working out of her home, she took whatever cases she could through family and friends. Her determination paid off. In 2004, she founded her own firm, Kostopoulos & Associates, and now has five attorneys, and two offices, one in Warren across Van Dyke from the General Motors Technical Center and the other in St. Clair Shores.

"At the time I was very disappointed," she says of the days when she couldn't find a job with a firm. "Now I'm glad it turned out that way."

Originally, the firm took whatever cases came up. In 2004, they began doing bankruptcy cases. Dubbed "The Fresh Start Center Law Firm," Kostopoulos & Associates sees clients seven days a week, Saturdays and Sundays being especially busy.

"It helps them eliminate debt and get on their feet again," Kostopoulos says of her bankruptcy clients. "It's a fresh start."

Now the 47-year-old self-made lawyer's talents are being called upon to revitalize the Hellenic Bar Association, which had gone somewhat dormant since its founding in 1958.

Founded by George Cholack, James G. Pyros and Theodore Souris, the Hellenic Bar Association was created as a way for Greek lawyers to get together. One of the bar's early successes was getting Souris on the Michigan Supreme Court. Appointed and elected in 1960, Souris, at age 33, was the youngest justice to serve on the Michigan Supreme Court and the first Greek.

Other prominent Hellenic Bar Association members include State Reps. Andrew Kandreas and Bob Constan, noted labor arbitrator George Roumell, Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Athina Siringas involved in the Kwame Kilpatrick restitution matter, Wayne County Circuit Judge Eric Cholack, District Judges James Plakas and James Kandreas and Grosse Pointe Farms Councilman Louis Theros.

As its president, Kostopoulos hopes to renew interest in the specialty bar for attorneys of Greek background. She plans to have a Web site and more events.

"We're hoping to bring it back to its glory," she says.

The Hellenic Bar Association will also focus on helping establish the Hellenic Museum of Greece. See **PROFILE**, Page 2

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## Law professor calls immigration system 'broken'

### Wayne State immigration reform lecture mirrors Obama administration's view

By TARYN HARTMAN  
Legal News

Coming on the heels of a pertinent November 13 address on immigration reform from Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Wayne State law professor Rachel Settlage gave her own lecture on the topic last week as the last event in a speaker series sponsored by the law school's new Program for International Legal Studies.

"What both sides agree on is the current system is broken," Settlage told a packed classroom last Wednesday afternoon. "It's broken and it needs to be fixed."

Settlage explained that the current family- and employment-based systems of immigrating into the United States — which boasts the highest rate of immigration into the country than any other nation in the world — are severely crippled by the limited number of visas that can be legally awarded each year, often numbering less than 10,000.

Her sentiments echo that of the current administration, which earlier this month called for Congress to take up comprehensive immigration reform in early 2010. Democratic Representative Luis Guterrez of Illinois will be overseeing the effort in the House and Senators Chuck Schumer and Lindsey Graham will spearhead the Senate initiative, according to a November 14 Wall Street Journal article.

Settlage's lecture addressed a handful of myths surrounding the immigration debate and the approximately 12 million undocumented aliens — 4 percent of the current population — currently living and working in the United States. Among the misconceptions Settlage sought to refute were that undocumented persons take jobs from U.S. citizens, drive down wages and usurp the nation's public benefits.

Rather, Settlage said, the undocumented population has been shown to make little negative impact and in fact be a little benefit to society by consuming goods and services, lowering consumer prices, and contributing and

improving entrepreneurship and other benefits to their immediate communities. Settlage was quick to point out that undocumented individuals and their families simply are not and never have been eligible to access health care and other public benefits, and are in fact often exploited by employers through severely depressed wages.

Undocumented immigrants compose 5.4 percent of the nation's labor force and anywhere between 25 percent and 75 percent of all agricultural workers, Settlage said. In addition to taking low-skill jobs U.S. citizens simply don't want, she added, undocumented workers use "borrowed" or phony Social Security numbers to obtain employment and through payroll taxes annually contribute \$8.5 billion to Social Security in benefits they will never benefit from.

New to Wayne State's faculty this fall, Settlage is an immigration law expert who's worked as an advisor on the topic for the Department of State and most recently taught an immigration rights clinic at the University of Baltimore's School of Law. She's launching a similar Asylum and Immigration Law Clinic

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Wayne State law professor Rachel Settlage is an immigration law expert who joined the faculty this fall.

## Trial Basis



Photo by John Melu

The Association of Defense Trial Counsel (ADTC) conducted its November Membership Meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 10, at Sinsbad's at the River in Detroit. Among those enjoying the evening were (l-r) Charles Trickey of Holm, Killeen, Siefer, Arene, & Hoehn, ADTC treasurer; Kevin Moloughney of Collins, Einhorn, Farrell, & Ulanoff PC, ADTC director; John McSorley of Garan Luow Miller PC, ADTC director; Brian Einhorn of Collins, Einhorn, Farrell, & Ulanoff PC, ADTC past president; Ralph Chapa of Kaufman, Payton, & Chapa PC, ADTC director; Kevin Moffatt of Martin, Bacon, & Martin PC, ADTC past president; Macomb County Circuit Court Judge Diane Druzinski, guest speaker; Jonathan Wayman, ADTC president; Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan Judge Amy Hathaway, guest speaker; David Thomas of Rutledge, Marston, Rabaut, Terry, & Thomas PC, ADTC past president; Monroe County Circuit Court Judge Michael LaBeau, guest speaker; Matt LaBeau of Garan Luow Miller PC, Alicia Siefer of Garan Luow Miller PC; Cynthia Geller of Law Offices of Cynthia L. Geller PLLC; and Daniel Siefer of Holm, Killeen, Siefer, Arene, & Hoehn. According to ADTC President Wayman, the three circuit court judges were there to share their experiences along with what's expected of attorneys in their courtrooms.

## DAILY BRIEFS

### Public Notice

The Wayne County Clerk's Office will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Third Circuit Court Civil, Criminal and Family Divisions will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27 in observance of Thanksgiving. The court will reopen on Monday, Nov. 30.

In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, the 36th District Court will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27. Only criminal arrangements will be conducted.

The Wayne County Probate Court will be closed in observance of Thanksgiving on Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27 and will reopen Monday, Nov. 30 at 8 a.m.

### CLS of Detroit to hold annual Advent Evening of Reflection

The Catholic Lawyer Society of Detroit will hold its Annual Advent Evening of Reflection on Wednesday, Dec. 9 at the Manresa Jesuit Retreat House in Bloomfield Hills. The evening will begin with a dinner at 6 p.m. Followed by a presentation in the Manresa Lounge by Fr. Thomas Ryan, SJ around 7 p.m. entitled "What might the coming of Jesus into our lives mean this Christmas of 2009?" The Evening of Reflection will end with a mass at 8 p.m. celebrated by Fr. Ryan.

The cost of the Evening will be \$35. Checks should be made payable to the Catholic Lawyer Society of Detroit and may be collected

at the door or sent in advance to: Catholic Lawyer Society of Detroit, C/O Lawrence J. Paolucci, Wayne County Probate Court, 1305 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, Detroit, MI 48226.

RSPV by Dec. 2 by emailing Lawrence J. Paolucci at lpaolucci@wcpcc.us or calling (313) 224-5602.

### Polish American Legal Society's annual Christmas party Dec. 4

The Polish American Legal Society (PALS) will celebrate its annual Christmas Party on Friday, December 4, from 6 to 11 p.m. at the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy. For more information, contact Mark Plawecki at (313) 277-7143.

### WBA and Straker to hold annual holiday party Dec. 10

The Wolverine Bar Association and the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association will fellowship at their annual holiday party on Thursday, Dec. 10 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Seldom Blues Restaurant in downtown Detroit. Refreshments and a cash bar will be available. The cost is a \$40 donation (\$25 for WBA members, Straker members, and law students) towards the Wolverine Bar Foundation or Pontiac's Grace Centers of Hope in support of their service to the community. Contact the WBA Office at (313) 962-0250 with any questions.

## IDEAation

### Law firm returns to DPS with 2nd year of entrepreneurship program for teens

By TARYN HARTMAN  
Legal News

Foley & Lardner is back in the Detroit Public Schools with the second year of its Improving Detroit through Entrepreneurship Advancement (IDEA) program, which itself has undergone some improvement and advancement from last year's pilot curriculum.

Designed to teach high-school students how to construct a realistic plan for a new Detroit-based business, the IDEA program is this year offered only at Martin Luther King High School instead of the six DPS career and technical centers that participated in the program's initial installment, primarily to allow for more interaction between the approximately 97 participating students and Foley & Lardner volunteers.

"To get a really good work product by the end of the year, we need to allow for more one-on-one mentoring time," said Marcus Sproe, a Foley patent attorney and self-described "quarterback" of the IDEA program, which was launched after firm attorneys decided to establish a unique means of giving back to the Detroit community. Sproe said the need for more time to establish closer working relationships with the students was the biggest lesson the firm took away from IDEA's inaugural year.

Over the course of the year, IDEA students gather once a month to hear presentations from local business leaders and Foley attorneys on different aspects of creating and maintaining a small business. The program's second session

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