

Five Plunkett Cooney attorneys named industry 'Rising Stars'

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Emily M. Ballenberger; Gary W. Francis; Jeffrey S. Hengeveld; George A. Netschke, IV; and David R. Stechow of Plunkett Cooney, one of the oldest and largest law firms in Michigan, were recently named "Rising Stars" by *Michigan Super Lawyers* magazine in the 2008 issue published by Law & Politics Media, Inc.

The publisher of *Michigan Super Lawyers & Rising Stars* compiled its lists of rising stars based upon a rigorous selection process that combines a statewide survey of practicing attorneys and independent research by the publisher's attorney-led research staff. To be eligible for inclusion in Rising Stars, a candidate must be either 40-years old or younger or in practice for 10 years or less. No more than 2.5 percent of eligible attorneys are named to the Rising Stars list.

Factors considered in evaluating candidates include, but are not limited to: verdicts and settlements, representative clients, experience, honors and awards, special licenses and certifications, bar and or other professional activity, *pro bono* and community service, scholarly lectures and writings, and other outstanding achievements.

In the area of personal injury defense: medical malpractice, Emily M. Ballenberger was acknowledged for her work. A member of the firm's Mount Clemens office and Medical Liability Practice Group, Ballenberger focuses her practice primarily on the defense of physicians, physician's assistants, hospitals, and other healthcare professionals involved in medical malpractice or section 1983 litigation. A *magna cum laude* graduate from Wayne State University Law School in 2004, she received her undergraduate degree, with highest honors, from Michigan State University James Madison College in 2001.

FIVE PLUNKETT COONEY ATTORNEYS NAMED INDUSTRY 'RISING STARS' Cont.

Gary W. Francis, a member of Plunkett Cooney's Labor and Employment Practice Group, was also recognized as a rising star. Francis currently focuses his practice primarily on traditional labor law, employment law and employee benefits (ERISA). A member of the firm's Bloomfield Hills office, his previous work experience includes complex litigation. He also represented clients in administrative law matters; and mass tort litigation. Francis received his master's degree in Labor Law from Wayne State University Law School in 2007 and both his undergraduate and law degrees from Michigan State University.

Also included on the Michigan Super Lawyers Rising Stars list were Plunkett Cooney attorneys George A. Netschke, IV and David R. Stechow for their construction litigation experience. A member of the firm's Bloomfield Hills office, Netschke is an attorney in the Construction Law Practice Group who focuses his practice on representing design professionals, general contractors, construction managers, subcontractors and owners in both commercial and personal injury litigation. He also represents product manufacturers and suppliers in product liability litigation. Netschke received his law degree from Wayne State University Law School in 2001 and his undergraduate degree from James Madison College at Michigan State University in 1996.

David R. Stechow, a member of the firm's Bloomfield Hills office, focuses his practice in various areas of complex litigation, including construction law, product liability and fire and property damage litigation. Stechow defends builders, contractors, management companies and manufacturers in state and federal courts. He represents his clients in complex litigation matters involving property and personal injury claims resulting from construction deficiencies or fires and explosions in residential, commercial and industrial settings. Many of these cases include property destruction or serious injury or death. Stechow attended Southern Methodist University and received his bachelor's degree in 1992 from Michigan State University. He received his law degree in 1996 from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law.

Also a member of the firm's Bloomfield Hills office, Jeffrey S. Hengeveld, has been recognized for his professional liability defense practice. Hengeveld focuses his practice primarily in the area of professional liability with an emphasis on claims against attorneys, accountants and real estate professionals. He defends attorneys in legal malpractice actions with various types of underlying cases, including environmental law, collections, bankruptcy, Michigan No-Fault Law, medical malpractice, real estate law, divorce and family law, wills, estates, and trust law and banking law. His accountant malpractice matters typically involve claims of failing to detect fraud. In the area of real estate, Hengeveld defends professional liability claims against title companies, property inspectors and real estate agents and brokers. A *magna cum laude* graduate from Michigan State University - Detroit College of Law in 2003, Hengeveld received his undergraduate degree from Michigan State University, James Madison College in 1999.



FIVE PLUNKETT COONEY ATTORNEYS NAMED INDUSTRY 'RISING STARS' Cont.

Established in 1913, Plunkett Cooney employs more than 150 attorneys in nine Michigan cities, Columbus, Ohio and Indianapolis, Indiana. The firm has achieved the highest rating (AV) awarded by Martindale-Hubbell, a leading, international directory of law firms and has received several awards naming the firm a top place to work in the legal industry.

For more information regarding Plunkett Cooney's "Rising Stars," contact the firm's Practice Development Manager, John Cornwell, at (248) 901-4008.

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