

Oakland County LEGAL NEWS



UBS

 Wealth Management Services
 Conservatorships • Guardianships • Special Needs Trusts

James C. MacDonald, CFP®
 Sr Vice President--Wealth Mgmt
 248-649-7523
james.macdonald@ubs.com

 UBS Financial Services Inc.
 2301 W. Big Beaver Rd., Ste. 800
 Troy, MI 48064-3300

Kathryn L. Halonen, CFP®
 Investment Associate
 248-637-0239
kathryn.halonen@ubs.com

 CLICK
 HERE

As a firm providing wealth management services to clients, UBS Financial Services Inc. offers both investment advisory services and brokerage services. Investment advisory services and brokerage services are separate and distinct, offer in material ways and are governed by different laws and separate regulations. It is important that clients understand the ways in which we conduct business and that they carefully read the agreements and disclosures that we provide to them about the products or services we offer. For more information visit our website at ubs.com-enr/ubsna. Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, Certified Financial Planner™ and federally registered CFP (with flame design) in the U.S., which it awards to individuals who successfully complete CFP Board's initial and ongoing certification requirements. ©UBS 2019. All rights reserved. UBS Financial Services Inc. is a subsidiary of UBS AG. Member FDIC/SIPC. OUBS-C30839C2

Posted April 6, 2020

[Tweet This](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

A safety net: Civil rights attorney sees need to 'pull together' in response to crisis


DOWNLOAD
 Download a PDF of this paper!

headlines Oakland County

- [Reaching out: Muslim Bar Association extends helping hand to hospital workers](#)
- [Supreme Court postpones April arguments because of virus](#)
- [Invasive carp and COVID-19: Michigan lawmakers forced to make tough decisions](#)
- [State high court revives anti-fracking effort; could get on ballot](#)
- [Campaign asks groups, individuals to pledge to stay at home](#)

headlines National

- [Google parent company's top lawyer leaving amid claims of misconduct](#)
- [Afternoon Briefs: Texas no longer accepting refugees; new San Francisco DA announces round of layoffs](#)
- [Ahead of the Curve: Law School Admissions Amid A Pandemic](#)
- ['A Very Bad Sign for November': Supreme Court Is Assailed for Wisconsin Ballot Ruling](#)
- [Opinion analysis: Court upholds stop of vehicle based entirely on registered owner having revoked license](#)
- [Relist Watch: Kalsarikännit edition](#)

A magna cum laude graduate of the Detroit College of Law, attorney Cary McGehee was a 2009 recipient of the coveted Wade H. McCree Jr. Award from the Federal Bar Association for the advancement of social justice.


 By **Linda Laderman**
 Legal News

With Detroit emerging as one of the country's COVID-19 hot spots, employment and civil rights attorney Cary McGehee, a founding partner of Pitt, McGehee, Palmer & Rivers in Royal Oak, is fielding questions from clients, who, besides the health implications of the coronavirus, are worried about how the economic fallout from the pandemic will affect their ability to make a living.

"We're hearing a lot of fear and anxiety about what's going to happen for them. We're trying to provide as much information as we can," McGehee said, adding that many of her clients work in industries where they have sustained public contact, or where they have been laid off with no definite restart date and are unclear how to access benefits.

McGehee, whose firm also served as co-counsel in a 2014 class action suit that represented Flint residents during the ongoing water crisis, said she is attempting to clarify what the recently passed federal stimulus package means for her clients throughout the state.

"The stimulus package just rolled out so there are a lot of moving parts. To that end, we're advising people to seek legal guidance on how to cope with their individual situations. We're handling these questions pro bono," McGehee said. "The people we're hearing from want to know what to do if they have kids at home and can't come to work, how the stimulus bill applies to them, what to do if they become sick with COVID-19, how to access benefits, and what it means to be categorized as an essential employee."

McGehee's hope is that employers will look to historical evidence that points to the difficulties that exist when laid off workers can't access benefits or, after a layoff, attempt to re-enter the workforce.

"We start off with the assumption that employers are acting in good faith, trying to do the best they can to provide for their employees because we know from history and experience when you lose people it's really hard to get them back into the workforce," McGehee said. "To the extent that there is the ability to keep them on the payroll, it's best for everyone, including the employers. The stimulus package affords employers with some financial assistance so they can continue to employ folks during this crisis."

McGehee, who also represents women incarcerated in Michigan, said this population is among those who have the least control over their health and environment.

"We're in contact with women who are currently incarcerated in the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility, the only women's facility in Michigan. It's terribly overcrowded with over 2,000 prisoners," McGehee said of the prison west of Ypsilanti.

In a correctional facility like Huron Valley, that already has severe health hazards, the coronavirus makes what was already a dangerous situation even more life threatening, McGehee noted.

"A group of attorneys, which I am part of, represent women in a class action at Huron Valley who were diagnosed with scabies, a problem the MDOC (Michigan Department of Corrections) knew of for two years before they dealt with it. By that time, it was out of control," McGehee said. "To add to that, the prison has an antiquated ventilation system that should have been replaced years ago. Women are getting respiratory

problems among other illnesses related to that.”

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's latest executive order that details COVID-19 protocols for “entry into Michigan Department of Corrections facilities and transfers to and from Department custody,” is a positive step, but more needs to be done, said McGehee.

“These are some of the most vulnerable people because obviously they can’t social distance. Not only is there a lack of health care within the system, but there are staff coming into the facility with inadequate protection, who are required to touch the prisoners, to pat them down, and to transport them. There is just a lot of opportunity for this to be a major health crisis within the prison itself,” McGehee said.

“So, I was happy to see Governor Whitmer’s March 29th executive order addressing COVID-19 protocols for jails and juvenile detention centers,” McGehee added. “While I’m glad she did that, the reality of the situation is they just don’t have all the resources the executive order outlines. Unfortunately, it doesn’t address releasing some vulnerable prisoners because of overcrowding. If you think it’s bad on the outside in terms of health care providers, it’s 100 times worse in the prison environment.”

For those who question why Detroit has an increasing number of coronavirus cases, McGehee said an uncertain economic situation for many of the city’s low-income residents has become an even bigger factor with the onset of COVID-19.

“Poverty is a big reason why Detroit is a hot spot,” McGehee said. “That’s one of the reasons why I would urge other attorneys who are out there representing companies to recognize the need for all of us to pull together, to provide some kind of a safety net for dedicated loyal employees.”

“If I were representing a corporate client I’d say, ‘Think creatively and make sure you’re doing the right thing. Use the federal funds you’re getting to help your employees, not to enrich your stakeholders.’ That’s going to make the difference between us recovering and not.”

Subscribe to the Legal News!

<http://legalnews.com/subscriptions>

Full access to public notices, articles, columns, archives, statistics, calendar and more

Day Pass Only \$4.95!

One-County \$80/year

Three-County & Full Pass also available

Comments

No comments

Leave a comment