

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 . . ."

March 2011

Here's what's happening in the world of diversity (from the WSBA perspective). If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at chachdw@wsba.org.

New Stuff

March 18 Board of Governors Meeting in Spokane. To view the complete BOG book, please go to www.wsba.org/info/bog/march2011bogbook.htm.

- p. 10 — Agenda
- p. 61 — Structure of WSBA diversity committees and integration of WYLD Committee for Diversity (consent calendar)
- p. 215 — Upcoming Diversity Reminders
- p. 296 — Report from Washington Lawyers Division (WYLD)
- p. 372 — Letter from WSBA President Steve Toole to Senator Cantwell re: support federal funding for civic learning
- p.373 — Letter from WSBA President Steve Toole to Senator Murray re: support federal funding for civic learning

The next BOG meeting is April 29–30 in Bellevue.

Race and WA's Criminal Justice System

On March 2, 2011, the Washington State Supreme Court Justices, the WSBA Board of Governors, and representatives from various organizations and institutions came together to discuss "Racial Bias in the Criminal Justice System."

For more information, including access to the "Preliminary Report on Race and WA's Criminal Justice System" and a webcast of the presentation, please visit www.wsba.org/wsbadiversity.htm.

Diversity Success in the Legal Field – WSBA Wants Your Stories: The WSBA Committee for Diversity (CFD) is developing a series of articles highlighting diversity and inclusion strategies that have had a positive impact on recruitment and retention of minority legal staff. To that end, the CFD is soliciting personal diversity and inclusion stories from every sector of the legal field — large and small law firms, solo practitioners, in-house counsel, government attorneys, nonprofit attorneys, and others. If you have a story to share, or know someone who does, contact Robert Taylor at roberttaylor11@comcast.net.

Congratulations to new KABA President Michelle Chen and soon-to-be QLaw President Christine Sanders. Thank you to the outgoing presidents, Jerry Chiang and Andy Sachs, for their dedication and commitment to minority attorneys in Washington state. For more information on the Minority Bar Associations, please see www.wsba.org/minority+bar+associations.htm.

Seeking Diversity Program Interns for Summer 2011! All law students looking for a unique opportunity to work with WSBA on diversity issues in the legal profession are encouraged to contact Lillian Lin at lillianl@wsba.org for more information on how to apply.

Washington Supreme Court's Minority and Justice Commission Elects Judge Mary Yu as Co-Chair
www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/?fa=newsinfo.pressdetail&newsid=1800.

"In Shift, U.S. Says Marriage Act Blocks Gay Rights," by Charlie Savage and Sheryl Gay Stolberg. President Obama, in a striking legal and political shift, has determined that the Defense of Marriage Act — the 1996 law that bars federal recognition of same-sex marriages — is unconstitutional, and has directed the Justice Department to stop defending the law in court, the administration said Wednesday. www.nytimes.com/2011/02/24/us/24marriage.html

In honor of last month's celebration of Black History, here are some historical facts of interest:

- The month of February was chosen in honor of Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, who were both born in that month.
- In the case of *Sipuel v. Oklahoma*, the Supreme Court ruled on January 12, 1948, that a state must allow blacks to study law at state institutions.
- Violette N. Anderson became the first black woman lawyer admitted to practice before the Supreme Court on January 29, 1926.
- In addition to being the first African-American President of the United States, Barack Obama was the first African-American to become president of the prestigious *Harvard Law Review* in 1990.

Legal Info of Interest

"ACLU and Yale Law team up to challenge high school filtering of LGBT-related sites," by Karen Sloan. The American Civil Liberties Union and Yale Law School's LGBT Litigation Clinic are teaming up to confront the unconstitutional filtering of the Internet at public high schools around the country. www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202482252490

"ADA doesn't cover woman's immune deficiency condition," by Nate Raymond. A federal judge in New York granted summary judgment for a defunct hedge fund in one of the few decisions addressing whether a type of immune deficiency qualifies as a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act. www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202481696336

"Are You a Culturally Competent Lawyer?" by Molly Peckman. I recently attended a program on cultural competence for lawyers only to confirm a fear: It turns out I am not very culturally competent. www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1202482426027&Are_You_a_Culturally_Compentent_Lawyer=&src=EMC-Email&et=editorial&bu=National%20Law%20Journal&pt=NLJ.com-%20Daily%20Headlines&cn=20110218NLJ&kw=Are%20You%20a%20Culturally%20Compentent%20Lawyer%3F&slreturn=1&hbxlogin=1

"Asian American Lawyers Still Underdogs," by Vivia Chen. It's the start of Chinese New Year — the Year of the Rabbit — so what better time to check on the state of Asian American lawyers? <http://thecareerist.typepad.com/thecareerist/2011/02/asian-american-lawyers.html>

"California Bar wants U.S. News to add diversity as factor in law school rankings," by Karen Sloan. Should diversity be a factor in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings? www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202482364965&slreturn=1&hbxlogin=1

“Companies surpass goal for spending with women- and minority-owned firms,” by Karen Sloan. It seemed ambitious at the time: Eleven major U.S. corporations pledged to spend \$30 million with women- and minority-owned law firms in 2010 as part of a program called the Inclusion Initiative, spearheaded by the National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms. www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202482883918&rss=nlj

“Federal Appeals Court Rules in Favor of NWIRP Client Reaffirms Broad Protections for Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence,” released by Matt Adams. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled Monday that an immigration judge in Seattle had erred in issuing a deportation order against a survivor of domestic violence whose children had been physically abused by her former partner and who had been abused herself. <http://nwirp.org/NewsAndEvents/ViewPressRelease.aspx?PressReleaseID=17>

“Former DC Bar President Named General Counsel of NAACP,” posted by Jenna Greene. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has a new general counsel — Kim Keenan, who has served as president of both the National Bar Association and the District of Columbia Bar. <http://legaltimes.typepad.com/blt/2011/02/former-dc-bar-president-named-general-counsel-of-naacp.html>

“Judge Denies FBI Agent New Trial in Retaliation Suit,” posted by Mike Scarcella. A federal judge in Washington yesterday denied the FBI’s highest-ranking Arab American agent’s motion for a new trial on claims the bureau retaliated against him for reporting alleged discrimination. <http://legaltimes.typepad.com/blt/2011/02/judge-denies-fbi-agent-new-trial-in-retaliation-suit.html>

“Maintaining diversity efforts in this economy,” by Nilesh Patel. A retention program is the crucial second step for a law firm in building a successful diversity initiative. www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202479662075&src=EMC-Email&et=editorial&bu=National%20Law%20Journal&pt=NLJ.com-%20Daily%20Headlines&cn=20110201NLJ&kw=Maintaining%20diversity%20efforts%20in%20this%20economy&slreturn=1&hbxlogin=1

“Seattle police officer resigns after shooting,” from The Associated Press. Seattle’s police chief says an officer who fatally shot a woodcarver on a downtown street has resigned. http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/local-news/2014247487_apwaseattlepoliceshooting7thld.html

“Separation Anxiety,” by Marcia Coyle. Nearly six decades after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down racially segregated schools, the state of Maryland is moving toward trial in a \$2 billion federal lawsuit charging that the state has failed to dismantle its dual system of higher education. www.law.udc.edu/news/56349/UDC-DCSL-Prof.-Brittain-Quoted-in-National-Law-Journal-on-Higher-Education-Segregation-Case.htm

Opportunities

Note: For job opportunities, please see www.wsba.org/jobs.

Nomination for Public Legal Education Award

The Council on Public Legal Education (CPLÉ) is continuing to accept nominations for its Flame of Democracy Award, which will be presented in 2011 to an individual, organization or program in Washington state that has made a significant contribution to increasing the public’s understanding of law, the justice system or government.

Nominations are due April 1, 2011. Further information about the CPLÉ may be found at www.wsba.org/ple.

WSBA Annual Awards Nominations

Each year, WSBA members are asked to identify those who deserve the legal profession's recognition and appreciation. For more information about each of the awards and the nomination process, please visit www.wsba.org/2011wsbaawardsinfo.htm.

Upcoming Events

March 11: KCBA Young Lawyers Division "Bridging the Gap" CLE. Low-cost, practical skills to help prepare new lawyers for success in their legal careers, regardless of practice area. Go to <https://www.kcba.org/secure/cleRegistration.aspx#105> for registration.

March 17: "Race, Power & Elections: Redistricting in Washington State," Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave., Seattle, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. The speakers will include national Voting Rights Act expert Professor Joaquin Avila from Seattle University, George Cheung of the Win/Win Network, and Cristóbal J. Alex of the Open Society Foundations.

March 18–19: WSBA Board of Governors meeting, Davenport Hotel, Spokane

March 31: "Serving the Legal Needs of Urban Native Americans" CLE. Thursday, March 31, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Foster Pepper PLLC, 30th Fl. www.foster.com/events.aspx?t=1&eid=517

April 20: ABAW CLE. "10 Mistakes Lawyers Make in Arbitration: Tips and Best Practices," 701 Pike St., Ste. 950, Seattle (American Arbitration Association), noon – 1:30 p.m.