



**Washington State Bar Association**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Joanna Plichta Boisen to Receive 2011 WSBA Young Lawyers Division**

**Thomas Neville Pro Bono Award**

(SEATTLE) — The WSBA Young Lawyers Division (WYLD) is pleased to announce that the 2011 Thomas Neville Pro Bono Award recipient is Seattle attorney **Joanna Plichta Boisen**, of Foster Pepper PLLC. The WYLD Board of Trustees selected Boisen not only for her commitment to pro bono and her deep involvement with Washington's access to justice community, but also for encouraging private law firms to think differently about their commitment to pro bono legal services. The award will be presented at a ceremony on November 10.

In 2005, as a summer clerk, Boisen created a formal pro bono program at Foster Pepper PLLC. Seeing the potential of instituting a formal pro bono program at a regional law firm, she drafted a 20-page strategic proposal laying out operational details about how the firm and community would mutually benefit from hiring pro bono counsel to advance meaningful corporate social responsibility initiatives statewide. The firm's executive committee approved her proposal, which has positively impacted countless low-income people and nonprofit entities in Washington state.

For the past six years, Boisen has served as Foster Pepper's pro bono counsel and is the youngest attorney in Washington state to hold this position. She is also chair of the Pro Bono Counsels and Coordinators in Seattle, a position she has held for the past five years.

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Boisen is also the program supervisor for the Motion for Revision and Reconsideration Project. This program, which helps victims of domestic violence appeal wrongfully denied protection orders, was eliminated by a local nonprofit two years ago due to lack of funding. Believing in the importance of this unique resource for victims, Boisen adopted the project, making it Foster Pepper's flagship pro bono program. The firm now sponsors annual trainings to prepare attorneys to take domestic violence cases.

Boisen was a founding member of the Ghetto Reparations Project in Washington, which helps Holocaust survivors access reparations from the German government. Many of these clients are elderly and low-income, and extremely grateful for legal assistance. In 2010, she also helped launch another project in Washington that would benefit survivors who did not receive their pensions during WWII, called the ZRBG Pension Project. To date, these programs have helped hundreds of clients. (See the May 2011 *Bar News* article "[Legal Synergy: Attorney and Client Perspectives](#)" for more information about this project.)

In addition to providing direct representation to clients, Boisen has authored numerous articles on corporate pro bono and often presents at Continuing Legal Education seminars on pro bono legal topics. She also serves on various boards and committees, including the Access to Justice Board's Law School Relations Committee. She is also an active member of the WSBA Pro Bono and Legal Aid Committee, serving on its Fellowship, Private Bar, and Supreme Court subcommittees. She also holds leadership positions in the Federal Bar Association and King County Bar Association.

In the past six years, Boisen has earned several honors, including the *Washington Law and Politics* Rising Star Award in 2010 and 2011 for her outstanding work with nonprofit organizations and indigent clients. In 2010, she was honored with the Outstanding Recent Alumna award from Seattle University School of Law for her pro bono endeavors, leadership in the community, and entrepreneurial approach to public interest law.

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### **About the Washington State Bar Association**

The WSBA is part of the judicial branch, exercising a governmental function authorized by the Washington State Supreme Court to license the state's 34,470 lawyers. The WSBA both regulates lawyers under the authority of the Court and serves its members as a professional association — all without public funding. As a regulatory agency, the WSBA administers the bar admission process, including the bar exam; provides record-keeping and licensing functions; and administers the lawyer-discipline system. As a professional association, the WSBA provides continuing legal education for attorneys, in addition to numerous other educational and member-service activities.

The governance of the WSBA is vested in its Board of Governors. There are three governors from the seventh congressional district; one from each of the other eight districts; and three at-large, one of whom represents the Young Lawyers Division. The president is **Steven G. Toole**, of Bellevue. The 2010–2011 president-elect is **Stephen R. Crossland**, of Cashmere; the 2011–2012 president-elect is **Michele G. Radosevich**, of Seattle; and the immediate past-president is **Salvador A. Mungia**, of Tacoma. The Board meets regularly (every six weeks) at various locations around the state, and its meetings are open to the public. Much of the work of the Bar is carried out through its numerous standing committees, 27 sections, and a Young Lawyers Division with its many committees.

The Washington State Bar Association's mission is to serve the public and the members of the Bar, ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.

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