

## Lawyer/Artist John Willems to Receive Hensel Award for Contributions to Michigan's Art Community

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September 8, 2014

Miller Canfield lawyer John Willems will be presented with the 2014 John Hensel Award by the State Bar of Michigan's Arts, Communication, Entertainment and Sports Section. He will receive the award on Friday, October 10, 2014, at a reception hosted at The Community House in Birmingham.

The Hensel Award annually recognizes a Michigan attorney for significant contributions to the state's art, entertainment or sports communities.

Willems is a long-time member and supporter of ArtServe Michigan (which will soon be re-named Creative Many Michigan), currently serving as the chair-elect for the organization's board of directors. He was also a long-time member and past chair of the Downriver Counsel for the Arts in Wyandotte and an advisory board member for Lawyers for the Creative Economy and was a member of its predecessor organization, Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. He also actively supports Detroit's PuppetART puppet theater, providing pro bono legal services, developmental guidance and advice. John also supports Michigan artists directly, frequently advising local musicians and labels (often pro bono) as well as film makers, visual artists and dancers, on career and legal issues.

Willems' commitment to the arts is fueled in part by his own activities as an artist. He is an active recording and performing musician, a poet, sound designer, producer, photographer, audio engineer and a videographer. He has scored compositions for several Detroit-area dance companies and is currently composing the score for PuppetART's upcoming adaptation of Antoine de Saint-Exupery's classic children's tale, "The Little Prince." Throughout his career, he's won several music awards, including individually (Best Keyboardist and Best Composer (Jazz) at the 1994 Detroit Music Award), and as part of his locally successful urban world jazz trio, INO/UNO (Best Recording (Jazz) from the Metro Times and the Detroit Music Awards in 1995 and 1996, and Best Group (Jazz) at the 1995 Detroit Music Awards).

Willems is equally respected in his legal practice, as a principal in Miller Canfield's nationally recognized Employment and Labor group. He has extensive experience representing employers in complex employment and class action litigation, collective bargaining, and contract and interest arbitration, as well as in administrative proceedings before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the National Labor Relations Board, and the Michigan Employment Relations Commission. He is annually recognized among the best labor lawyers in Michigan by *Best Lawyers in America* and *Michigan Super Lawyers*.