

Diversity News

A Newsletter of the Washington State Bar Association



The Washington State Bar Association's Commitment to Diversity: "To advance and promote diversity, equality, and cultural understanding throughout the legal community . . ."

April 2012

Here's what's happening in the world of diversity (from the WSBA perspective). If you have any questions, please feel free to email Joy Eckwood at joye@wsba.org.

New Stuff

Referendum

On April 6, 2012, the votes were tallied on the WSBA License Fee Reduction referendum. The referendum passed, with a total of 12,339 WSBA members casting their votes. 52% of those who voted cast a YES vote to reduce the current license fee by \$125. The result means that WSBA license fees will be decreased from \$450 to \$325 beginning with the 2013 fiscal year.

In response, WSBA President Steve Crossland is reaching out to the membership, asking two specific questions in an effort to better understand the needs and issues of the lawyers in Washington state:

1. How can WSBA be of greater value to you?
2. How can the WSBA better serve the day-to-day practitioner?

Please respond to comments@wsba.org with your comments and feedback.

President Crossland also sent the following message to the WSBA membership:

WSBA is committed to listening and engaging more with all members, and we're trying some new ways of connecting with you. Please join me on Wednesday, April 25, at 5:30 p.m. for an online discussion. We'll start off the evening with this question: What is Your Vision for a More Efficient and Effective Bar? Joining the conversation is simple. Click on <http://wsba.org/Crossland> and follow the instructions. I look forward to your participation. A transcript of the chat will be available after the event.

~ WSBA President Steve Crossland

MBA Leadership

Thank you to outgoing QLaw President Andy Sachs for his service and dedication! We also welcome QLaw's incoming President Zana Bugaighis, and wish her luck during the upcoming year.

Trayvon Martin Case

On February 26, 2012, 17-year old African-American Trayvon Martin was gunned down in Sanford, Florida, by George Zimmerman, a 28-year-old biracial Hispanic-American. Martin was unarmed, and returning from a trip to a local convenience store. Zimmerman, in a call to local police, claimed Martin was exhibiting suspicious behavior. The police told Zimmerman not to pursue Martin; however, Zimmerman chased after a running Martin, the two engaged in a confrontation, and Martin was shot in the chest at close range. (cont'd.)

“Center Will Study Interplay of U.S., Mexican Law,” by Karen Sloan. The University of Houston Law Center has launched an academic center focused on the intersection of U.S. and Mexican law. <http://bit.ly/I02CXG>

“It’s Official — Women Trump Men on Leadership,” by Vivia Chen. To be frank, I don’t buy a lot of the folklore out there about how women — particularly, working moms — make better leaders. <http://bit.ly/I2rDwu>

“Judge Rules against D.C. Courts Employee in Discrimination Case,” posted by Zoe Tillman. A District of Columbia Courts system employee has lost her race and gender discrimination suit against the courts. U.S. District Judge Robert Wilkins found Friday that the court had non-discriminatory reasons for downgrading the pay level of a position the employee was approved to fill. <http://bit.ly/HQtI49>

“Justices Torn over Whether Children Conceived In Vitro are Entitled to Survivor Benefits,” by Tony Mauro. The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday struggled to fit new reproductive technology into old Social Security definitions as it heard arguments over whether a child conceived in vitro after the death of the father is entitled to survivor benefits. <http://bit.ly/IErL6V>

“John Payton, ‘Champion of Equality,’ Remembered,” posted by Zoe Tillman. To attempt to summarize the accomplishments of the late John Payton, former president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, would be like using a thimble to “try to empty an ocean,” Vernon Jordan Jr., a senior member of the LDF board, said at a memorial in Payton’s honor. <http://bit.ly/ITQpjG>

“Woman Charged with Intimidating Judge Overseeing her Suit against Seyfarth,” by Sheri Qualters. A Massachusetts woman who brought pro se lawsuits against Seyfarth Shaw and her former employer is facing criminal charges for a letter she sent to a Boston federal judge and statements she made on a YouTube video. <http://bit.ly/ltjC6b>

“Women Lawyers and Gray Hair,” by Vivia Chen. Senior-level men are unnerved by the gray roots sticking out of women’s hair. The horror! <http://bit.ly/JdF6FM>

Opportunities

Starbucks Corporation Law & Corporate Affairs Department 2012–13 Diversity Mentorship Program

Starbucks Law & Corporate Affairs Department is pleased to announce the second year of the Starbucks Diversity Mentorship Program. This program will connect Starbucks in-house lawyers with private practice junior attorneys from diverse backgrounds in one-to-one mentorship relationships. Starbucks in-house lawyers are one of the most experienced and diverse groups of attorneys in the region, and are eager to share their insights into learning the practice of law, succeeding in law firm and other private practice environments, and for those who are interested, pursuing in-house career opportunities.

This program will foster direct, informal interactions over a one-year period to help diverse junior attorneys learn their craft and network in the local community of legal professionals and business leaders. The program is open to all lawyers in private practice in their first three years as an attorney, and who are members of one or more minority bar associations or diversity affinity groups.

If you are interested in applying, please submit a cover letter and resume to Peggy Reiff at preiff@starbucks.com by Friday, May 18. In your cover letter, please identify your current area of practice (and your desired area, if different), your general interest in receiving mentoring, and the minority bar association(s) or affinity group(s) to which you belong. If you have any questions, you may contact David Byers, co-chair of the Starbucks L&CA Diversity Committee, at dbyers@starbucks.com.

Upcoming Events

For a complete list of all WSBA events, including registration and location details, please visit www.wsba.org.

April 27–28: BOG Meeting, Tulalip: <http://bit.ly/u1Zvfs>

May 4: Northwest Immigrant Rights Project 28th Anniversary Celebration: <http://bit.ly/Jl4smn>

May 25: 2012 Philip L. Burton Scholarship Dinner — Loren Miller Bar Association: <http://bit.ly/JUTD5l>

June 1: Washington Minority Bar Associations Collaboration Project (WAMBAC) Seventh Annual Statewide Diversity Conference (preconference reception on Thursday, May 31): <http://bit.ly/vvcff>

June 8: BOG Meeting, Yakima: <http://bit.ly/u1Zvfs>

June 8–10: ATJ/Bar Leaders Conference: <http://bit.ly/HOpvdb>

