



MDTC Annual

EXCELLENCE IN DEFENSE AWARD

NOMINATIONS PACKET

PO Box 66  
Grand Ledge, MI 48837  
Phone: 517-627-3745  
Fax: 517-627-3950  
[www.mdtc.org](http://www.mdtc.org)

*\*highest achievement award ever granted\**

## Excellence in Defense Award Prior Recipients

1993 Robert E. Rutt, Plunkett & Cooney, P.C. \*  
1993 Richard G. Smith, Smith & Martin, P.C. \*  
1994 Richard B. Baxter, Dykema Gossett \*  
1994 John E. S. Scott, Dickinson Wright \*  
1995 Earl J. Cline, Cline, Cline & Griffin, P.C. \*  
1995 David Coey, Dickinson Wright PLLC \*  
1996 John D. Peacock \*  
1997 L. Roland Roegge-Smith, Haughey, Rice & Roegge  
1998 John L. Collins, Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C. \*  
1999 William D. Booth, Plunkett & Cooney, P.C. \*  
1999 John W. McGraw, McGraw, Martin & Heyn P.C. \*  
2000 D.J. Watters, Plunkett & Cooney, P.C. \*  
2001 Robert S. Krause, Dickinson Wright, P.L.L.C. \*  
2002 William W. Jack, Jr., Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge  
2003 James R. Kohl, James R. Kohl P.C.  
2004 John P. Jacobs, John P. Jacobs P.C. \*  
2005 Webb A. Smith, Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C.  
2006 Richard G. Leonard, Rhoades McKee P.C.  
2006 Charles C. Collison, Sr., Collison & Collison P.C. \*  
2007 Lawrence G. Campbell, Dickinson Wright P.L.L.C.  
2008 J. Michael Fordney, Fordney & Coffeey  
2008 Walter P. Griffin, Cline, Cline & Griffin P.C.  
2009 James E. Lozier, Dickinson, Wright, P.L.C. \*  
2010 Peter L. Dunlap, Fraser Trebilcock Davis & Dunlap P.C.  
2010 Edward M. Kronk, Butzel Long  
2011 + Jonathan E. Martin, Martin, Bacon & Martin, P.C. \*  
2011 James N. Martin, Martin, Bacon & Martin, P.C.  
2012 Brian D. Einhorn, Collins, Einhorn, Farrell & Ulanoff P.C.  
2013 Kathleen A. Lang, Dickinson Wright P.L.L.C.  
2013 Steven B. Galbraith, Galbraith Delie & James P.C.  
2014 Robert P. Siemion, Siemion Huckaby PC  
2015 Thomas W. Cranmer, Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, PLC  
2015 James P. Feeney Dykema Gossett, PLLC  
2016 J. Brian MacDonald, Cline Cline & Griffin, P.C.  
2016 Ralph F. Valitutti, Kitch Drutchas Wagner Valitutti & Sherbrook  
2017 Scott L. Mandel, Foster Swift Collins and Smith PC  
2018 Patrick F. Geary, Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge PC  
2019 Cheryl L. Chandler, Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge PC  
2020 Patricia Nemeth, Nemeth Law, PC  
2021 Michael Sullivan, Collins Einhorn Farrell PC  
2022 Wilson A. Copeland, II, Grier Copeland & Williams PC  
2023 James G. Gross, James G. Gross PLC  
2023 John T. Eads, Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani  
2024 Jose' T. Brown, Cline Cline & Griffin PC  
2024 Dora A. Brantley, Foster Swift Collins & Smith  
2025 Richard Kitch, Kitch Attorneys and Counselors, PC and Marcy Matson, Matson Law Offices  
2026 Jenna Wright Greenman, Kitch Attorneys and Counselors, PC  
2026 Megan Norris, Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone PLC

The firm at the time of receiving the award

\* *Deceased*

+ *Awarded posthumously*

Updated 7-1-2025 OC

## **THE EXCELLENCE IN DEFENSE AWARD**

### **I. History and Purpose**

Established in 1992, the Annual Michigan Defense Trial Counsel (MDTC) "Excellence in Defense Award" is designed to honor those civil defense counsel who have over a number of years through their professionalism, intelligence, creativity, judgment, personality, sensitivity, civility, advocacy skills, community involvement and efforts to educate younger attorneys, promoted the practice of the defense bar and the representation of their clients both in and outside of the courtroom. It also recognizes contributions beyond their normal roles as an advocate.

Your participation in the nominating process is vital, and ensures that all of those who deserve recognition will have the opportunity to be duly considered for this prestigious award.

### **II. Nomination Process and Format**

The sponsor of a nominee must be a current MDTC member in good standing. The sponsor may nominate anyone who meets the following criteria:

- (1) the person has spent at least 75% of his/her time in the defense of civil lawsuits; and
- (2) the person has not spent more than 10% of his/her time representing plaintiffs in civil lawsuits.

It is not necessary that the nominee be currently living and/or practicing law.

To ensure the individual given the Excellence in Defense Award is worthy of this honor, the Board of Directors has adopted criteria that will be considered in both nominating, and selecting, the honoree. The criteria are as follows:

- A. Number of cases tried or in which appeals were handled.
- B. Creativity and intelligence in the handling of defense matters.
- C. Advocacy skills as reflected in the defense of complex legal matters.
- D. Good judgment in the preparation of trial matters and appeals.
- E. Civic, community and bar activities.

Any materials supporting a nomination should include a completed (see attached) one page nomination form. Please send all of the nomination materials to the following address:

MDTC, PO Box 66, Grand Ledge, MI 48837  
Phone 517-627-3745; Fax 517-627-3950  
info@mdtc.org

### **III. Procedure for Selection of Award Winner and Presentation of Award**

- A. A committee entitled Awards and Nomination Committee for Excellence in Defense Award shall be selected by the Board of Directors to review all nominations submitted by any MDTC sponsor. From the nominations submitted, the nomination committee shall select the five most deserving candidates as semi-finalists for the award.
  
- B. The names of the five nominees along with the memorandum relating to the action taken by the nomination committee, shall be submitted to the past presidents to review and then select three finalists for the award. A memorandum reflecting the action of the past presidents shall then be submitted to MDTC's Board of Directors for selection of the award winner.

Updated 6-23-17 Board Meeting edits were recommended and approved.  
Updated 11-5-2020 Board Meeting edits were recommended and approved.

**NOMINATION FORM FOR  
MDTC's ANNUAL  
"EXCELLENCE IN DEFENSE" AWARD**

The deadline for nominations is October 1<sup>st</sup>.

All nominations should be sent to MDTC at: [info@mdtc.org](mailto:info@mdtc.org)

If you have any questions, contact MDTC at 517-627-3745.

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Law Firm (If applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Practice \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Admission to Bar \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Years Practiced \_\_\_\_\_

Names of law firms and/or other legal positions held and period when associated with such firm(s) and when working in such other legal position.

**Sponsored By:** \_\_\_\_\_

Law Firm Name (If applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a current member of MDTC? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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