# 2026 Fellows Nomination Form

COMPLETE #7

The Michigan State Bar Foundation is currently seeking nominations for the Class of 2026 Fellows. ONLY active Fellows are eligible to complete the nomination form. Nominations may not be submitted by persons related by blood or marriage to the nominee.

Following is the criteria for the Fellows Program:

* Attorneys who have demonstrated professional excellence.
* Attorneys who serve their community.
* Attorneys who practice law for a minimum of 10 years.
* Attorneys who are in good standing with the State Bar of Michigan.

Please answer each question as thoroughly as possible.

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* **Nominee's Name:**

Laura Jeltema

* **Nominee's P Number (please enter number only):**

68962

* **Nominee's Email Address:**

ljeltema@wnj.com

**Nominee's Address:**

Warner Norcross + Judd

150 Ottawa Avenue, NW, Suite 1500

Grand Rapids

Michigan

49503

United States

* **Total Years Admitted to Practice Law (a minimum of 10 years required). Also, include in your total the years practiced out of state.**

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**Do you have a vitae, resume or bio for your Nominee? If not, you will be asked to answer additional questions below.**

Yes

**Upload Your Nominees Bio**

**Provide below a link to your nominee's bio:**

https://www.wnj.com/people/laura-a-jeltema/

**Please list State Bar, local or affinity bar associations and other community activities:**

(No response)

### Please list legal teaching, publications, professional recognition and/or memberships:

(No response)

### * PROVIDE A BRIEF SUMMARY OF WHY YOU BELIEVE THIS CANDIDATE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE FELLOWS PROGRAM:

I am pleased to nominate Laura Jeltema for election to the Michigan State Bar Foundation Fellows Program. Laura is a partner at Warner Norcross + Judd LLP in Grand Rapids and a highly respected trusts and estates attorney, advising individuals and families on estate planning, wealth preservation, and charitable giving strategies.
In addition, Laura brings a strong commitment to the legal community and public service. She has contributed as a speaker, author, and educator, and she applies her expertise to help clients navigate complex legal and financial decisions.
Laura is an engaged member of the West Michigan ATJ Campaign Committee. Her involvement reflects a meaningful commitment to expanding access to civil legal aid and strengthening our justice system.
Laura's professional achievements, leadership, and dedication to community impact make her an excellent candidate for the MSBF Fellows.

### * Nominator's Name:

Jennifer Bentley

### * Nominator's P Number (please enter number only):

57076

### * Nominator's Email Address:

jennifer@msbf.org

Warner Norcross + Judd

# Laura A. Jeltema

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I firmly believe that being a good listener is crucial to being a good estate planning lawyer. When meeting with a client, I don't rush to interject my opinion. I ask questions to elicit revealing answers, listen closely and absorb what they're telling me about their circumstances and concerns. By hearing and understanding their big-picture perspective, I can approach issues from many different angles and draw on my extensive experience and knowledge to craft creative strategies that address problems in the most optimal way.

## Estate Planning Attorney

Laura Jeltema is a Warner partner and estate planning attorney who advises high-net-worth individuals, families and family offices in trust and estate administration and planning, wealth preservation and income, gift and generation-skipping transfer tax planning. Laura designs and implements innovative solutions for multigenerational families to accomplish planning objectives and to limit their risk and tax exposure, which constitutes the hallmark and foundation of her Michigan-focused practice.

### Education

- American University Washington College of Law J.D. 2005 magna cum laude
- Western Michigan University B.S. 2001 summa cum laude

### Admitted

- Michigan, 2005
- District of Columbia, 2006

Laura guides owners of closely held businesses through pre-transaction planning, wealth preservation and business succession planning. Private foundations also rely on Laura's legal acumen and experience with respect to governance, compliance and transactional matters. She enjoys the multifaceted and multidimensional nature of trusts and estates work and appreciates the challenging and dynamic nature of the specialty.

A skilled problem solver, Laura makes complex laws more comprehensible for clients and helps them sleep better at night by allaying their worries about the future. Her highly regarded ability to educate and connect with people in the style they prefer enhances her capacity to deliver excellent client service. Clients value the strong communication skills she brings to their matters – skills similar to those she previously brought to the classroom at two prominent law schools where she served for several years as a guest lecturer and adjunct faculty member. Prior to joining Warner in 2017, Laura practiced for more than 11 years at a large top-ranked Washington, DC-based law firm.

With a deep and genuine sensitivity to personal and private issues, Laura helps clients navigate difficult decisions that often become intertwined with complicated family dynamics. Many people, for example, want to ensure that the passage of wealth does not create disincentives for heirs to become productive members of society. She finds it gratifying to talk candidly with clients about the legacy of wealth and what it means for them specifically. She works diligently and innovatively to craft approaches that bring families together rather than tear them apart.

Laura stays updated on the ever-shifting tax law landscape and ensures that her clients' plans are flexible and easily adapted to accommodate regulatory changes. Clients say they appreciate her ability to jump into action and counsel them wisely on protecting their assets when a rule change makes an impact on their wealth preservation efforts.

**Industries**

- Private Client and Family Office
- Insurance

**Practices**

- Trusts and Estates
- Charitable Giving and Organizations
- Estate Settlement and Trust Administration
- Family Business and Succession Planning
- Family Office Representation
- Fiduciary Representation
- Fundamental Estate Planning
- Tax Planning
- Closely Held Businesses
- Tax
- Insurance
- Corporate

## Representative Experience

### Estate Planning Attorney

- Coordinates administration of trusts and estates of all sizes with all types of assets.
- Manages preparation of complex wills and trusts and other estate planning documents.
- Handles settlement of estate and gift tax audits before the IRS.
- Oversees implementation of strategies for wealth preservation, charitable giving, business succession and pre-transaction planning.
- Represents multiple generations of families and family offices.

## Honors and Awards

- *Best Lawyers in America*, Trusts and Estates, 2021-26
- Private Wealth Law – Michigan, *Chambers High Net Worth Guide*, 2021-25
- Named a Top Lawyer in Trusts and Estates, *Grand Rapids Magazine,* 2021-24

## Publications

- Estate Planning Focus — Spring 2026
- Making a List and Checking It Twice: Year-End Planning Ideas, Part 1 of 2
- Warner Again Recognized by Chambers for Private Wealth Law
- Hot Topics for Private Clients and Family Offices from the 2024 Heckerling Institute on Estate Planning – Part Two
- Hot Topics for Private Clients and Family Offices from 2024 Heckerling Institute on Estate Planning – Part One
- Additional items are available upon request.

## Other Publications

- ICLE Chapter on Trust Directors and Divided Trusts (2024 and ongoing updates)
- "Practice Area Snapshot, Part Two … Elder Law: Skill Sets, Hiring, & Medical Cannabis ," *Of Counsel The Legal Practice and Management Report*, Volume 42, No. 5, May 2023
- "Practice Area Snapshot, Part One … A Confluence of Factors Keep Elder Law Attorneys Hopping," *Of Counsel The Legal Practice and Management Report*, Volume 42, No. 4, April 2023
- Co-Author, "Time to Get Smart About ART – How Reproductive Technology Affects Your Planning," *Michigan Bar Journal*, 12/1/2019
- "Incorporate estate planning into New Year's resolutions," *Grand Rapids Business Journal*, 12/7/2018
- "Under Lock and Key: Are Your Family Assets Protected?" *Grand Rapids Business Journal*, October 20, 2017
- "Times Have Changed. Have Your Operating Documents?" *Aspen Corporation Services Bulletin, Vol. LXXXVII No. 20*, October 2016

## Blogs

- Attention Donors: What to Know About the Changes Affecting Charitable Deductions Under the OBBBA

- Making a List and Checking It Twice: Year-End Planning Ideas, Part 1 of 2
- The Case for Keeping Asset Protection Trusts Onshore
- Warner Again Recognized by Chambers for Private Wealth Law
- Hot Topics for Private Clients and Family Offices from the 2024 Heckerling Institute on Estate Planning – Part Two
- Additional items are available upon request.

## Professional Affiliations

- West Michigan Estate Planning Counsel, Member (2017-Present)

## Community Affiliations

- Access to Justice
  - West Michigan Campaign Committee (2023-Present)
- Widowed Persons Service
  - Board Member and Secretary (August 2018-2023)
- Heart of West Michigan United Way Capital Campaign
  - Cabinet Member (2020-2021)
- Grand Rapids Community Foundation
  - Professional Advisory Committee (2017-Present)
- Leadership Grand Rapids
  - Class of 2020
- Widowed Persons Service
  - Board Member/Secretary (2018-2023)

## Bar Associations

- American Bar Association
- State Bar of Michigan, Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section
- District of Columbia Bar Association, Estates, Trusts and Probate Law Section
- Grand Rapids Bar Association

## Teaching and Lecturing

- Grand Rapids Bar Association 3Rs Program Faculty Member – 2023/2024, 2024/2025, 2025/2026 Academic Years
- Guest Lecturer for the Advanced Wealth Planning Seminar, Georgetown University Law Center, Spring 2013 – 2016
- Adjunct Faculty, University of Baltimore School of Law, Introduction to Lawyering Skills, Fall 2008 and 2009

## Speaking Engagements

- ICLE Probate Institute Presenter, May 2026

- "Drafting Engagement and Closing Letters," ICLE's 32nd Annual Drafting Estate Planning Documents, February 16, 2023
- "Drafting Trusts for Estate Tax Planning," ICLE Seminar: Planning Techniques for the Taxable Estate, Virtual Seminar, December 6, 2022
- "Implement Flexibility with Established Estate Planning Tools," ICLE Tax Law Webinar Series, June 2020
- DC Bar Presentation, "There is Nothing Permanent Except Change: Using Nonjudicial Settlement Agreements to Change Irrevocable Trusts," February 2015

**My Life Outside the Office**

The parent of teenage twins, Laura spends a great deal of non-work time with her children. She also enjoys tap dancing and outdoor activities such as birding, gardening, hiking and camping. A fan of lifelong self-education, Laura has recently been challenging herself to learn new skills, including baking, crafting and pickleball. Next on her list: more foreign language learning.