

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"

January 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 me at chachdw@wsba.org.

New Stuff

The Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality will host a major conference February 11, 2012, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Ninth Circuit opinion in the *Hirabayashi v. United States coram nobis* case. For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/xCNNsG>.

Along with the new year, we are pleased to welcome four new presidents to our Minority Bar Associations! Please welcome:

ABAW — **Janet Kim Lin**
FLOW — **Emilia "Mimi" Castillo**
LBAW — **Jennifer Davis**
SABAW — **Kaustuv M. Das**
VABAW — **Sinjin Dinh** and **Martin Le**

And thank you to their outgoing presidents for their commitment and service!

ABAW — **Thuy Nguyen Leeper**
FLOW — **Eric de los Santos**
LBAW — **Fé Lopez**
SABAW — **Aravind Swaminathan**
VABAW — **Ty Ho**

For a complete listing of Washington's minority bar associations and contact information, visit <http://bit.ly/wRmYKz>.

Congratulations to Washington state's new Supreme Court Justice, Steven González! Only the second justice of Hispanic heritage, Justice González was sworn in on January 9. For more information on Justice González, see <http://bit.ly/zqz9Hx>.

The December 2011 [Equal Justice newsletter](#), a publication of the **Washington State Minority and Justice Commission**, offers information on diversity events, clinics, and bar associations – check it out!

Following a comprehensive investigation, the **Justice Department** announced its findings that the **Seattle Police Department** has engaged in a pattern or practice of excessive force that violates the Constitution and federal law. A letter detailing the findings was delivered to Seattle Mayor Michael McGinn and Police Chief John Diaz. For more information, including the findings letter, visit <http://1.usa.gov/uTvfYk>.

Congratulations to the 2012 class of WSBA Leadership Institute fellows! Complete bios of the fellows can be viewed [here](#). For more information on the Leadership Institute, visit <http://bit.ly/wqxiDe>.

The Washington State Redistricting Commission unanimously voted on January 1 to approve the final version of the Washington State Redistricting Plan. The legislature has until February 7 to make any changes to the redistricting, and will then publish maps of all 10 districts on their site. See <http://bit.ly/xmQD1F> for updated information.

Starbucks recently announced that General Counsel and Secretary **Paula Boggs** is set to retire on April 2, 2012. At that time she will begin her next adventure as part of President Obama's re-election campaign. Read the full press release from Starbucks at <http://bit.ly/x4Rtul>.

"Remembering Theodore Spearman: 'A gentleman' on and off the bench," by Josh Farley. Theodore "Ted" Spearman, longtime lawyer, Bainbridge Islander, civil rights champion, and the first African-American to ascend to the Kitsap County Superior Court bench, died on January 3 due to complications from a brain aneurysm. He was 64. A memorial service for Judge Spearman was held Saturday, January 21, at 1:00 p.m. at the Suquamish Community House, in Suquamish. See the [funeral home's website](http://bit.ly/wjQRKF) for further details. <http://bit.ly/wjQRKF>

Board of Governors At-Large member **Tracy Flood** offers a personal tribute to Judge **Theodore Spearman** and Civil Rights Advocate **Lillian Walker**:

Judge Spearman — On Tuesday, January 3, 2012, the Honorable Judge Theodore "Ted" Spearman, the first African-American judge in Kitsap County, passed away. Judge Spearman was one in a million. When you appeared before him, you felt honored to be an attorney; even if the ruling was not in your favor, you felt heard and respected. Judge Spearman was on the board of the Legal Foundation of Washington and during his term, I had the pleasure of seeing Judge Spearman at WSBA BOG meetings, where he always offered words of encouragement. I am eternally grateful to him for taking the time to discuss issues of access to justice and sharing his wisdom with me professionally and personally. This is a great loss to our legal community.

Ms. Lillian Walker — On Wednesday, January 4, 2012, Lillian Walker, civil rights advocate, died at the age of 98. Ms. Walker was a founder of the Bremerton NAACP and YWCA of Kitsap County. I first met Ms. Walker in my third year of law school, when I became a student board member of the YWCA. In 2010, an autobiography of Ms. Walker's life was published. She was committed to sharing her story with young women, offering words of encouragement and was a great role model. I am honored to have had the opportunity of meeting Ms. Walker, who worked tirelessly to establish great institutions in Kitsap County during the civil rights movement.

I am honored to have had the pleasure of spending time with both Judge Spearman and Ms. Walker. Knowing them both has been inspirational. I have lived in Kitsap County for 22 years and they will truly be missed in our community. They are gone, but not forgotten.

WSBA referendum proposes big changes; calls on WSBA members to vote

Recently, a member referendum was filed with WSBA's Executive Director calling for a vote of the WSBA membership. It requests that the Board of Governors' decision to keep 2013 license fees the same for the fourth consecutive year be repealed, and that 2013 license fees be dropped from \$450 to \$325. On **March 7**, electronic ballots will go out to the Active membership, with paper copies sent to those without valid email addresses on file. Members will have until **April 6** to vote. To pass or defeat this referendum requires a majority vote of those Active members voting. Below are some facts about WSBA's member referendum process, your WSBA license fee, and the potential impact of the proposed referendum.

• **WSBA's member referendum process is the avenue by which any Active member of the Bar can affect policy set by the Board of Governors.** A referendum can reverse or modify a final action taken by the Board of Governors, enact a resolution, or amend the WSBA Bylaws. Any Active member may file a petition for a referendum if it meets the criteria laid out in the WSBA Bylaws. To pass, a referendum requires a majority of those Active members voting.

• **The WSBA license fee of \$450 has been set the same for four consecutive years (2010–2013).** The Board voted unanimously in 2011 to keep the fee the same, despite continued growth of the membership and budget pressure.

• **WSBA is both a regulatory agency and trade association.** Washington is one of 32 states with a mandatory bar. The rest (18) pay a license fee to the Supreme Court and additional fees for a bar membership. WSBA serves nearly 30,000 active members and is charged with regulating the profession as well as providing valuable services and programs to members and the public.

• **Paying your annual license fee is the equivalent of obtaining a business license.** Many other professions require an annual license fee to practice in our state. While a number of professions pay less, there are many that annually pay more. For instance, midwives pay \$525, chiropractors pay \$607, physicians and surgeons pay \$675. Dentists pay \$576 and auto dealers pay \$750.

• **Washington's license fees are on par, when looking at other state bar associations that perform regulatory functions.** Of the 32 mandatory state bars in the country, Washington's license fees rank near the middle among those states with comparable membership size (e.g., Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia). By comparison here in our region, Oregon and Alaska, also mandatory bars, have annual license fees of \$492 (Oregon) and \$660 (Alaska).

• **Reducing the license fee to \$325 is equivalent to what was collected a decade ago, when WSBA membership was 28 percent smaller, with fewer programs and services offered.** A cut in license fees of this magnitude equates to a 26 percent budget cut, or \$3.6 million, putting numerous programs and services at risk for cuts or elimination.

Please look for your ballot to arrive electronically or in the mail. Every vote counts. For more information on the License Fee Referendum, go to www.wsba.org.

Legislative Matters of Interest

Washington state Governor **Chris Gregoire** recently asked the legislature to pass a bill allowing same-sex couples to marry: <http://bit.ly/z97xKn>. View Governor Gregoire's [historic speech](#). Read the official press release [here](#).

Legal Info of Interest

"ABA Seeks Better Treatment of the Disabled by LSAT Administrator," by Karen Sloan. The Law School Admission Council is no stranger to litigation over its testing policies. The organization has been sued numerous times by would-be takers of the Law School Admission Test who were denied accommodations for what they claimed were disabilities. <http://bit.ly/A45gI0>

"Firms Hail New Chiefs (of Diversity)," by Leslie Kwon. Some companies are adding a new executive to their C-suite lineup: chief diversity officer. <http://on.wsj.com/yKTeh5>

"First Female Chief Judge Named In Virginia's Eastern District," posted by Mike Scarcella. This week, Rebecca Beach Smith was named the new chief judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, becoming the first female chief judge in the district. <http://bit.ly/tm3RvR>

"Judge Certifies Class of Immigration Detainees Suffering Mental Problems," by Amanda Bronstad. A federal judge in California has certified a class of hundreds of undocumented immigrant detainees with mental disabilities who have alleged that they were unable to obtain legal counsel in violation of their due process rights. <http://bit.ly/xlRo4v>

"Littler Heads South of the Border with Acquisition of 24 Mexican Lawyers," by Sara Randazzo. A year after opening an outpost in Venezuela, Littler Mendelson is again expanding in Latin America, this time by opening a pair of offices in Mexico. <http://bit.ly/zKimKI>

"More Bad News for Women — NAWL's 2011 Report," by Vivia Chen. The percentage of women in firms is on the decline. <http://bit.ly/rWI8as>

"Questions for: Mark Kamitomo, President, Washington State Association for Justice," by Robert Celaschi. Spokane attorney Mark Kamitomo found himself in the spotlight four years ago when a jury returned a verdict against his client. One of the jurors later complained that racial bias played a role — not against Kamitomo's client, but against Kamitomo himself. <http://bit.ly/zababo>

"With Immigration Case, Court Takes on another Potential Blockbuster," by Marcia Coyle. Once again raising the stakes in what may be a historic term, the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday agreed to decide whether Arizona's tough anti-immigration law can be enforced or is in fatal conflict with federal immigration law. <http://bit.ly/xzD3Ie>

Opportunities

The Seattle University School of Law 2012 Leadership for Justice Fellowship provides \$55,000 to a social justice legal host organization — whether in the United States or internationally — to cover salary, benefits, and other costs associated with funding a full-time fellow for one year. Projects must be designed to offer effective advocacy with underserved or marginalized individuals or groups, or to address social justice issues that are not adequately addressed by some existing aspect of the legal system.

For detailed information about the 2012 Leadership for Justice Fellowship, including the application form, guidelines and other related materials, please visit the ATJI [website](#).

Upcoming Events

January 26: BOG Meeting — Olympia

January 27: LBAW Annual Awards Gala

February: Celebrate Black History Month!

February 11: The Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality Conference to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Ninth Circuit opinion in *Hirabayashi v. United States*.

February 23: Korean American Bar Association's Annual Banquet Luncheon