



The National Conference of Bar Presidents
Task Force on Diversity
presents...

Best Diversity Projects of 2004

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July 2004

BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS OF 2004

The Task Force on Diversity of the National Conference of Bar Presidents (NCBP) seeks to encourage bar associations to develop programs to enhance the diversity of their membership and leadership, to address issues confronted by lawyers of color in the profession, and to produce effective programs and activities to encourage students of color to consider a legal career. This compendium, "Best Diversity Projects of 2004," provides a description of successful diversity programs and describes how those programs were developed in the hope that it will provide bar leaders and executives with ideas and models for adaptation to their particular associations.

The task force extends its appreciation and thanks to the ABA Division for Bar Services for its invaluable assistance and to the state, local and specialty bars which have shared their programs. We hope bar leaders and bar executives will consider this report a useful resource.

NCBP Task Force on Diversity

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BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS OF 2004

Diversity summits and conferences, a leadership academy and a judicial candidates forum are some of the programs sponsored by state, local and specialty bar associations to help increase diversity in the profession. The "Best Diversity Projects of 2004," is a compilation of diversity programs submitted by those bars.

The projects are divided into state and local categories and often include "how-to" information, objectives, program costs and results obtained. In addition, each entry includes a bar association volunteer or staff person to contact for more information. These projects were self-selected by the bar associations and all submissions were included in the publication. Some submissions have been edited for space and clarity.

Copies of this report have been distributed to paid registrants at the NCBP Annual Meeting, August 5-7, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia, and are available to all individual members of the NCBP.

Kimberly Vann
Editor

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BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: ISBA Diversity Summit
Bar Association: Indiana State Bar Association

Type of Bar: Voluntary

Membership Size of Bar: 11,500

Contact Person: Jennifer Infanger, Communications Assistant
Phone: (800) 266-2581 **E-mail:** jinfanger@inbar.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$11,300

Description of Project/Program:

Last summer, a relatively small number of managing partners, judges, deans, placement directors and heads of corporate and government law departments were invited by the Indiana Supreme Court and the Indiana State Bar Association (ISBA) to participate in the ISBA Diversity Summit, June 20-21, 2003. The ISBA's objective was to have as many as possible of those leaders of the profession who recruit, educate, hire, promote and nurture the careers of lawyers to participate in the summit and seek to devise ways to bring about fuller participation by people of diverse color and ethnicity in every aspect of the legal profession.

The summit convened on Friday, June 20, with a reception and dinner in the atrium of the Indiana University School of Law – Indianapolis. The keynote speaker was Charles R. Lawrence III, professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center. A 1969 graduate of Yale Law School, Lawrence practiced with Public Advocates, a San Francisco public interest law firm until 1974, when he began his teaching career at the University of San Francisco Law School. He was later a professor of law at Stanford for seven years and a visiting professor at Harvard, Berkeley, UCLA and the University of Southern California. He is a frequent writer in the areas of race relations, anti-discrimination law and equal protection.

Saturday morning's plenary session, "Understanding the Challenge," was conducted by Verna Myers, a Harvard law graduate and principal of Verna Myers & Associates, a diversity management consultant firm that specializes in the legal profession and serves private firms, government agencies, educational institutions and nonprofit agencies nationally. The firm seeks to motivate individuals and organizations to embrace diversity and inclusion as core values that promote innovation and productivity, and enhance the organizations' abilities to serve clients and constituents.

The luncheon speaker on Saturday was Richard C. Simpson, partner in the Columbus, Ohio, law firm of Bricker & Eckler, LLP, and chair of the Diversity Advisory Committee of the Columbus Bar Association. Last year his committee began an unprecedented diversity initiative involving more than 20 of Columbus' largest law firms. These firms are now engaged in a collaborative effort to significantly increase the number of minority attorneys recruited, hired and promoted. Simpson is a managing partner and past chair of the bond department at Bricker & Eckler. Saturday afternoon was devoted to breakout sessions addressing issues such as rethinking traditional hiring criteria, retention strategies, opportunities and responsibilities for bench and bar associations to foster diversity in the profession and development and encouragement of the next generation of lawyers.

The summit was hosted by the Indiana Supreme Court and the ISBA's Committee for Racial Diversity in the Profession, and sponsored by the IU School of Law – Indianapolis, Valparaiso University School of Law, Contract Counsel and the ISBA Young Lawyers Section. Six hours of CLE credit was offered to attendees. In addition, ICLEF (Indiana Continuing Legal Education Forum) offered on Friday afternoon, in conjunction with the summit, a presentation of the Freetown Village Players entitled "A Matter of Justice," highlighting the 1855 anti-slavery Indiana Supreme Court case of *Freeman v. Robinson*, 7 Ind. 321. An expert faculty augmented the dramatic presentation production with a discussion of how the events surrounding the case affected the equal application of justice in Indiana and the United States then and today.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Maryland State Bar Association Leadership Academy

Bar Association: Maryland State Bar Association

Type of Bar: Voluntary

Membership Size of Bar: 21,580

Contact Persons: Paul Carlin, Executive Director and Janet Eveleth, Director of Communications

Phone: (410) 685-7878

E-mail: pcarlin@msba.org

jeveleth@msba.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$26,831 annually

Description of Project/Program:

To address the need for greater diversity in the volunteer leadership of the legal profession and the local community, the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) created the Leadership Academy in 1996. This young attorney mentoring program, with strong ties to minority bar associations, promotes diversity, offers leadership training and prepares future volunteer leaders. Through the academy, young attorneys focus on leadership and communication skills. They are trained in everything from public speaking, media relations, managing an organization and interviewing skills to meeting planning and fiscal management.

On June 19, 2004, the latest class of 15 Leadership Academy "Fellows" graduated from the program and was recognized during MSBA's Annual Meeting. Many of the academy's graduates, who have moved into MSBA leadership roles, were on hand to congratulate them. Interested attorneys undergo a competitive application process and the 15 successful candidates meet regularly throughout the year with a committee of attorney "mentors" who guide them in the leadership learning process.

This intensive training program includes educational sessions, guest appearances by prominent judges and attorneys and interaction with community and MSBA leaders. Every academy class also plans and implements a public service program geared to help people in a law-related area. To date, 132 Fellows have graduated from the academy and many have advanced to key leadership roles in MSBA and the broader community. Thanks to the academy, they are now promising leaders of the future.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Minority Judges Reception
Bar Association: New Jersey State Bar Association

Type of Bar: Voluntary

Membership Size of Bar: 17,000

Contact Person: Cynthia A. Pellegrino, Director, Membership and Inter-Bar Relations
Phone: (732) 937-7507 **E-mail:** cpellegrino@njsba.com

Cost of Project/Program: \$3,000

Description of Project/Program:

The Minority Judges Reception is a cosponsored social and networking event of the NJSBA Diversity Committee, Women in the Profession Section, Minorities in the Profession Section, Young Lawyers Division and Government and Public Sector Lawyers Committee. Outside organizations also participate in the program and include the Garden State Bar Association, Association of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey, Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey, New Jersey Women Lawyers Association, Asian-Pacific American Lawyers Association of New Jersey and the New Jersey Corporate Counsel Association.

Federal, state and municipal judges are invited to honor their colleagues of color. Lawyers from the NJSBA and the cosponsoring organizations are also invited. In addition to recognizing the achievements of the minority judges, the reception allows lawyers and judges to socialize at the New Jersey Law Center. The Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, the Chief Judge of the District Court and the NJSBA president each address the audience. Costs underwritten by the NJSBA.

The First Minority Judges Reception, held in 2002, attracted 80 attendees. The following year, greater publicity and word of mouth caused the event to grow to 180 guests. The reception takes place the third week in October at the NJSBA Law Center from 6 - 8 p.m. Photos are featured in the *New Jersey Lawyer* Newspaper.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Specialty Bar Summit

Bar Association: New Jersey State Bar Association

Type of Bar: Voluntary

Membership Size of Bar: 17,000

Contact Person: Cynthia A. Pellegrino, Director, Membership and Inter-Bar Relations

Phone: (732) 937-7507

E-mail: cpellegrino@njsba.com

Cost of Project/Program: \$3,000

Description of Project/Program:

The New Jersey State Bar Association's (NJSBA) Task Force on Diversity initiated the idea for a "Specialty Bar Summit" in 2001, which culminated in a one-half day conference in February 2003. The six statewide specialty bars (women, minority and in-house counsel) that cosponsored and supported the event are the Asian-Pacific American Lawyers Association of New Jersey, the Association of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey, the Garden State Bar Association (African-American), the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey, the New Jersey Corporate Counsel Association and New Jersey Women Lawyers Association.

In addition, various NJSBA groups participated in the programming: Minorities in the Profession Section and the Women in the Profession Section, as well as the Special Committee on Government and Public Sector Lawyers. The idea for the summit arose from a desire to celebrate diversity within the bar and to ensure that diversity of opinions continues to form part of the overall agenda governing the bar. The summit included a retrospective of where each of the statewide specialty bars had been -- their origins and organization, what they have accomplished, as well as the identification of current areas of concern. This was the initial phase of fostering the commitment needed from among the specialty bars to work in coalition among themselves and with the NJSBA. The Specialty Bar Summit was planned with the following goals: (1) to identify concerns within each specialty bar, garner organizational support from its own leadership, and further catalog those areas which require support from the State Bar; (2) to determine those concerns where specialty bars can assist each other; and (3) to identify the various objectives which require the commitment and support from the State Bar.

The summit began with a morning session that featured welcoming remarks by the association's president, task force chair, event chair and the keynote speaker. Following the opening session, specialty bars gathered for breakout sessions to discuss and prioritize issues. A specialty bar/state bar panel addressed some of the issues raised. The summit ended with a luncheon and a keynote address. The luncheon speaker, the Hon. Joseph H. Rodriguez, Senior Judge of the U.S. District Court, was the NJSBA's first president of color. The audience was comprised of members of the state bar and various specialty bars. At least 80 people attended, including the presidents of the specialty bars, past presidents and incoming leaders. Topics covered included membership and leadership development, project and program highlights, inclusiveness, legislative programs and more.

In 2004, the goals for the second Specialty Bar Summit were modified to include panel discussions on practical topics. In addition to featuring a keynote speaker from the NAACP who discussed *Brown v. Board of Education*, breakout sessions covered the following:

"Diversity in Politics"

A discussion of how to become an elected official and why diversity is important in the political arena

"Pathway to the Bench"

A primer for those interested in a career on the bench

"Pathway to Diversity for the Corporate Law Department"

A panel on which experienced corporate counsel shared their perspectives on diversity and its impact on the selection of outside counsel and on corporate career mobility

Through the use of volunteer coordinators, the panels consisted of a moderator and panelists--lawyers, judges and lay people--discussing the concurrent session topics. Sponsors for the program included various NJSBA sections and committees, including the Government and Public Sector Lawyers Committee and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Committee. Other organizations supporting the effort were the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, New Jersey Corporate Counsel Association, Asian-Pacific American Lawyers Association, Association of Black Women Lawyers, Garden State Bar Association, Hispanic Bar Association and the New Jersey Women Lawyers Association. This successful event included 100 participants. The NJSBA Board of Trustees approved funding for the cost of the events. Costs included publicity, postage, photocopying, meals and beverages, as well as photography. Menus featured various ethnic foods to compliment the diversity theme.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Conference on Commonality
Bar Association: State Bar of New Mexico

Type of Bar: Unified

Membership Size of Bar: 7,000

Contact Person: Joe Conte, Executive Director
Phone: (505) 797-6099

E-mail: jconte@nmbar.org

Cost of Project/Program: Less than \$1,000

Description of Project/Program:

To follow-up and to continue the work of the State Bar of New Mexico's Task Force on Minorities in the Profession from 1990 and 1999, the Committee on Diversity conducted a one-day conference in January 2004, titled the Conference on Commonality: Partnerships and Opportunities for a Diverse Legal Community. The conference was designed to explore the common missions shared by voluntary and mandatory bar associations, to discuss the development of partnerships to better serve our mutual membership and innovative ways of addressing the practical problems faced by new lawyers in solo and small firm practice. The goal is to begin ongoing dialogue and action plans.

There are many common issues that unite all bars, minority and mainstream alike. The conference addressed pressing concerns that include:

- Leadership training and development
- Solo and small firm resources
- Relevant CLE programming
- Mentoring of young lawyers and law students
- Judicial representation

The Conference on Commonality: Partnerships and Opportunities for a Diverse Legal Community brought together representatives from virtually every minority organization in the state of New Mexico. Each group was requested to send three members of leadership who could represent the varying views within the respective organizations. The groups invited to participate included:

- New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association
- New Mexico Indian Bar Association
- National Hispanic Bar Association
- Navajo Nation Bar Association
- New Mexico Black Lawyers Association
- New Mexico Gay and Lesbian Lawyers Association
- New Mexico Women's Bar Association
- Senior Lawyers Division of the State Bar of New Mexico
- Solo and Small Firm Section of the State Bar of New Mexico
- St. Thomas Moore Society
- Tonali Legal Alliance of Women
- Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of New Mexico

The Conference provided a truly unique forum to bring together leaders and representatives from all of the state's legal groups for the first time in history. The result has been outstanding in that these groups have been meeting as part of the bar's diversity committee to develop goals and an action plan. Many of the representatives of these groups are also taking a greater interest in bar activities.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Diversity and Leadership Development Initiatives
Bar Association: New York State Bar Association

Type of Bar: Voluntary

Membership Size of Bar: 72,000

Contact Persons: Kenneth G. Standard, President and A. Thomas Levin, Immediate Past President
Phone: (518) 463-3200 **E-mail:** president@nysba.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$13,100

Description of Project/Program:

The New York State Bar Association undertook an integrated approach to enhancing diversity. The program objectives were: (1) to better reflect the diversity of the legal profession, and bring new talents, interests and experiences into the membership of NYSBA sections and committees; (2) to enhance communication and coordination with minority bar associations on issues of mutual concern; (3) to introduce minority attorneys to the numerous paths to rewarding professional development and mentoring opportunities in the NYSBA; and (4) to encourage more participation of minority attorneys in NYSBA's Annual Meeting educational and networking events.

Initiative One: Diversity and Leadership Development Committee (July 2003)

The NYSBA sought to further the goals of enhancing the diversity within the membership of the Association, and support more minority attorneys who wish to advance to leadership positions. A Diversity and Leadership Development Committee was formed to spearhead broad-based initiatives on behalf of the association.

Initiative Two: Governance Report (2003 -2004)

NYSBA aims to better reflect the diversity of the profession by better engaging the talents and experiences of minority attorneys, especially in leadership positions. The Special Committee on Association Governance sought to establish designated seats in the Executive Committee and House of Delegates for minority attorneys, and this expansion was approved in January 2004.

Initiative Three: Adoption of Diversity Statement - New York State Bar Association House of Delegates (November 8, 2003)

To formalize its commitment to enhance diversity within its membership, the NYSBA House of Delegates, the association's decision and policy-making body, adopted a Statement of Diversity.

Initiative Four: Business Law Diversity Plan

The NYSBA Business Law Section, with more than 4,300 members, used an ABA Model in developing its own Diversity Plan. The section established an "Ambassador Program," to provide a more welcoming environment for new members and minority attorneys, and to help introduce them to section members. The section reached out to 30 ethnic, minority and women's bar associations to invite them to attend their Annual Meeting events as guests of the Section.

Initiative Five: Celebrating Diversity in the Bar Reception, January 26, 2004

In collaboration with 14 minority bar associations, the NYSBA organized a "Celebrating Diversity in the Bar" networking reception on the first day of the January 2004 Annual Meeting. The initiative was an effort to bring together minority attorneys and representatives of various NYSBA sections and committees, and encourage greater participation of minority attorneys. Section and committee representatives were on hand to welcome guests, and discuss ways attorneys could get involved.

Minority bar associations were invited to serve as cosponsors of the event, and were asked to publicize the event among their members. Attorneys were offered complimentary passes to Annual Meeting education programs, and were able to learn more about rewarding opportunities for professional development within NYSBA sections and committees. Then NYSBA President A. Thomas Levin, current President Kenneth Standard, and a distinguished guest from the National Bar Association (NBA), former NBA President Beverly McQueary Smith, served as speakers for the evening, sharing their perspectives on the personal and professional value of active bar involvement. The speaking portion of the event was minimal (less than 10 minutes), but the personal testimonies were very enjoyable and motivating for guests. Over 300 people were in attendance at this event. Approximately 70 guests were not NYSBA members. Results to date: Over 50 Celebrating Diversity guests attended various NYSBA educational programs during the Annual Meeting week. The NYSBA gained approximately 20 new members, and reactivated the memberships of approximately 12 others. The NYSBA gained important visibility and recognition that the organization was sincerely committed to strengthening its membership through greater representation from attorneys of diverse backgrounds. To continue the momentum from the Celebrating Diversity reception, the NYSBA leadership is now working on ways to strengthen communication channels, and work on issues of common concern in partnership with minority bar associations.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: *Brown v. Board of Education* Anniversary Observance
Bar Association: North Carolina Bar Association

Type of Bar: Voluntary

Membership Size of Bar: 13,318

Contact Person: Russell Rawlings, Director of Communications

Phone: (919) 657-1558

E-mail: rrawlings@ncbar.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$85,000

Description of Project/Program:

The North Carolina Bar Association produced an extraordinary two-day observance of the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision on Thursday and Friday, May 20 and 21, 2004. The event represented the highlight of Judge Allyson K. Duncan's tenure in 2003-04 as the first African American to preside over the NCBA. Judge James Wynn of the N.C. Court of Appeals chaired the *Brown v. Board of Education* Committee. Attendance and participation was exceptional on both days, highlighted by an audience of some 500 who attended Friday's daytime segment. Large crowds also turned out for the daylong CLE program on May 20, conducted by the NCBA Constitutional Rights and Responsibilities Section (CRRS) in conjunction with the Legal Assistants Division (LAD), and Friday evening's dinner celebration featuring the Brown sisters, Linda and Cheryl.

Professor Jack Greenberg of Columbia Law School, who participated in the oral argument of *Brown* on behalf of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, was the featured luncheon speaker. His appearance was preceded by an "Introduction to Brown" and a re-argument of *Brown* before a "Supreme Court" comprised of four U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals judges and three former chief justices of the N.C. Supreme Court. The daytime event concluded with lively panel discussion moderated by the former president of the state's consolidated university system. The panel included attorneys, a law dean, two judges, the national public school superintendent of the year and the former N.C. governor.

The May 20 CLE program, "Multiculturalism: *Brown v. Board* to Moussaoui," included a video, "The Road to *Brown*," and follow-up discussion; a panel discussion on "The Attorney and Paralegal Roles in Diversity Issues in the Workplace" ; separate section and division annual meetings; separate programs on "Moving Up the Invisible Career Ladder," (LAD) and "Brown's Impact on Litigation Theories, Strategies and Remedies: Is the Pendulum Swinging Back?" (CRRS). The proceedings concluded with general sessions devoted to "Multiculturalism and the Struggle with Racial Profiling," led by ACLU Foundation staff attorney Reginald Shuford of Brooklyn, and "Representing Zacarias Moussaoui," led by his counsel, Assistant Federal Public Defender Gerald Zerkin.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Celebrations Recognizing John Robert (J.R.) Clifford, Esq. - West Virginia's First African-American Lawyer
Bar Association: West Virginia State Bar

Type of Bar: Unified

Membership Size of Bar: 4,300

Contact Person: Thomas R. Tinder, Executive Director

Phone: (304) 558-7993

E-mail: tindert@wvbar.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$1,000

Description of Project/Program:

The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, the Mountain State Bar Association and the West Virginia State Bar's Minority Lawyers Committee cosponsored public seminars and discussions celebrating the work and life of J.R. Clifford, Esquire, West Virginia's first African-American lawyer and civil rights pioneer in three locations of the state. These events were held in connection with the 50th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

In 1896, Clifford brought the first legal challenge of the state's segregated school system to the court, *Martin v. Board of Education*, 42 W.Va. 514, 26 S.E. 348 (1896). The Supreme Court upheld the state's segregation policy, ruling that the Martin children were not allowed to attend the white school even though the alternative meant not receiving an education.

In 1898, Clifford won an important equal rights education case before the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, *Williams v. Board of Education*, 45 W.Va. 199, 31 S.E. 985 (1898). The Fairfax District (Tucker County) Board of Education shortened the school term for African-American schools from eight to five months. Carrie Williams, a black teacher, went to Clifford for advice on whether she should continue teaching even though she would not be paid. Clifford became Ms. Williams attorney and took the case to the West Virginia Supreme Court. The court ruled in favor of Williams, making this the first case in U.S. history to determine that racial discrimination was against the law of the land.

These events were held in Martinsburg, Morgantown and Charleston. Hundreds of citizens were in attendance for these inspiring and educational presentations. A dramatic reenactment of the trial and appeal of Clifford's extraordinary civil rights case, *Williams v. Board of Education*, was done at each location.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Judicial Candidates Forum

Bar Association: Multi-Bar Leadership Council (GA) (10 local voluntary Bar Associations: Atlanta Bar Association, Gate City Bar Association, DeKalb Bar Association, DeKalb Lawyers Association, Georgia Hispanic Bar Association, Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association, Georgia Association for Women Lawyers, Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, Indus Bar Association, Stonewall Bar Association.)

Type of Bar: Local and Specialty

Membership Size of Bar: From 30-6,500

Contact Person: Diane O'Steen, Executive Director, Atlanta Bar Association

Phone: (404) 832-6206

E-mail: dosteen@atlantabar.org

Cost of Project/Program: Approximately \$400

Description of Project/Program:

The program provides a public forum for candidates for contested statewide judicial positions in the Georgia Supreme Court and the Georgia Court of Appeals. The Multi-Bar Leadership Council, which was formed in 2001, sponsored a Judicial Candidates Forum for the candidates for the Georgia Supreme Court and Georgia Court of Appeals on Tuesday, June 29, 2004. The forum was held in the auditorium of the Georgia State University School of Law. The members of all 10 Bar Associations and the general public were invited to attend the forum. A panel of three attorneys reviewed written questions from the audience before they were submitted to the moderator, Denis O'Hayer, a local legal news reporter for two television stations. All candidates for contested judicial, solicitor, district attorney and clerk of court were invited to join the attendees at a reception following the forum.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association Diversity Initiative
Bar Association: Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association (MO)

Type of Bar: Local

Membership Size of Bar: 5,000

Contact Person: Marci McNeal, KCMBA Director of Communications
Phone: (816) 474-4322 **E-mail:** mmcneal@kcmba.org

Cost of Project/Program: Minimal

Description of Project/Program:

Under the leadership of 2003 Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association President Sylvester 'Sly' James Jr., the KCMBA has initiated a comprehensive effort to increase diversity in the legal community. In the seven months since 28 law firm managing partners met at the KCMBA Annual Meeting to sign a Commitment to Diversity, the KCMBA Diversity Initiative has continued to progress towards its ultimate goal of increasing diversity in our profession. The Diversity Committee, consisting of members of law firms, government entities, corporations and law schools, has met bimonthly to lay the groundwork for implementing policies, plans and "best practices" which will be considered, approved, and adopted by the managing partners by the end of 2004. The managing partners committee has met quarterly to review the work of the committee and to make plans to implement the long-range program. At the April committee meeting, a partner in the Washington D.C. office of Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal spoke and explained the steps their firm went through to establish their diversity plans.

Those involved in the Diversity Initiative have created a survey instrument to determine the levels of diversity in our firms at the present time, and this survey will be sent out the first of July to the managing partners. The "best practices" to be implemented have been drafted and are in the review process, and there are plans underway for a major job fair in the fall of 2005.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the Diversity Initiative is that the legal community is working together in order to address and resolve this problem. It is perhaps the first time that this legal community has met to address a common problem and made a written commitment to find common solutions.

By the end of 2004, KCMBA plans to have gathered baseline statistical information and data from the surveys on where Kansas City firms are with regard to diversity in order to determine and evaluate our progress over the next five years. Association staff will have received diversity training in order to become sensitive to the issues. Staff will have cemented relationships with law schools, corporations and firms in order to accomplish this goal and will adopt "Best Practices" as the cornerstone for the plan.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Minority Attorney Business Development Initiative
Bar Association: Dallas Bar Association (TX)

Type of Bar: Local

Membership Size of Bar: 9,000+

Contact Person: Alicia E. Hernandez, DMAP Director/Director of Community Services
Phone: (214) 220-7499 **E-mail:** ahernandez@dallasbar.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$6,500

Description of Project/Program:

The Dallas Bar Association has developed the Minority Attorney Business Development Initiative to assist minority attorneys in developing new business by providing greater access to the court through court appointments, foster business development in the larger community, encourage participation in DBA committees and sections, and create seminars and workshops on law practice issues using basic materials from The Center for Legal Ethics. These goals are accomplished through a variety of efforts including the Dallas Minority Attorney Program (DMAP), monthly Workshop Modules, a Structured Settlements Seminar, and the Large Law Firm Pilot Program.

The Dallas Minority Attorney Program provides practical support to minority attorneys who are practicing in solo and small firms. Held annually since May 2000, DMAP is a free, one-day CLE seminar designed to meet the unique challenges facing solo, small firm, minority, and female attorneys. The program focuses on business development, marketing, office management, technology, and guardian ad litem and other court appointments. All preregistered participants in the program are also given the option to participate in a Guardian Ad Litem Directory. The directory is a compilation of the names, contact information, and qualifications, including language capabilities, of solo, small firm, minority and female attorneys. The program compiles, publishes and distributes the directory to all Dallas County judges who make court appointments with the goal of increasing the number of court appointments for the DMAP target group. DMAP cosponsors include the J.L. Turner Legal Association, Dallas Hispanic Bar Association, and Dallas Asian American Bar Association. Funding sources include LexisNexis, the Dallas Bar Foundation, and the Texas Bar Foundation.

The monthly Workshop Modules, normally held on the first Friday of the month from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m., are focused on assisting lawyers with improving their bottom line through better law firm management. Over the last several years, the Workshop Modules have focused on an overview of law firm management, leasing space, technology, banking, accounting, taxes, malpractice, financial planning, media relations, marketing, Web site development, and partnering with corporations and firms for government contracts.

The Structured Settlements Seminar, a half-day CLE program normally held in the fall, addresses trusts, mechanics liens, and the mechanics of structured settlements. It, like DMAP and the Workshop Modules, is intended to increase business development for the minority and female attorney by educating them in an area of the law that can make them more marketable in representing clients and their interests and, in turn, improve their law business.

The Large Law Firm Pilot Program is a program intended to increase the communication between law firms and law schools regarding diversity hiring with the goal of placing more minority attorneys in larger law firm settings. Currently, six law firms and 24 law schools are participating in the program.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Summer Minority Law Clerk and Mentor Program
Bar Association: Houston Bar Association (TX)

Type of Bar: Local

Membership Size of Bar: 11,500

Contact Person: Kay Sim, Executive Director
Phone: (713) 759-1133

E-mail: kays@hba.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$500 for copying, mailing expenses and cost of professional etiquette program

Description of Project/Program:

The program was developed by the HBA's Minority Opportunities in the Legal Profession (MOLP) Committee in 1996 to provide opportunities for minority first year law students to gain exposure to the legal community by practicing in law firms, corporate legal departments and government agencies. While opportunities exist for second and third year students, the HBA program is the only clerkship program that focuses on first year students. Students from all three of Houston's law schools - South Texas College of Law, Thurgood Marshall School of Law, and the University of Houston Law Center - are eligible to participate. These students may not have the support network or contacts within the legal community to get internships or clerkships after their first year of law school. The overall goal of the program is to "level the playing field" for these students when they compete for clerkships during their second and third years of law school, and to better prepare them to be good lawyers.

The program was designed not only to provide income and experience to minority students, but also to place them in an environment where they will receive mentoring and guidance. The participating firms and law offices are encouraged to pay the first year interns the same weekly salary they would pay second-year clerks. They also are asked to give these students the same work and opportunities given to all law clerks. While those chosen for clerkships represent a wide range of academic achievement, some firms prefer to provide opportunities to students who may not be among the top tier in their law schools. They feel that these students may benefit from practical evaluations of their research and writing skills even more than students with higher grades.

MOLP Committee members visit all three law school campuses to present an overview of the program and describe the application process to interested students. Students then fill out and submit an application, along with a resume, cover letter and personal statement that outlines the student's unique, individual qualifications, interests, aspirations for the study of law or reasons for wanting to participate in the program. Each student may choose no more than three firms to receive their application. The firms then choose which students they would like to interview from among those applicants. Law students agree upon submitting their applications that they will only accept an offer to clerk from one participating firm or office. Students are generally hired for six weeks during the summer, although some firms may offer longer clerkships. Some firms even continue mentoring students throughout their law school career and will help the student find permanent employment upon graduating.

In early June, the HBA MOLP Committee sponsors a luncheon for all Houston summer clerks and attorneys. The clerks and employers participating in the MOLP program are encouraged to attend, and the HBA will pay for the interns to attend if their firm does not. The luncheon includes a panel discussion on practicing law in Houston, with an emphasis on issues particular to minority attorneys. In addition, the MOLP Committee sponsors a seminar on "How to Survive the Summer Clerkship" that emphasizes "do's and don'ts" in a professional environment, etiquette, dress and how best to make a positive impression on your employer. To date, there have been more than 100 minority law students placed in clerkships through this program. Approximately 35 different law firms, corporate legal departments and government agencies have participated in the program through the years. Approximately 20 firms now participate each year, and the number has grown steadily since the program's inception.

There have been many "success stories" among the summer clerks, including students who have gone on to work for some of Houston's largest law firms and even the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C. Their experiences in the Summer Minority Law Clerk and Mentor Program have prepared them for success and have given them the background and knowledge needed to compete with top students. As one corporate lawyer/mentor says, the program "is not a handout, but a hand up."



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Gender Fairness Initiative
Bar Association: Houston Bar Association (TX)

Type of Bar: Local

Membership Size of Bar: 11,500

Contact Person: Kay Sim, Executive Director
Phone: (713) 759-1133

E-mail: kays@hba.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$2,724.92 for luncheon expenses

Description of Project/Program:

In 2003, the Houston Bar Association established a Gender Fairness Task Force to discuss and plan initiatives aimed at urging the legal profession to "shatter the glass ceilings" within their organizations. The task force developed a Commitment Statement that set tangible goals for law firms and corporate law departments. The statements asked the firms and law departments to sign a pledge that provided:

- A material increase in the number of women at the partnership level in law firms by year-end 2007, with an approximate pro-rata percentage of women partners that reflects the proportion of women at the experienced attorney level (10 years or more) in the law firm. An increase in the number of women in firm management that corresponds to the increase in the number of women in the partnership ranks. A material increase in the number of women in corporate and public sector legal departments by year-end 2007, with an approximate pro-rata percentage in management which reflects the proportion of experienced women attorneys in such departments. Develop and implement objective and unbiased criteria and procedures for evaluation and promotion to management positions.
- Approximately equal retention rates for both men and women attorneys for 2007 and beyond.
- Obtain feedback from employees on their assessment of gender issues in the workplace. Senior management will be responsible for addressing unconscious stereotypes and perceptions of gender bias.
- Offer formal or informal networking opportunities, client development activities, and mentoring programs to women attorneys at all levels to help women establish their professional profiles and to develop client bases.
- Identify and promote opportunities for women at all levels to participate in challenging projects, organizational committees, practice groups, and management training to help enable women to assume significant management roles within their law firms or law departments.
- Embrace the concept of part-time partners and flexible work schedules, including making efforts to ensure that alternative schedules are an equitable and viable option.
- Get the message out that senior management of the organization embraces these commitments.
- Provide information to the National Association for Law Placement and the Houston Bar Association regarding (a) the number of women partners, (b) the number of women attorneys serving in management positions, and the (c) number and gender of part-time partners.

On June 17, 2003, the task force held its first seminar on gender fairness issues and presented the commitment statement to firms for consideration. To date, 24 firms and corporate law departments have signed the statement. The task force has held two additional seminars, one on the business case for gender equality and one for summer associates on balancing career and family. The task force will continue to encourage compliance and commitment from Houston's legal community, as well provide education to all members of the bar on gender fairness issues.

A list of participating firms and a copy of the commitment statement can be found by visiting the Houston Bar Association's Web site at www.hba.org.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Color of Justice

Bar Association: Fairfax Bar Association - Young Lawyers Section (VA)

Type of Bar: Local

Membership Size of Bar: 2,058

Contact Person: Yvonne McGhee, Executive Director

Phone: (703) 246-2740

E-mail: ymcghee@fairfaxbar.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$1,600

Description of Project/Program:

On February 28, 2004, the Fairfax Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section, in conjunction with the Asian American Bar Association, the Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association, the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association, in conjunction with Fairfax County Public Schools' College Partnership Program, the George Mason University School of Law, and the Virginia Women Judges Association, held the inaugural Color of Justice program in Fairfax County. Also participating in the program were Justice Lacy from the Virginia Supreme Court, Judge Annunziata from the Virginia Court of Appeals, Judge Lee from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia and Judges Alden, Klein and Newman from the Circuit Courts and Judges Grodner, Dawkins and Wiggins of the Juvenile Domestic Relations Courts of Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria.

The purpose of the Color of Justice program was to encourage college-bound minority high school students to consider careers in the law as attorneys and judges. This program was specifically targeted towards minority students in three high schools in Fairfax County who are achievers and for whom a career in law was of interest. These were bright students, who, in some cases, were the first in their families to seek a college education, much less consider graduate work. The event occurred at the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Courthouse in Fairfax. The program began with a panel discussion with all of the members of the bench sharing their positive experiences and their challenges in college and during their legal careers. The discussion was moderated by Kyung (Kathryn) Dickerson, of Smolen Plevy, who also served as coordinator for this inaugural event.

The stories told by the judges were inspirational to the students - a number of whom had failed to appreciate the challenges that were faced by the members of the panel in attaining the bench. Students were treated to the various experiences that lead each of the panel members to their positions on the bench. Later, Associate Dean Anne Richard of the George Mason University School of Law spoke briefly about what law schools look for when reviewing admissions applications and how students are able to finance law school. The new Director of Minority Affairs, Assistant Dean Darrell Jackson, graciously invited all attendee students, both high school and American University students, to give him a call if they had any questions about applying for law school, whether in the next year or, for the high school students, in four years.

The second half of the program was its highlight - groups of high school students were joined by one judge, two attorneys and one law student from GMUSL. Over 20 attorneys of various practice areas and levels of experience participated in the program, as did students from American University. The groups shared an informal lunch and students were encouraged to ask questions and to discuss where they were in their educational careers and what they were considering in terms of professional careers. This was a wonderful opportunity for these students to explore and get guidance toward a career in law and for the members of the bars and benches to develop relationships with possible future colleagues. This was also the first cooperative coordinated effort of this many voluntary and minority bar associations in the area. The program created bridges of communication and support between the various associations and is intended to be an annual program with primary leadership passing from bar association to bar association with all of the other associations serving to continue to support the program. This year, Gina Marine of Colten, Cummings, Watson & Vincent and Sameena Sabir, special counsel for DCSE, also served on the coordinating committee and their concerted efforts helped make the event a success.

The Color of Justice program was originally a project of the National Association of Women Judges. The National Association of Women Judges launched its first Color of Justice program in St. Louis, Missouri, in August 2001, with funding provided by a grant from the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation. Judge Grodner proposed the running of the program in Fairfax and provided invaluable support in bringing the various groups together to coordinate this program.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: The Future of the Law Institute
Bar Association: King County Bar Association (WA)

Type of Bar: Local

Membership Size of Bar: 5,500

Contact Person: Ginna Owens, Development Director
Phone: (206) 267-7006 **E-mail:** ginnao@kcba.org

Cost of Project/Program: \$45,000

Description of Project/Program:

Through a concentrated two-day program, supplemented by continuing mentorship, the Future of the Law Institute (FLI) introduces high school youth of color and/or economic disadvantage to the possibilities of a career in the law. FLI inspires students through a series of high school-oriented programs that offer the opportunity to meet law students, practicing lawyers, judges, law professors and others, from widely diverse backgrounds and ethnic heritages.

The FLI curricula includes a typical classroom setting, interactive workshops on current topics of interest to young people, a mock trial, a question and answer session with sitting judges, and sentencing hearings in the courtroom. It provides information and resources regarding how to get from high school to law school, supporting efforts along the way through its mentorship program.

FLI students are offered a scholarship incentive if they complete the two-day program. They are eligible for a \$100 scholarship if they enroll in a baccalaureate program, and a \$500 scholarship if they, later, enroll in law school. These modest amounts reflect FLI's fledgling budget. Increasing their size is considered for the 2004 institute and will depend on funding.

The first FLI was held in 2002 as a pilot program for 35 students, grades 10 -12. In 2003 the number was increased to 66 students from ten schools. In early 2004, FLI became a bar affiliate and recruited members for a policy-setting governing council. A diversity trust was established soon after to serve as ambassadors to the legal community, encouraging both personal and financial participation.

The unmistakable impact of the program will be measurable when FLI students are admitted to college, go to law school, and finally become attorneys. Meanwhile, one gains a sense of its positive impact from the evaluations that students complete at the conclusion of each institute, and from comments and reactions in follow-up conversations with students and participating school advisors and family members.

The students' written evaluations are uniformly positive: portraying student enlightenment, a "can-do" attitude. School advisors comment on attitudes reflecting new determination and positive, redirected outlook. Students report the value of interaction with judges and lawyers, the opportunity to witness courtroom sessions, the substantive legal issues discussed, and the importance of hearing successful law school students and lawyers explain how they overcame the same social and cultural obstacles faced today by students.

By annually selecting a group of minority high school students, bringing them into King County's two law schools, and involving them in activities designed to give a powerful sense of the important work attorneys do in addressing issues of vital importance, the Future of the Law Institute distinguishes itself. The active participation and leadership of the practicing bar, the sitting bench, and both law schools sends the important message that diversification of the legal profession is not simply the work of universities, but is best accomplished through partnerships involving all elements of the justice system.



BEST DIVERSITY PROJECTS

2004

Best Project: Initiative for Diversity

Bar Association: A consortium of King County Bar Association, King County Bar Foundation and various minority and specialty bar associations, with support of Washington State Bar Association (WA)

Type of Bar: State, Local, Minority and Specialty **Membership Size of Bar:** varies

Contact Person: Steve Rovig, Partner, Hillis, Clark, Martin and Peterson

Phone: (206) 623-1745

E-mail: srr@hcmp.com

Cost of Project/Program: Nominal to date (We anticipate a budget of \$40,000 - \$50,000 when staff is hired.)

Description of Project/Program:

The Initiative for Diversity began as a project of a consortium of minority and specialty bar leaders in King County, Washington. Having successfully launched the Future of the Law Institute, which was aimed at encouraging students of diverse backgrounds to consider a career in the law, the group next focused its sights on establishing a program that would advance the cause of diversity in the workplace.

After joining forces with members of the Glass Ceiling Task Force, the effort was expanded geographically to include all of Washington State. Furthermore, the scope of the effort was broadened to address diversity in its broadest definition: ethnicity, race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic level, religion, age and physical, mental and sensory ability. After 18 months in the drafting phase, the result is an Initiative for Diversity that was formally adopted at an April 12, 2004 summit meeting. In attendance were no fewer than six of the members of Washington's Supreme Court, the current and future president of the Washington State Bar Association, and representatives of nearly all of Washington's specialty and minority bar associations.

A 19-member governing council with broadly diverse representation is being formed to guide the initiative through a state-wide launch. Signatories of the initiative will be asked to sign a Statement of Commitments and to join together to advance diversity in the law offices and courtrooms of Washington through a series of recommended "best practices."

The eight commitments in the Initiative for Diversity include pledges to recruit from diverse populations, to promote diversity in each member's management structure, to conduct trainings to increase awareness of diversity issues and to support programs to increase the number and broaden the representation of law students from diverse populations.