Divorce in Michigan
An Informational Guide

Presented By:

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INTRODUCTION TO DIVORCE

The following material is intended to answer some of your questions about divorce proceedings, generally. It is not intended to answer specific questions about your particular case, as each case is different.

The dissolution of a marriage may be a traumatic experience, and your attorney, or attorneys, are well aware of the emotional involvement of the parties. Though we are not behavioral specialists, we attempt to relieve your anxiety by attempting to assist in solving the problems which confront you during these proceedings.

In order to properly represent you, it is absolutely necessary for you not only to provide us with all the facts concerning your matter, but we must know your wishes, and we welcome your viewpoints. Withholding information from your lawyer may effect the outcome of your case, so we advise you to be completely candid with us. Remember, that a fiduciary relationship exists (one of trust and confidentiality) between attorney and client.

Please be fully advised that, though we will counsel and advise you throughout the entire proceedings, the final decisions regarding your case must be made by you. Our experience has shown that most divorce cases are settled, which means in those matters, the parties eventually, through their attorneys, reach an agreement which is placed upon the court`s record. Never agree to something you do not understand nor something you feel you are **forced** to agree to. Your consent to an agreement must be voluntarily made, after consultation with your attorney. After an agreement is placed upon the record, or in writing, it is extremely difficult to vacate and you should consider it binding on you and your spouse.

Finally, as your representatives, we are here to advise and inform you, provide you with the options and alternatives available to you, process your divorce matter, assist you in decision-making, and cooperate with you in attempting to obtain the best possible results in your behalf.

GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

Michigan is known as a "no-fault" divorce state; however, the words, "no-fault," may be misleading. If the parties reach a final settlement on all issues, fault is not a factor. If there is a dispute as to alimony, property, support, parenting times, or custody, fault may become an active ingredient in resolving these issues. It is for that reason that we may go over with you a history of the indiscretions of the parties.

Basically, Michigan has a single ground for divorce, which is as follows: "There has been a breakdown of the marriage relationship to the extent that the objects of matrimony have been destroyed and there remains no reasonable likelihood that the marriage can be preserved." (In court, some judges require a detailed showing of the marital breakdown; ie., that the matrimonial objects have been destroyed and there is no chance for a reconciliation. Other judges require only one brief recitation of the facts or merely an assertion that your marriage is dead, and you will never live with your spouse as Husband and Wife.)

In Michigan, we have provided also for Separate Maintenance actions which are seldom processed. The procedure is relatively the same as in a divorce matter, except that neither party may remarry. Further, the law provides that if one party institutes a Separate Maintenance suit, and the other party files for divorce, the court will only consider the case as a divorce matter and cannot enter Judgment of Separate Maintenance.

We also have annulment proceedings in Michigan, which invalidate a marriage. Marriages may be void from the inception, or are voidable depending on the circumstances. The grounds include incapacity to marry such as insanity, bigamy, under age, or any type of fraud that goes to the heart of the marriage. Parties desiring an annulment must not cohabit, after discovered the impediment to their marriage. If you have any questions about Separate Maintenance or annulment, please advise us of same, as the following material basically concerns divorce (though there may be similarities with Separate Maintenance and divorce actions).

DIVORCE PROCEDURE

The initial filing of a divorce case may include the following documents:

1. **Summons**. This notifies the other spouse that a suit has been started and he or she has 21 days to respond or a default may be taken.
2. **Complaint**. This document states the names of the parties, where, when, and by whom you were married, names and birthdays of children (if any), wife's and husband's names before marriage, length of residence in county and state, date of separation, grounds for divorce, a brief statement as to property, and the relief requested. The Complaint does not and should not contain a statement of all of the claims of one party against the other.

A party must reside in Michigan for 180 days and in the county where suit is started for at least 10 days or the Courts will not have the power to grant a divorce.

3. **An Affidavit of Service and Return of Service** is filed when service is made. We will work with you, and, if possible, your spouse to make service of the papers in as civil a manner as possible.
4. **Affidavit Under the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act**. This informs the court as to information about your children.
5. **Statements to the Friend of the Court**. This is to inform the Friend of the Court of the essential facts. This is not necessary in cases where Friend of Court services are not required.
6. **Record of Divorce**. This is a statistical record required by the state.
7. **Injunctions**. These are only requested where needed to restrain spouse from committing certain acts. Your attorney will explain this procedure to you in detail and ask if you require an Injunction.
8. **Ex Parte Orders**. In rare cases, these may be obtained for temporary custody, support, etc. An objection timely filed to the ex parte order will cause the Court to examine whether an ex parte order was appropriate.
9. **Affidavit for Ex Parte Order**. A sworn statement that the facts stated in order to obtain the ex-parte order are true.
10. **Filing Fee of $100.00**. This fee is the cost of filing the divorce. An additional fee may be is required if the Friend of the Court services are needed. There is also the cost of serving papers and entry of Judgment. Later on, there may be other costs for services such as services from appraisers, actuaries, accountants, depositions, etc. We will not incur these fees unless we believe it is necessary in pursuing effective representation of you in the divorce.
11. **Notice of Hearing, Motions and $20.00 Filing Fees.** Interim relief or motions require a hearing. A motion is a plea to the court for some type of relief. A notice of hearing merely advises that a hearing will be held.

The Plaintiff is the party who starts the lawsuit and the Defendant is the person against whom the suit is filed. All proceedings in the divorce matter are finally resolved by the Family Court in which the case is started. The Friend of the Court is an arm of the court which is used to assist the Court and the parties. The Friend of the Court usually makes recommendations as to alimony, support, custody, and parenting time rights. The Friend of the Court also collects and distributes alimony and child support payments. They also may seek enforcement of court orders dealing with support, parenting time rights, and alimony. The court may use the Friend of the Court for other miscellaneous duties such as conciliation of custody and parenting time disputes.

The law suit for divorce is initiated by the filing of a Complaint in the Family Court. Along with the filing of the Complaint, other documents which are necessary are also filed with the Family Court at that time. The Family Court Clerk validates the Summons and returns the Summons and Complaint to our office for effecting service of the papers upon the Defendant. It is necessary that these papers be "served" upon the Defendant. There are numerous ways of properly serving these papers. The classic method of service was by having them delivered by a sheriff. There are additional methods that are more "civil" of serving these documents on the opposing spouse. Arrangements can be made for service by having the party pick up the papers, by delivering the papers to the other party and having them sign a "receipt" or other methods which are perhaps more palatable then the conventional method of service by the sheriff.

After the Complaint and Summons are other documents are served, the Defendant may file an answer to the Complaint which is, in effect, a paragraph by paragraph response to the Complaint. Once the answer is filed, the case is contested. If no action is taken by the Defendant, an order of default may be entered, indicating the Defendant's lack of response, and the matter becomes an uncontested divorce case. The Defendant may desire not only to answer the complaint, but desire to file his or her own Complaint. This is known as a Counter-Claim and this must be answered by the Plaintiff.

A divorce cannot be granted in less than 60 days. Where there are minor children the parties must wait 6 months. The 6-month period may be waived upon a proper showing of special circumstances, warranting same; however this is seldom done. No divorce is granted without a court hearing as to the truth of the statements made in the Complaint. A brief hearing is necessary even if the matter is uncontested.

Temporary orders for custody, support, alimony, mortgage payments, medical payments, parenting time, injunctions, and other relief may be requested at any time during the time you start your case and a Judgment of Divorce is entered. A temporary injunction restrains a party from doing something. There are two types of injunctions dealing with domestic violence; one authorizes immediate arrest; the other provides for an appearance before the judge to determine what action should be taken (your lawyer will explain other differences upon request, if the injunctive order is disobeyed).

Temporary orders of support and alimony (if appropriate) may be entered. Generally, interim alimony and support is based on needs and ability to pay. The lifestyle of the

parties is also taken into consideration. In regard to child custody disputes, you will be advised to study and consider the factors listed in the Child Custody Act (please ask for a copy).

Attorneys Fees. There is statutory, court rule, and case law authority for the opposing party being required to pay all or a portion of the attorneys fees of the other party. The circumstances associated with this award vary from case to case. Primarily, these awards are designed to equalize the representation of the parties. While in the appropriate case we will seek to secure whatever attorneys fees can be obtained from the other side, you should not rely on those amounts being ordered or being paid if ordered.

During the Pendency of the Divorce

This period is usually spent in defining the issues and attempting to resolve them. We also attempt to find the net worth of the parties and the general financial status of the family. Interrogatories (written questions) may be sent to the other side requiring answers under oath from the recipient which may, in part, request complete financial data. Depositions (cross examination before a court reporter) may be taken to obtain further information from the other spouse or those that have the needed information. Appraisers, actuaries, (if pensions are involved), accountants or behavioral specialists may be used (with the client`s prior consent). Together, we will set the goals you wish to obtain. This will not be done hastily, but you will be given opportunity to study the proposed settlement. The attorney will advise you as to the likelihood of acceptance of your proposals or what a court may do.

Domestic Relations Mediation

If the efforts by the parties and their attorneys to resolve the parties' differences in divorce are unsuccessful, the Court will commonly order the property, alimony and other non-child custody or support related matters to a qualified mediator to assist the parties in securing a resolution to these matters. The Domestic Relations Mediators are specifically trained and designated lawyers qualified to help the parties and their attorneys in these disputes. Commonly attorneys will agree as to a particular mediator or the Court will simply designate one of the qualified mediators to act in this capacity.

The mediation process is a process which is extremely well suited to assist in resolving issues in domestic relations cases. After each of the attorneys for the parties have accumulated sufficient information to fully understand and set forth the positions of the parties, the attorneys will prepare and present to the mediator a summary of the history of the marriage, background on the parties, details as to assets and a proposal for resolution of the issues. After submission of these summaries, the mediator conducts a rather informal mediation hearing or meeting in an effort to bring the par-

ties together with their attorneys to resolve all or some of the issues. The mediation process presents a very real and viable opportunity to bring resolution to the divorce case at a significantly reduced economic and emotional expense to the parties.

If the parties can not resolve all of the issues of their case through mediation, the mediator is responsible for preparing a non-binding recommendation on the unresolved issue(s). If there remain unresolved issues after mediation, the Court will conduct a trial as to the unresolved issues.

Most domestic relations mediators are attorneys who are paid by the parties on an hourly fee for their services. These fees are usually equally divided between the parties and are usually billed at a somewhat lesser rate than the mediator would charge for legal services to their own clients.

Occasionally, under rather special circumstances, the parties and their attorneys may agree to have "binding" mediation. If this prospect is considered, the impact of this decision should be seriously discussed and considered with your attorney.

Finally, as noted above, domestic relations mediation does not apply to child custody disputes, unless the parties and their attorneys all agree to submit custody to a domestic relations mediator.

If settlement is reached, the parties will be asked to sign a settlement agreement containing all the provisions of the settlement; or, they may be asked to approve the final Judgment. Further, the parties may be required to approve the settlement in court, before the Judge, after it is placed on the record.

FRIEND OF THE COURT CONCILIATION CONFERENCE

For many years the Courts in Mid-Michigan counties would commonly enter child custody and child support Orders to the first party to file a divorce or custody case. This was done even without allowing the other party to have his or her position heard on these issues. The Courts have resolved that this former practice was, on occasion, unfair and may have the effect of polarizing the parties. As a result many courts are now referring these matters to the Friend of the Court for a meeting of the parties with a qualified Friend of the Court employee. The Friend of the Court Conciliator will acquire information from the parties and attempt to workout an agreement as to the handling of custody, support and matters related to the children on an interim basis until the conclusion of the divorce. If the parties are able to agree to an Order on these matters, the Friend of the Court will prepare an Order to be agreed to by the parties and submitted to the Court. If the parties are unable to reach agreement on these issues, the Friend of the Court will make a report and recommendation to the Judge and that will be the Court's Order unless objections are promptly filed by the party that does not agree with the recommendation. The Court will then decide the contested issues.

The conciliation meeting is an important event in the divorce process. It is important that you promptly respond to requests for information and meetings with the Friend of the Court. Please advise your attorney as soon as the Friend of the Court Conciliation meeting is set by the Friend of the Court so the handling of the meeting can be fully discussed.

It is the practice of the Friend of the Court and the Courts that attorneys are not present or involved in this Conciliation Conference. While it is possible to have your attorney present, past experience has suggested that having the parties' attorney present is not helpful.

The Friend of the Court conciliation process is now being used to address other Friend of the Court issues such as post judgment requests for increase or decrease in child support, alimony or changes of custody or domicile of the minor children.

JUDGMENT

The Judgment of Divorce is the most important document you will receive. After a settlement is reached and/or the case is tried, the Judgment of Divorce will be entered by the court, as your final decree, granting a divorce. It will also contain clauses dealing with such matters as alimony, custody, child support, parenting time, pension rights, insurance, dower rights, property settlement and other miscellaneous clauses. If a settlement has been reached, you must carefully read and examine this Judgment, and have your attorney explain it to you before you approve it.

You are not divorced until the Judgment is signed by the Judge and filed with the Clerk of the Court.

ALIMONY

Alimony is a sum of money paid by one spouse to another spouse for the support and maintenance of that spouse. The factors that are required to be considered by the court in awarding alimony are as follows:

1. The past relations and conduct of the parties.
2. The length of the marriage.
3. The ability of the parties to work.
4. The source and amount of property awarded to the parties.
5. The age of the parties.
6. The ability of the parties to pay alimony.
7. The present situation of the parties.
8. The needs of the parties.
9. The health of the parties.
10. The prior standard of living of the parties and whether either is responsible for the support of others.
11. General principles of equity.

Regular alimony is usually taxable to the recipient, and is deductible by the payor. The phrase "payment until death," must be part of the alimony clause, if it is to be considered as taxable alimony.

Another type of alimony, referred to as Alimony in Gross, has all the attributes of a property settlement.

There are many tax consequences and restrictions in regard to alimony and alimony in Gross, which should be explained to you by us or your accountant. As tax laws and their interpretation continually change, as well as State laws and their interpretations, it is important to have a full understanding of the tax implications of your divorce.

Alimony is usually paid through the office of the Friend of the Court. This enables a party to obtain an accurate record of these payments. Also, it makes it easier to request assistance from the Friend of the Court in the event that payments are not forthcoming, or if a spouse denies receiving said payments.

Enforcement of alimony payments is usually instituted by an Order to Show Cause. The procedure will be explained to you, by your attorney, upon request.

CHILD SUPPORT / DEPENDENCY EXEMPTION

Under present federal law, the custodial parent is entitled to take the minor child or children, as dependents, for all tax purposes unless there is an agreement to the contrary. The parties may agree that the non-custodial parent shall have this allowance and enter this agreement into the Judgment. If the non-custodial parent is entitled to the allowance by the Judgment, that parent must obtain each year, from the custodial parent a signed Form 8332, which must be filed with the non-custodial parent`s other federal income tax forms.

Child support is modifiable on the same basis as alimony. This support is usually ordered until the minor reaches the age of 18 years, or completes his or her high school education, whichever event occurs latest, or, in exceptional circumstances, until the child is 19-1/2. Enforcement of payments is the same as for alimony.

Calculation of the amount of child support that is to be paid by the non-custodial parent to the custodial parent is a complex matter. The law requires that the Court consider two principal factors. These factors are (a) the needs of the minor children, and (b) the ability of the respective parties to pay support. It is clear that both parties are obligated to help support the minor children. Presently in use in Michigan are Michigan Child Support Guidelines that have been developed by the Michigan Friend of the Court Bureau. These guidelines, now required to be used, provide for a calculation as to the appropriate level of support to be paid by one parent to the other for the minor children. These guidelines attempt to take into consideration the anticipated ability of each of the parties to earn funds and the respective needs of the children. These factors also take into consideration outside income and other factors. Our staff has the capability of calculating what would be anticipated in the form of child support award based on the circumstances of your case. If you have questions about child support, please feel free to ask.

If there is an arrearage of child support payments, medical expenses, etc., during the pendency of the divorce action the Judgment of Divorce must contain a provision preserving this arrearage. The same provision holds true for any monies owing under any temporary order. In order to preserve a temporary order, it must be so ordered in the Judgment of Divorce. If it is not so ordered, it is canceled.

CHILD CUSTODY

This issue is the most emotional and traumatic part of most divorce cases. There is sole custody, joint custody, and many other forms. The basis for determining child custody is "what is in the best interests of the child." Due to the extensive nature of custody disputes and the laws involved, this subject is best left to an in-depth discussion with us. You are advised to read and study the child custody law, a copy of which will be given to you upon request.

A party involved in a child custody matter should become acquainted with the Child Custody Act of 1970, and study and be prepared to give their reasons for wanting custody pursuant to the following factors:

(a) The love, affection, and other emotional ties existing between the parties involved and the child.

(b) The capacity and disposition of the parties involved to give the child love, affection, and guidance and to continue the education and raising of the child in his or her religion or creed, if any.

(c) The capacity and disposition of the parties involved to provide the child with food, clothing, medical case or other remedial care recognized and permitted under the laws of this state in place of medical care, and other marital needs.

(d) The length of time the child has lived in a stable, satisfactory environment, and the desirability of maintaining continuity.

(e) The permanence, as a family unit, of the existing or proposed custodial home or homes.

(f) The moral fitness of the parties involved.

(g) The mental and physical health of the parties involved.

(h) The home, school, and community record of the child.

(i) The reasonable preference of the child, if the court considers the child to be of sufficient age to express preference.

(j) The willingness and ability of each of the parties to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing parent-child relationship between the child and the other parent, or the child and the parents.

(k) Domestic violence regardless of whether the violence was directed against or witnessed by the child.

(l) Any other factor considered by the court to be relevant to a particular child custody dispute.

When there are custody disputes, the parents must be advised that joint custody may be considered by the court. The court shall determine whether joint custody is in the best interest of the child by considering the following factors:

(1) . . .

(a) The factors enumerated in the above.

(b) Whether the parents will be able to cooperate and generally agree concerning important decisions affecting the welfare of the child.

(2) If the parents agree on joint custody, the court shall award joint custody unless the court determines on the record, based upon clear and convincing decisions affecting the welfare of the child.

(3) If the court awards joint custody, the court may include in its award a statement regarding when the child shall reside with each parent, or may provide that physical custody be shared by the parents in a manner to assure the child continuing contact with both parents.

(4) During the time the child resides with a parent, that parent shall decide all routine matters concerning the child.

(5) If there is a dispute regarding residence, the court shall state the basis for a residency award on the record or in writing.

(6) Joint custody shall not eliminate the responsibility for child support. Each parent shall be responsible for child support based on the needs of the child and the actual resources of each parent. If a parent would otherwise be unable to maintain adequate housing for the child and the other parent has sufficient resources, the court may order modified support payments for a portion of housing expenses, even during a period when the child is not residing in the home of the parent receiving support. An order of joint custody, in and of itself, shall not constitute grounds for modifying a support order.

(7) As used in this section of the law, "joint custody" means an order of the court in which one or both of the following is specified:

(a) That child shall reside alternately for specific periods with each of the parents.

(b) That the parents shall share decision-making authority as to the important decisions affecting the welfare of the child.

PARENTING TIME

Parenting time is generally granted to the non-custodial parent. The Judgment may state that general parenting times are granted and leave it up to the parties to decide the dates; or, specific parenting time hours and dates may be written into the Judgment. If long distances must be traveled to exercise this parenting time, some arrangements can be made concerning the circumstances and the cost of same.

The issue of co-parenting or parenting time for non custodial parents is a complicated matter. The Legislature has said that parenting time shall be awarded consistent with the best interests of the children. The law also allows that a child has a right to parenting time with the child's parents except if it is proven by clear and convincing evidence that parenting time would endanger the child's physical, mental or emotional health. The statute also sets forth the factors to be used by the Court in determining the frequency, duration and type of parenting time. They include:

(a) The existence of any special circumstances or needs of the child.

(b) Whether the child is a nursing child less than 6 months of age, or less than 1 year of age if the child receives substantial nutrition through nursing.

(c) The reasonable likelihood of abuse or neglect of the child during parenting time.

(d) The reasonable likelihood of abuse of a parent resulting from the exercise of parenting time.

(e) The inconvenience to, and burdensome impact or effect on, the child of traveling to and from the parenting time.

(f) Whether the visiting parent can reasonably be expected to exercise parenting time in accordance with the Court Order.

(g) Whether the visiting parent has frequently failed to exercise reasonable parenting time.

(h) The threatened or actual detention of the child with the intent to retain or conceal the child from the other parent or from a third person who has legal custody. A custodial parent's temporary residence with the child in a domestic violence shelter shall not be construed as evidence of the custodial parent's intent to retain or conceal the child from the other parent.

(i) Any other relevant factors.

PROPERTY SETTLEMENT

The parties usually arrive at a settlement of all their property rights after negotiation or after mediation. If settlement is not reached, the matter will be decided by the court after the trial is concluded. Again, you are advised that you must be absolutely sure that you understand and accept the settlement as written, or placed on the record in open court, as property settlements are not modifiable, except in cases of fraud, clerical error, mistake, or gross unfairness.

Enforcement of property settlements may be made through provisions provided in the Judgment by execution, show cause, garnishment, etc. We will explain these procedures to you, upon request.

In determining property issues, the court will usually consider the following: age of the parties, health of the parties, sources of the property, length of the marriage, how the property was accumulated, needs of the parties, needs of the children, earning ability and capacity of the parties, fault of the parties, and other equitable factors.

ATTORNEY FEES

Attorney fees are based on the Legal Canons of Ethics, a copy of which will be furnished to you upon request.

As we have no way of knowing how much time must be spent on your case, we cannot estimate with specificity what your ultimate fee will be at the conclusion of your case. No minimum or maximum fee will be quoted. Our fees are based, pursuant to the aforementioned Canon, on a number of factors, which include: the amount and nature of the services rendered, the time, labor and difficulty involved, the character and importance of the litigation, the amount of assets and value of the estate affected, and the requisite professional skill and expertise exercised by us as well novelty and difficulty of the questions involved and the results obtained. An hourly rate will be quoted to you by us, which may be helpful in assessing the amount of fees due. You will also be responsible for disbursements made on your behalf by your attorney for such items as court costs, filing fees, service of pleadings, appraisals, expert witness fees, etc. In the event your spouse is ordered to contribute to your attorney fees, you will be given credit on the amount your spouse pays. A lawyer may not enter into an arrangement for, charge, or collect a contingent fee in a divorce case.

We make it a practice to send monthly statements itemizing what was done and the cost of those services. The statement will indicate what, if any of the retainer, is available or the amount due. Unless arrangements are made, it is expected that the balance due will be paid as soon as possible. All fees should be paid, or arrangements made for payment by the conclusion of your case.

A retainer will be charged at the outset of the case, to be billed against the hourly rate quoted. If the case is concluded or our representation is concluded before the retainer is exhausted, that portion not used will be promptly returned.

Conclusion

Some divorce cases end in a reconciliation of the parties. If there is viability in your marriage and a chance to save it, we will be pleased to recommend marriage counselors to you and assist you in every possible way to effect this reconciliation. If, on the other hand, you believe the marriage is over, we will do our utmost to obtain a Judgment of Divorce that is satisfactory to you.

As divorce proceedings today are difficult, and extensive work may be necessary, we use a team effort; other attorneys in the office are available to assist us at the office, or in court. However, your primary attorney will oversee and advise on all work performed.

This document, in effect, merely touches the basic elements of divorce and divorce procedure. It is not to be considered as the last word on the subject, but merely as a helpful guide.

As your attorneys, we have had experience and expertise in the field of family law, and we are aware of the pressures and the personal difficulties faced by a person involved in the divorce process; we will attempt to ease and hopefully eliminate the cause of some of these problems. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or arrange for an appointment.

A Tradition of Excellence Since 1951

The law firm of ***Sinas, Dramis, Brake, Boughton & McIntyre, P.C.*** was established in Lansing, Michigan in 1951. The firm was founded by two young lawyers, *Thomas G. Sinas* and *Lee C. Dramis*, who built upon a close personal friendship to create a law firm that would become, over the next half century, one of the most respected in the State of Michigan. The firm, commonly referred to as **The Sinas Dramis Law Firm**, is widely known for its excellent reputation representing plaintiffs in matters dealing with serious personal injury and wrongful death.

The firm's personal injury division has achieved considerable success handling a wide variety of cases, including those involving motor vehicle liability, auto no-fault insurance claims, premises liability, liquor liability, product liability, highway liability, professional liability, workers' compensation and social security claims. The law firm's competence is reflected by the fact that three of its attorneys (B*arry D. Boughton, George T. Sinas* and *Bernie Finn*) have been recognized in the national publication, "***The Best Lawyers in America***."

Through the years, the attorneys at the Sinas Dramis Law Firm have been recognized as leaders in the legal profession. One partner was **President of the State Bar of Michigan** (*Donald L. Reisig*); two partners served as **President of the Michigan Trial Lawyers Association** (*Lee C. Dramis* and *George T. Sinas*); and two partners served as **Chairperson of the State Bar Negligence Law Section** (*Timothy J. Donovan* and *George T. Sinas*). The Sinas Dramis Law Firm practices in courts throughout the State of Michigan and in the Federal court system.

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