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OPINION

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Valerie Kutz-Otway, Staff Writer

Plaintiffs' attorney Brian J. McKeen is one of the foremost medical malpractice attorneys in Michigan¹— and a Thomas M. Cooley Law School graduate.

McKeen received his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Business Administration from Central Michigan University in 1978, and his J.D. from Cooley in 1982 (Wing Class). He began his career as a law clerk to the Honorable Dorothy Comstock Riley, first at the Michigan Court of Appeals and then at the Michigan Supreme Court. In 1998, McKeen bought out his former partner and started his own firm. McKeen & Associates, P.C., is composed of nine attorneys, two nurses, and a staff of paralegals. One associate, Terry Dawes, also graduated from Cooley (Hooker Class, 1993). While the firm is based in Detroit, it represents clients in both federal and state courts throughout Michigan and the United States.² The firm also represents clients from foreign countries who are injured in mass tort cases like breast implant litigation.³

McKeen repeatedly makes the news for bringing in large medical malpractice verdicts. In 1997, McKeen secured a \$19.8 million award for a young girl whose mental and physical impairments were blamed on a physician failing to follow up on warning signs before the girl's birth.⁴ And in 2001, McKeen won what is believed to be the largest ever medical malpractice verdict in Michigan: a \$55 million judgment against Henry Ford

Hospital Systems for a five-year-old girl who suffered severe brain damage after improper treatment for respiratory arrest.⁵ In 2003, McKeen contributed \$25,000 to the State Bar of Michigan Access to Justice Fund in support of legal aid to the poor. "As a trial attorney, I am compelled by the legal needs that poor people face in their day-to-day lives," McKeen said.⁶ Many persons have legal problems but cannot afford to hire an attorney on an hourly basis. And it would not be feasible for an attorney to take many of these cases on a contingent-fee basis. "Without Access to Justice, these people would be disenfranchised. I think it is important for attorneys to give back to the system for the betterment of others," he added.⁷ McKeen was on the executive board of the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association (MTLA) and lectured frequently on its behalf.⁸ He served as the MTLA state delegate to the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (ATLA), sat on the executive board of the ATLA Birth Trauma Litigation Group, and was an invited lecturer to the litigation group as well as to the ATLA Professional Negligence Section, The National College of Advocacy, and lawyer organizations in places as far away as Colorado and Australia.⁹

McKeen currently serves on the executive boards of the Michigan Association of Justice and the American Association of Justice. He was named one of the Top 10 Lawyers of the Year for 2006 by *Michigan*

Lawyers Weekly, a statewide publication for the legal industry.¹⁰

¹ Robert Ankeny, *A Conversation With: Brian McKeen, McKeen & Associates, P.C.*, Mar. 3, 2008, <http://www.craigslist.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080303/SUB/615729778/1068/-/a-conversation-with-brian-mckeen-mckeen-associates-pc>.

² McKeen & Associates, P.C., <http://www.mckeenassociates.com/> (last visited June 23, 2008).

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Brian McKeen: Medical Malpractice Specialist*, BENCHMARK, Hilary 2002, at 3, available at <http://www.cooley.edu/publications/benchmark/hilary/2002/mckeen.pdf>. [hereinafter BENCHMARK].

⁵ Ankeny, *supra* note 1.

⁶ Archive of the State Bar of Michigan, *Attorney Brian J. McKeen Contributes \$25,000 to Access to Justice Fund*, <http://www.michbar.org/news/releases/archives03/mckeen.cfm> (last visited June 23, 2008).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ BENCHMARK, *supra* note 4.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Ankeny, *supra* note 1.

As the president of Thomas M. Cooley SBA, I know that there have been communication problems with presidents of student groups. To resolve this, I ask that the president of each organization please send an e-mail to mccabep@cooley.edu. This e-mail should contain the name of the organization and the e-mail address and phone number of the president. This will allow me to ensure that each organization receives proper information and updates.

Thank you for your time,
Patrick A. McCabe

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