

had previously worked closely with some members of the ABA leadership, which had planned a national program several months before and, as a result, they shared some helpful tips, tricks, and practices. Still, she was tasked with methodically scaling down what the ABA had done and translating its lessons learned to a vision for what would work best for the ADR section. Zena quickly established a planning meeting schedule and worked with Section Administrator, Mary Anne Parks and former Section Chair, Bob Wright to coordinate interviewing and selecting a videographer. In effect, Zena sketched an outline of what she perceived possible and brought it back to Mike and the other Skills members to mold, shape, and implement without any pride-in-authorship. Aside from leading the Plan B task force, Zena also coordinated the Section's family-law segment, assisted with developing the Diversity and Inclusion Action Team's presentation, and, as an added value, designed and directed our now popular *Networking Rooms*.

Kudos are due to all contributors whose hard work and assistance help bring this production to its successful fruition, and we give special recognition to Mike and Zena for their vision and fortitude in planning and executing such an excellent Annual Conference. Our hats are off to you—bravo, bravissimo!

ADR Section members will be happy to learn that Mike, Ed, Zena, Scott, Bob, Mary Anne, and many others are currently planning another spectacular online conference for October 8-9, 2021, so be on the lookout for registration information. ❄️

About the Author

Betty R. Widgeon is a retired Michigan District Court judge and the 2020-2021 Chair of the SBM ADR Section. She is the founder and president of Widgeon Dispute Resolution, PLC, which specializes in arbitration, mediation, factfinding, and consulting, focusing specifically on labor, employment, and consumer cases. She also serves as a member of the Special Master Hearing Officers' Roster for the Michigan Supreme Court. She has over 25 years of experience resolving civil and criminal disputes. Her practice is now national in scope and covers a wide variety of issues and industries. Judge Widgeon is a member of the National Academy of Arbitrators and the National



Lee Hornberger

Appreciation for Doug Van Epps

By Lee Hornberger

Douglas A. Van Epps left the State Court Administrative Office as of the end of May 2021. Doug has been one of the outstanding shining lights of alternative dispute resolution in Michigan for over thirty years. Doug has been Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution for the Michigan Supreme Court since 1989. Doug is nationally and internationally recognized as a leader in the field of dispute resolution.

As Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution, Doug oversaw the development, implementation, and evaluation of alternative dispute resolution efforts in Michigan's trial courts and administered Michigan's Community Dispute Resolution Program.

As the first and only Director of that office, he shaped the position in the 32 years he has held it, moving from creating a system of volunteer mediation centers around the state to being an articulate and powerful force for dispute resolution within state government and throughout the Michigan court system.

His 32-year tenure has been focused on designing, implementing, and evaluating alternative dispute resolution systems in Michigan's trial courts. Doug oversaw the Community Dispute Resolution Program, through which child protection, agricultural, special education, guardianship, general civil, and domestic relations mediation services were developed. Doug helped lead the Permanency Planning Mediation Program, Michigan Agricultural Mediation Program, and Michigan Special Education Mediation Program. Doug routinely convened and facilitated important task forces created to develop court rules, policies, and procedures that implement ADR services in the trial courts and coordinated activities designed to implement and evaluate ADR initiatives.

Doug coordinated the Michigan Supreme Court Task Force on Dispute Resolution that led to the creation of a series of dispute resolution court rules. Doug oversaw implementation of those rules and initiatives to integrate alternative dispute resolution processes into trial court case flow management practices.



Doug Van Epps

By overseeing development of the [MI-Resolve](#) online dispute resolution program, Doug, along with colleague Michelle Hilliker, made ODR available to Michigan residents 24/7 through laptops, smartphones, and tablets.

Doug is a member of the American Bar Association's Dispute Resolution Section, the State Bar of Michigan's ADR Section, and the National Association for Court Management. He routinely authors articles and presents on ADR topics at judicial education programs, law schools, and national conferences. He has served on the editorial board of the *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*. Doug previously served as an assistant prosecuting attorney in Lansing.

He received his JD from Wayne State University Law School in 1980 and his BA in political science from the University of Michigan in 1977.

Doug has been an active member of the State Bar's ADR Section. In addition, he has been a loyal and dedicated friend to all of us and to the ADR Section. He is always a delight to work with. He brings honor to our profession.

In 2019, he received the George N. Bashara, Jr. Award from the State Bar's ADR Section. The **George N. Bashara Jr. Award** (*a/k/a* the Chair's Award) is given in recognition of exemplary service to the Section and its members. He was a regular contributor of excellent articles to the Section's *The Michigan Dispute Resolution Journal* and presentations at the Section's Annual Meeting and ADR Conferences.

All of us in the ADR Section wish Doug the best of luck in the future. Doug has been a great professional colleague over the years. He did an awesome job and he will be missed. ❄️❄️

About the Author

Lee Hornberger was Chair of the State Bar of Michigan's Alternative Dispute Resolution Section, Editor of The Michigan Dispute Resolution Journal, a member of the State Bar's Representative Assembly, President of the Grand-Traverse-Leelanau-Antrim Bar Association, and Chair of the Traverse City Human Rights Commission. He is a member of the Professional Resolution Experts of Michigan and a Diplomate Member of The National Academy of Distinguished Neutrals. He is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

He has received the ADR Section's George N. Bashara, Jr. Award for exemplary service. He is in The Best Lawyers of America 2018 and 2019 for arbitration, and 2020 and 2021 for arbitration and mediation.

He is on the 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 Michigan Super Lawyers lists for alternative dispute resolution. He received a Second Tier ranking in Northern Michigan for Arbitration by U.S. News – Best Lawyers® Best Law Firms in 2021. He received a First Tier ranking in Northern Michigan for Arbitration by U.S. News – Best Lawyers® Best Law Firms in 2019 and 2020.

While serving with the U.S. Army in Vietnam, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and Army Commendation Medals. The unit he was in was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm.