

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 . . ."

February/March 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

The WSBA Board of Governor Elections have begun for District Four! Please visit <http://bit.ly/GSs2pp> for more information.

On February 13, 2012, Washington state **Governor Chris Gregoire signed historic legislation allowing same-sex couples to marry.** View the press release at <http://1.usa.gov/GELmSF>.

At the January 26, 2012, BOG meeting, the Board of Governors voted to affirm the 2008 Marriage and the Law Resolution, which can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/GUdENP>.

IDGC Update

The **Initiative for Diversity** was organized eight years as part of the response to the Glass Ceiling Task Force's report on the continuing lack of diversity in the profession. The Initiative is an independent 501(c)(3) organization with a board, the Initiative for Diversity Governing Council (IDGC), that includes representatives from a very wide cross section of organizations working in this area — including the judiciary, MBAs, other bars, educators, and public and private employers. The Initiative has promulgated written commitments to diversity and inclusion which are the first such effort on a statewide basis. The goal of the Initiative is to complement diversity work that is being done by others in Washington, focusing on encouraging employers to sign and implement the commitments. The Initiative has also provided public education and worked with employers to formulate their individualized diversity plans.

We would like to offer a sincere thank you to our former diversity program manager, **Chach Duarte White**, for her years of service and dedication to diversity and inclusion efforts — you are missed! We are also pleased to introduce our new diversity program manager, **Joy Eckwood**! Joy has been with the WSBA for over a year, previously as a sections leaders liaison. We are excited to have her on board in diversity programming and look forward to working with her!

Voting on the WSBA member referendum is now open. All active WSBA members are encouraged to vote. Voting ends at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 6. For more information, visit www.wsba.org/referendum.

On behalf of the Faculty Diversity Committee, we are pleased to invite you to the **Annual Diversity Reception at Gonzaga University School of Law**, Friday, March 30, 2012, 5:30–7:30 p.m. The reception is an opportunity to meet local alumni, judges, and community members while celebrating diversity. Please RSVP to jsklut@lawschool.gonzaga.edu. We look forward to seeing you at the reception!

Recent Legislative Decisions of Interest

In the wake of Washington state's historic marriage equality legislation, opponents of the legislation began work on a referendum aimed towards striking down the new law. The following articles provide a brief discussion of the opponent's cause.

“Challenge Seeks Accurate Language for Ballot Title on Marriage Equality Law Referendum.” The ACLU of Washington and Legal Voice are representing the League of Women Voters of Washington and Parents, Families, and Friends of Gays and Lesbians (PFLAG) Washington State Council in a court challenge to the state attorney general's proposed ballot title for Referendum 74. <http://bit.ly/GJ2Tbf>

“Same-sex Marriage Opponents Can Begin Collecting Signatures,” by Brad Shannon. A Thurston County judge approved the ballot wording for Referendum 74 on Tuesday, paving the way for opponents of Washington's new gay marriage law to print petitions and collect signatures petitions for a possible statewide vote in November. <http://bit.ly/wPI7vZ>

Legal Info of Interest

“A Global Increase in Women on Boards of Directors, but U.S. Lags,” by Catherine Dunn. Legally mandated quotas have resulted in countries like France to have an increase of 7.5 percent from 2009 to 2011 for women on corporate boards, but the U.S. has experienced only a marginal increase of 0.5 percent. <http://bit.ly/ym0H4I>

“ABA Joins Disability Advocates in Pressuring Law School Admission Council,” by Karen Sloan. The American Bar Association has sent a message to the Law School Admission Council that it's not happy with that group's handling of requests for special accommodations by takers of the Law School Admission Test. <http://bit.ly/GOnr2I>

“ABA Report Finds Cause for Concern Regarding Women's Role,” by Karen Sloan. A report by the ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession found that the number of women in ABA leadership roles has been on the rise since 1991, but that the numbers have “remained relatively static or slightly decreased in recent years.” <http://bit.ly/zPJyy2>

“Affirmative Action and the Enemies of Diversity,” by Kevin Powell. The Supreme Court is to rule in a new case against affirmative action — and risk reversing half a century of social progress. <http://bit.ly/xU2sGC>

“Boosting Minority Enrollment at Public Law Schools,” by Sherry Karabin. Choosing the right law school can be a daunting task for any student, but for Bali Kumar, a black multiracial man from a working class background in New York City, the decision was even more difficult. <http://bit.ly/GHRJul>

“Court Skeptical of Using U.S. Laws in Foreign Human Rights Cases,” by Marcia Coyle. The U.S. Supreme Court during arguments Tuesday appeared skeptical of citizens and foreigners using two federal laws to hold corporations and other organizations liable for human rights violations committed abroad. <http://bit.ly/GFVBrh>

“Court Wades Back into Affirmative Action,” by Tony Mauro. The Supreme Court announced Tuesday that it would revisit the divisive and vexing issue of affirmative action in higher education. <http://bit.ly/GMZwjC>

“Diversity in the Legal Profession — Let's Talk About It,” by Michael Reilly. If lawyers are serious about increasing diversity, conversations about diversity should be integrated into everyday practice, starting with conversations between in-house and outside counsel. <http://bit.ly/xcuylL>

“Embattled Deputy Prosecutor James Konat Resigns,” by Jennifer Sullivan. A longtime senior deputy King County prosecutor who went on leave last summer after being rebuked by the state Supreme Court for using racially charged language during a 2007 murder trial has resigned. <http://bit.ly/xlgJvL>

“Female Bosses Are Getting (a bit) More Respect,” by Vivia Chen. Well, I guess this is progress — a majority of Americans don't give a hoot whether their boss is male or female. <http://bit.ly/ytfXwu>

“Law Society Survey Highlights Keys to Retaining Women,” by Suzi Ring. A recent survey by the Law Society and LexisNexis shows that flexible working options, gender diversity, and better performance assessment are the keys to retaining more women in law firms. <http://bit.ly/wHRNm8>

“LGBT Bar Association Honors Out & Proud Corporate Counsel,” by Catherine Dunn. Prudential’s in-house group is the first corporate law department to offer an internship specifically to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, said LGBT Bar Association’s executive director D’Arcy Kemnitz, and the profession should take note. <http://bit.ly/xjk4u8>

“Life Without Parole: Unfair for Children. The high court should recognize that standards of decency have evolved against sentencing children to die in prison,” by Kim Taylor-Thompson. Twenty years ago, the cover of *Newsweek* magazine blared “Teen Violence: Wild in the Streets.” High-profile academics, politicians, and journalists predicted the rise of a generation of “super predators.” These explosive labels, more often reserved for children of color who committed crimes, pushed the public to fear a coming “army of young male predatory street criminals.” <http://bit.ly/GGjHa>

“Make Jobs More Family Friendly,” by Molly Bishop Shadel. Unfriendly firm policies have a ripple effect, leading to low numbers of women in leadership roles in society. For the past two decades, about half of law school graduates have been women, but currently only 6 percent of managing partners at the 200 largest U.S. law firms are female. <http://bit.ly/xZ593C>

“Men on Paternity Leave Are Slackers at Home,” by Vivia Chen. The good news is that paternity leave is getting more attention. The not-so-good news is that men aren’t really taking care of the baby when they take time off. In fact, many are using the time to do more work. <http://bit.ly/wIMkNh>

“ProtectMarriage.com GC Sees ‘Clear Path’ to Supreme Court for Prop 8,” by Brian Glaser. In a long-awaited decision on the question of gay marriage in California, the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals on Tuesday found the state’s Proposition 8 ballot initiative unconstitutional. <http://bit.ly/GFb6iR>

“University of Iowa Prevails in Age-discrimination Lawsuit,” by Karen Sloan. The University of Iowa College of Law did not discriminate against a candidate for a faculty position on the basis of his age, an Iowa jury found on February 24. <http://bit.ly/GHTVC6>

“Women-Owned Law Firm Expanding With New Lateral, L.A. Office,” by Petra Pasternak. Employment law boutique Miller Law Group has added its twenty-second attorney this year and is planning to expand into Southern California. <http://bit.ly/GQDTRs>

Opportunities

The WSBA Public Service Program is looking for volunteers!

Volunteer to help homeowners facing foreclosure! Tacoma-Pierce County Volunteer Legal Services and the Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project need volunteer attorneys to help homeowners avoid foreclosure at a **free legal clinic on May 5, 2012, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Tacoma.** Northwest Justice Project’s Foreclosure Prevention Unit will host a live foreclosure prevention webinar for attorneys who volunteer at the May 5 legal clinic (1.5 general MCLE credits pending). Mark your calendar to attend this webinar on May 3, 2012, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. To volunteer at the clinic and sign up for training, please email Ariel Speser at ariels@nwjustice.org.

Presidential Search

The WSBA Board of Governors is seeking applicants for the position of WSBA president for 2013–2014. Pursuant to Article VI (D)(2) of the WSBA Bylaws, the 2013-2014 President-elect may be an individual from anywhere within the state. The WSBA executive director must receive applications by 5:00 p.m. PST on May 4, 2012. The duties and responsibilities of the president are set forth in the WSBA Bylaws. <http://bit.ly/GSs2pp>

The WSBA is accepting nominations for its Annual Awards! For a complete listing of the awards, including nomination information, visit <http://bit.ly/rjTTRq>.

Upcoming Events

March 28: Juvenile Justice and Racial Disproportionality: A Presentation to the Washington State Supreme Court. <http://bit.ly/wvEyzm>

March 30: Annual Diversity Reception at Gonzaga University School of Law: <http://bit.ly/GH8r7k>

April 19: QLaw's Seventh Anniversary Celebration. Join the GLBT Bar Association of Washington's 7th Annual Banquet: <http://bit.ly/zgKhTw>

April 27–28: WSBA Board of Governors Meeting, Tulalip: <http://bit.ly/u1Zvfs>

May 4: Northwest Immigrant Rights Project 28th Anniversary Celebration. Sky Church at the EMP Museum, Seattle. 5:30–8:00 p.m. <http://nwirp28anniversary.eventbrite.com>

June 1: WAMBAC Seventh Annual Statewide Diversity Conference: <http://www.wambac.org>

June 8: WSBA Board of Governors meeting, Yakima.

June 8–10: ATJ/Bar Leaders Conference, Yakima.