

Commercial Litigation
Family Law
Municipal Law
Real-Estate Law

Senior Partner, Secrest Wardle

WILLIAM HAMPTON



Looking back over a remarkable, multifaceted legal career spanning 44 years, William Hampton could've easily rested on his public-sector laurels. At 26, he was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives; at 28, he was House majority leader; and by 32, the Pontiac-raised attorney was beginning a six-year term as an Oakland County Circuit Court Judge.

But his private-sector work offers more visible evidence of his success. "One of the things I'm proudest of is the way the communities I have represented have evolved," says Hampton, 70, a senior partner at Secrest Wardle in Farmington Hills. "If you look at Bloomfield Hills and Bloomfield Township, you'll see premier residential communities and how Woodward Avenue has been kept pristine. It takes work, and it's because we aggressively defended those communities in litigation when [some] developers came in and wanted to do something inconsistent with the residential point of view."

Farther north, in 1983, sleepy little Pontiac Township benefited greatly from Hampton's counsel. Through his legal expertise and work on tax incentives and abatement plans, he helped the area transform itself into the city of Auburn Hills, a success story if ever there was one.

Although Hampton's work includes real estate, business litigation, and divorce matters, his expertise and reputation as a litigator and jurist draws interest, as well. When there's a complex case in a circuit or federal court, judges will often ask Hampton to act as an arbitrator.

He's also been appointed to various posts within state government, as well as the Michigan State Bar Association. Recently, he completed a six-year term on the Attorney Discipline Board, which included a two-year stint as chairman. And last year, he received the prestigious Michael J. Franck Award from the state bar for his contributions to the profession.

Currently, Hampton is monitoring a bill in Lansing that would take away the authority of local communities to regulate anemometers (devices that measure wind velocity) as part of an alternative-energy initiative. Recently he prepared an ordinance for Bloomfield Township that regulates the location of anemometers. "I've always taken the position that municipalities should vigorously defend their ordinances and be proactive," he says. **db**