

# DIVERSITY THE BAR

Empowering People. Inspiring Leadership.

## Lawyers Shine in MCCA's Broadway-Style Revue

plus

- Rainmakers Reflect on Mentoring
- 2010 or Bust: MCCA's New Capital Campaign
- Scholarship Program Enters Third Year



| M | C | C | A |  
MINORITY CORPORATE COUNSEL ASSOCIATION

## A Campaign for the Future of Diversity



Photo by John Abbott Photography

**T**he start of the New Year is a great time for each of us to reflect upon the prior year and whether it yielded the results we wanted both professionally and personally. It's also a great time for looking ahead to set goals for the coming year and chart timetables for achieving those goals.

After reflecting on the occasion of our tenth anniversary last year, MCCA began to think strategically about how this organization wishes to make a difference going forward. The result was a decision by the MCCA Board to embark on a major effort to substantially increase the range of resources, programs, and services that this association will offer in furtherance of our mission to advance diversity.

It's an ambitious agenda for our tenth anniversary, and achieving it will necessitate MCCA to raise \$10 million, which we have set the goal of collecting by 2010. It's called the MCCA 10x10x10 Campaign (see pp. 50–52 of this issue), and we could not be more excited or dedicated to using these funds to help to change the legal profession in significant and meaningful ways. And we are delighted to have launched the campaign in November 2007 with the early support of the following law firms and corporations who collectively have pledged more than \$1.5 million in support of the MCCA 10x10x10 Campaign:

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The MCCA Board and I would love to tell you more about the Campaign and enlist your support. You can reach me at [vetarichardson@mcca.com](mailto:vetarichardson@mcca.com) for more details. **DB**

Veta T. Richardson

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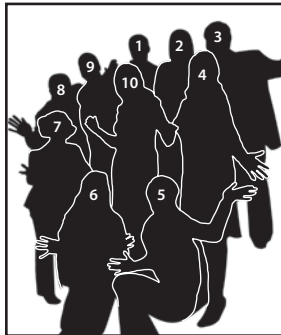
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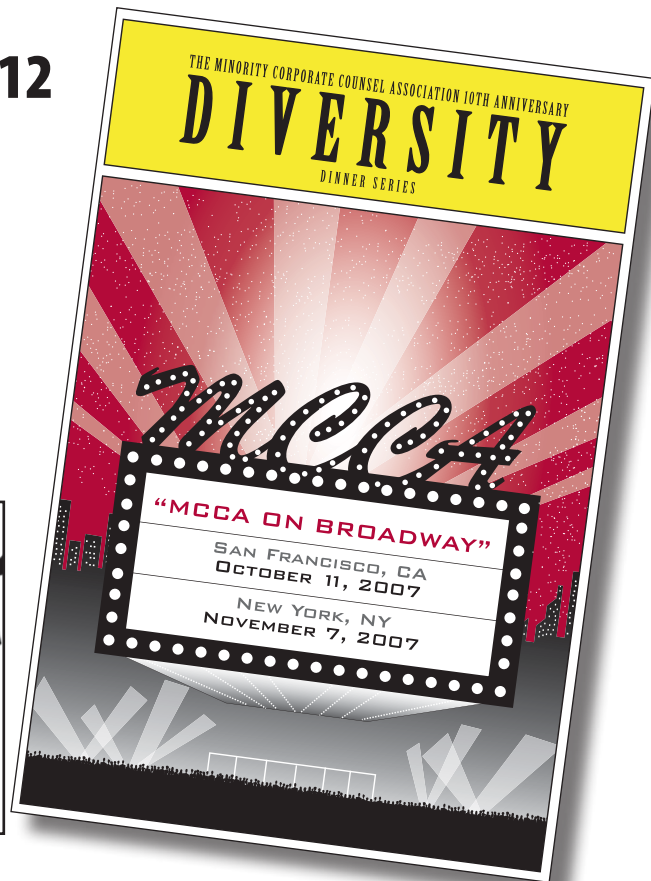
By Patrick Folliard

#### Cover photo

(Clockwise from Center Top):  
1) Mark Robertson, 2) Marty Thompson, 3) Howard Speight, 4) Heather Kubiak, 5) Patricia Lin, 6) Trina "The Queen of Justice" Perkins, 7) Mary Kendall, 8) Tony Ocasio, 9) Paul Shanklin, and 10) Debra Baker (in the middle).



Cover photo by John Abbott Photography



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By Patrick Folliard

**vo-ca-tion** /vo-ke-shun/  
[voh-kay-shuhn] noun—  
a particular occupation,  
business, or profession;  
calling.

*The goal of this column is to enlighten our readers about the private endeavors of attorneys with whom we come in contact in the profession.*

*By examining lawyers and their work practices by day in contrast to the personal interests that they pursue outside of the office, it is our hope that this series of articles allows our readers to see the other side of lawyers who manage to pursue unique interests despite their demanding careers.*

## MCCA on Broadway

It's no secret that many attorneys are frustrated performers. Still, encouraging gainfully employed legal professionals to unleash their inner hams and strut and belt out musical standards onstage in front of hundreds of people seems a shaky proposition at best. Nonetheless, that's exactly what MCCA did. The results, we are relieved to say, were pleasantly surprising.

When MCCA executive director Veta Richardson first began to think about the association's 10th Anniversary Dinner Series (which took place throughout 2007), she knew she wanted to do something different to make the evenings memorable. Asking around, she got a tip from MCCA Board Chair Cathy Lamboley about a Houston-based production team that specialized in putting lawyers on the boards. Richardson's meeting with them



Photo by John Abbott Photography

eventually resulted in “MCCA on Broadway,” an all-attorney mini-musical with a poignant message that charmed audiences at anniversary dinners in San Francisco in October and in New York in November.

The day before the New York performance, the cast gathered in a rehearsal studio in Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood to go over the show. Despite being well-rehearsed and having met with a warm reception when they performed the show in California, the 10-member cast of musically inclined attorneys had reservations about providing the evening’s entertainment at the final anniversary dinner at the Marriott Marquis Times Square.

Traveling mostly from Texas and Arkansas, the attorneys had been warned that New York audiences could be pretty tough and that it’s never easy to hold the attention of a roomful of schmoozing Big Apple attorneys. But when the cast took the stage just moments after dessert had been served and faced a sea of more than 1,100 revelers in the cavernous Broadway Ballroom, nary a nerve was on display. The audience of their peers responded positively to their tuneful efforts and rewarded them with appreciative applause throughout the show. It was evident not only that the cast had triumphed individually and as a group, but that they reflected the camaraderie and supportive spirit of the evening and of MCCA in general.

Performed by attorneys from corporations and firms as well as three solo practitioners, “MCCA on Broadway” is a persuasive musical journey that succinctly and entertainingly outlines the progress of diversity in the legal profession over the past 15 years. The 20-minute show was produced and co-written by Judy Frow (rhymes with “show”) and her husband Gene Smith, who own and operate FrowBiz, a theater company in the special events industry. It featured monologues adapted from MCCA member testimonials and pop and R&B classics with lyrics tailored to the production.

The show began with Marty Thompson (Haynes and Boone LLP), Patricia Lin (Chevron), Heather Kubiak (Fulbright & Jaworski LLP) and Trina Perkins-Moutin (solo practitioner aka “The Queen of Justice”) bounding onstage as four young law school graduates eager to make their way in the profession. Soon they are joined by their equally enthusiastic male counterparts, played by Mark Robertson (Fulbright & Jaworski LLP), Antonio Ocasio (Wal-Mart Stores Inc.) and Howard Speight (Law Office of Howard Speight). The idealistic lawyers sing of their aspirations and legal ambitions in “MCCA on Broadway,” a legal take on “On Broadway,” a tune made popular by singer George



*From left to right: Patricia Lin, Mark Robertson, and Marty Thompson perform the “Diversity Drag.”*

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◀ **Top row** (from L to R): Mark Robertson, Marty Thompson, Howard Speight, Jim Benton, music director and accompanist.

**Middle row:** Mary Allen, backup vocalist and production assistant, Trina “The Queen of Justice” Perkins, Paul Shanklin, Debra Baker, Patricia Lin, Heather Kubiak, Gene Smith, co-writer and stage manager.

**Front row:** Tony Ocasio, Judy Frow, co-writer and director, Mary Kendall, Camilla Smith, production assistant, and Gene and Judy’s daughter.

Benson. Debra Tsuchiyama Baker (Connelly-Baker-Wotring-Jackson LLP), Mary Kendall (Wal-Mart Stores Inc.) and Paul Shanklin (Shanklin Law Firm) join the cast to sing the final verses of the show's optimistic title song. In San Francisco, the cameo players were Cornell Boggs (Coor's), Mary Snapp (Microsoft), Lauri Shanahan (Gap Inc.), and Rhonda Bethea (Del Monte Foods). Marie Lona (Winton & Strawn LLP) was a part of the San Francisco production, but a heavy work schedule prevented her from reprising her role in New York.

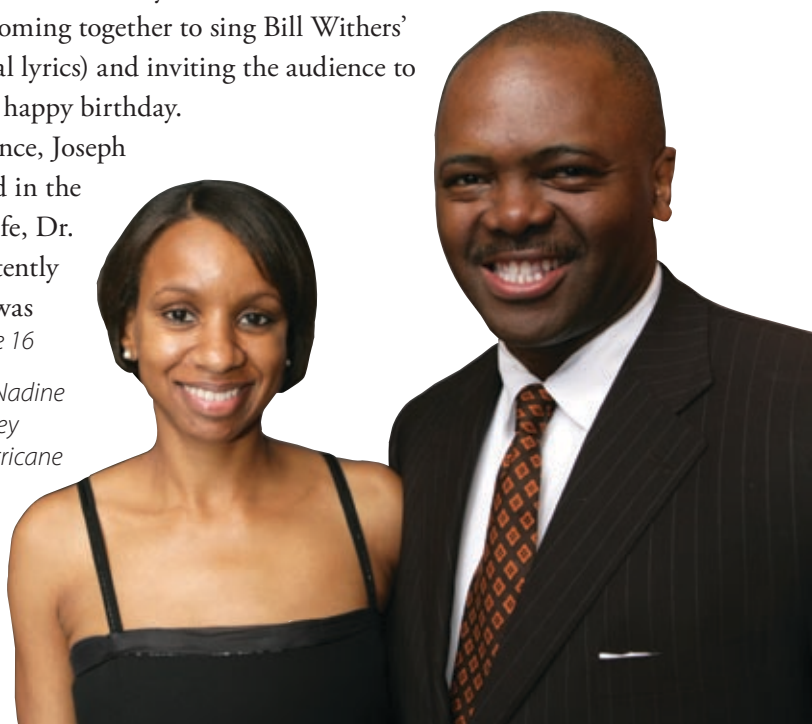
Reality hits when Robertson, as the smug voice of years of discrimination, flanked by Thompson and Lin as a pair of bouncy flappers, breaks into the "Diversity Drag" (to the tune of the Jazz Age anthem "Varsity Drag"), advising the newly minted women and minority lawyers, "Our clients want someone who looks just like me. You'd never succeed here, I'm sure you'd agree...That's the way we do the Diversity Drag!"

Down but not out, the attorneys press on, bonding with the growing diversity movement in the legal community. Then the trio of Kendall, Kubiak, and Baker sing the show's version of "Waiting on the World to Change," followed by four cameo players—Robbie Narcisse (Pitney Bowes), Don Liu (Xerox), Cindy Faatz (Intel Corporation), and Hinton Lucas (DuPont)—reading excerpts from the seminal 2004 document penned by Palmore of Sara Lee, "A Call to Action on Diversity."

Next, Baker interprets an MCCA member's recollection of how, after a long absence from the profession, the association helped her reenter the workplace. In perhaps the show's most compelling moment, Paul Shanklin delivers a monologue gleaned from the recollections of an African American MCCA member whose life was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. After sending two of his children to safety, the attorney remained behind with his physician wife and their nursing infant at the New Orleans hospital where his wife was employed. There he assisted with patients for six long days, enduring the floods and numerous tragedies wreaked by the storm. For months after the hurricane, his life was seriously upended, until an MCCA connection led to an in-house position with Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. Today, he is rebuilding his and his family's lives in Bentonville, Ark. The show closes with the cast coming together to sing Bill Withers' "Lean on Me" (with the original lyrics) and inviting the audience to join them in wishing MCCA a happy birthday.

At the New York performance, Joseph K. West (the attorney portrayed in the Katrina monologue) and his wife, Dr. Nadine Ford West, watched intently from the audience as his story was  
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*The harrowing experience that Dr. Nadine Ford West and her husband, Attorney Joseph K. West, endured during Hurricane Katrina, were recounted during the performance by Paul Shanklin.*





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told on stage. After the performance, West said, “The good news is that they captured it very well; the bad news is that they captured it very well.” He added, “It’s still very difficult. So much happened in New Orleans that we still don’t speak about—not even to each other—so to see and hear our experience portrayed so movingly in a public fashion is a little jarring at first, but also very cathartic.”

“Above all,” West said, “the show makes me realize how grateful I am to MCCA and Wal-Mart. They’ve both really been there for me and my family. Sharing my story with Judy, and with MCCA’s members, has been a wonderful thing.”



Paul Shanklin delivering his Hurricane Katrina monologue.

Judy Frow, who directed the production, says, “I knew that for an attorney in the audience to see his story performed by a peer or colleague would have a very strong impact. That’s why, when other directors tell me I’m crazy to work with lawyers and not professional actors, I never listen.” For 12 years, Frow has co-written and directed the annual all-lawyer musical comedy for the Houston Bar Association’s Night Court theater company. This full-blown production typically features a cast of 60 lawyers and judges, and regularly sells out its limited run at a 500-seat theater. The most recent offering was titled “Draculaw.”

“Whether it’s a Night Court show or a FrowBiz corporate event, we use our skills, concepts, and techniques to create a theater experience,” says Frow. “In MCCA’s case, it was to acknowledge an anniversary.” Whatever the production, she and her husband co-write the librettos and parody lyrics, typically collaborating from inception to execution.

The cast for “MCCA on Broadway” was mostly Houston-based Night Court regulars, so they were able to get a jump on rehearsals. Cast members in other states learned their parts from scripts and CDs of the score sung by Frow. A day before both the San Francisco and New York performances, Frow arrived with her very able musical director and accompanist Jim Benton and FrowBiz stalwart and featured player Mary Allen Keating, and joined the attorney-performers for a final rehearsal. Frow is fast, and she keeps the blocking and choreography very simple—it’s more about the words. According to Frow, this approach works fine, because lawyers are notoriously last-minute folks who never fail to pull it off in the end.

“A lot of our business includes writing shows to introduce and sell widgets,” Frow says, “so when we get an opportunity to use our craft to make people feel good about a great organization like MCCA, it’s very validating for my husband and me. And for me, it’s great fun to help attorneys and other professionals express their artistic side and, in some cases, even introduce them to their performing side. That’s my joy!”

Cast member and assistant general counsel for Wal-Mart Mary Kendall says, “I’m not a professional singer by any means, but I’d love to do it if I didn’t have to make a living.” Kendall, who studied voice in college before earning her law degree from Texas Wesleyan School of Law, adds, “When attorneys get together, we have a lot in common, but there’s nothing quite like actors and singers getting together—we have a blast!”

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Kendall recruited her Wal-Mart colleague Antonio Ocasio to be in the show at the last minute. Ocasio says, “I warned her that I can’t sing or dance to save my life and that the last time I was up on stage was in a play in junior high school. I think it was Gilbert and Sullivan’s ‘H.M.S. Pinafore,’ but I’m not sure. I told her that if she was willing to take me with the understanding that she’d be better off grabbing anyone off the street, I’d do it.” He did it, and says that being part of the show turned out to be one of the most rewarding experiences he’s had in a long time.

Although he is very involved in diversity initiatives at Wal-Mart and with the Hispanic National Bar Association, Ocasio says the show was his introduction to MCCA: “It’s a great organization that has provided opportunities to many attorneys and their families. I plan to remain involved with MCCA.”

As Mr. Status Quo in the “Diversity Drag” number, Mark Robertson, a partner in Fulbright & Jaworski’s New York office, displays considerable presence and a very respectable voice. Robertson is a theater buff who has invested in a number of Broadway shows, including “The History Boys” and “The Wedding Singer.” Because of his tight schedule, he was unable to participate in the San Francisco show, and although he had the script for weeks, he first looked at it on a flight from Europe just days before the New York performance. “There was a lot going on,” he says. “I was a little worried that I wouldn’t get my lines down. But [he adds, too humbly] everything seemed to work out okay.”

Robertson’s interest in theater dates back to his formative years in Snyder, Texas, where his immediate family was very interested in theater. His local public high school (where he played the stage manager in “Our Town” and Oberon in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”)

*continued on page 20*



*The cast performing the final number for “MCCA On Broadway.”*

# av-o-ca-tion /ævo-ke-shun/ [av-uh-kay-shuhn] noun— something a person does in addition to a principal occupa- tion, esp. for pleasure; hobby.

was ranked by the Rockefeller Foundation as having one of the best high school fine arts departments in the country. “The director was a tremendously talented guy, and we all learned a lot from him,” recalls Robertson. “He was with the school for 30 years; in fact, he was actually paid more than the football coach, a nearly blasphemous thing in west Texas.”

As a student at Columbia University School of Law, Robertson sang and danced in the Cabaret and Law Revue; before transferring to New York in 2001, he was based at Fulbright’s headquarters in Houston, where he was a Night Court regular. “For me, doing ‘MCCA on Broadway’ has been an opportunity to connect with old friends and a chance to perform—a great time overall.”

For Debra Tsuchiyama Baker, founding partner with the Houston litigation and environmental law firm of Connelly·Baker·Wotring·Jackson LLP, theater is something she does just for herself. “At home and at work, it’s about others, but when I’m rehearsing or performing, it’s time for me,” she says. “It’s also an opportunity to meet people I otherwise wouldn’t. For example, Paul Shanklin does a small solo criminal practice in Houston—if it weren’t for theater, we would never have crossed paths and become the good friends we are.”

“MCCA on Broadway” contains a message that Baker says she understands all too well: “When I was starting out in law, I didn’t get invited to be on the pitch teams. I didn’t get the opportunities that the young men got. But it’s different now—because so many corporations demand a team that’s diverse, I’m regularly sought out.”

Baker says, “What most attorneys want is a chance to show what we can do and to have an opportunity to shine.” Every day, MCCA works to make that wish a reality in the office; for two enjoyable evenings last fall, MCCA also made it happen on stage. **DB**

Marie Lona of  
Winston & Strawn  
performs in the San  
Francisco “MCCA on  
Broadway.”



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*Patrick Folliard is a freelance writer based in Silver Spring, Md.*

*Do you have an interesting pastime that you want to share in this space, or do you know other attorneys whose away-from-work activities might be showcased in this column? Please send your recommendations to [robtruhn@mcca.com](mailto:robtruhn@mcca.com), and we’ll consider your submissions for upcoming issues. Thanks!*

By Kara Mayer  
Robinson

## Follow the Leaders

How two families continue the legacy of a fierce commitment to civil rights and the law

If family vacations revolve around annual NAACP conventions, the odds are fairly high that the a child will end up in a career linked to civil rights and the law. That's precisely what happened to Johnita Due, senior counsel and Diversity Council chair for Cable News Network, Inc. (CNN). As young children, she and her sisters, Lydia and Tananarive, spent their summer vacations with their parents at civil rights events. As preteens, they were actively involved in local non-partisan voter registration and education campaigns. "We were calling people on the phone [and] encouraging them to vote," Due recalls. "We were in the car with a megaphone driving through the black community."

The sisters were involved in the civil rights movement in ways that most adults can't lay claim to: They participated in demonstrations and commemorated Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a family well before it was made a national holiday.

With two parents who have spent the better part of their lives furthering the cause of civil rights, it may have been inevitable that Johnita, Lydia, and Tananarive would choose to devote their own careers to the cause. Their father, John D. Due Jr., worked as a civil rights attorney defending protestors, including Dr. King, and litigating the longest desegregation case in the state of Florida. Their mother, Patricia Stephens Due, is a longtime activist and author who, among other notable experiences, was part of the nation's first jail-in in 1960, spending 49 days in jail following an arrest for sitting at a Woolworth lunch counter in Tallahassee.

"My sisters and I realize that our upbringing was unique because of our parents' experiences," Due says. "We've all been shaped by those experiences, and they are such a part of who we are. We really learned by example that one person can make a difference and that it's your responsibility to give back to the community and do what you can.... That was ingrained in all of us growing up. We've all chosen different [career] paths...but we most certainly have been influenced by them significantly and



Photo courtesy of Lee A. Waters, Jr.

Patricia and John D. Due Jr. with daughters, standing left to right, Johnita, Lydia, and Tananarive.

profoundly. Their influence is always a part of what we are doing.”

Due’s own career path didn’t come as much of a surprise to her parents. After receiving a bachelor’s degree in psychology at Harvard University, she earned a master’s degree at the University of Sussex in England, studying race relations and organizational culture on a Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholarship. Her decision to become a lawyer was solidified when she saw the law being used as a tool to effect social change.

As a law student at Cornell University, Due was an NAACP Legal Defense Fund Earl Warren Scholar and interned at the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. Public interest law was Due’s intended career path, but she realized that she could serve the public interest and pay off her law school debt at the same time by working at a Wall Street law firm committed to pro bono work. After receiving her law degree, she worked as a litigation associate at Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam and Roberts, which awarded her a year-long pro bono fellowship to work at Rome’s SOS Razzismo Italia, a nonprofit organization that was part of a network of European organizations committed to fighting racial discrimination.

Now, as senior counsel at CNN, she advises on newsgathering, First Amendment, and copyright issues, and has been involved in access matters such as



*Johnita Due receives a hug from her father, John Due, at her graduation.*

CNN’s successful lawsuits against the state of Florida for a copy of its suspected felons list, and against the federal government for access to the Hurricane Katrina recovery process. Due developed a minority outreach program for the Turner legal department to encourage minority college students to go to law school, and also serves as chair of CNN’s Diversity Council.

Lydia Due is currently on hiatus from practicing law—she was an attorney with the general counsel’s office of the Department of Health and Human Services before choosing to stay home with her young children. She, too, believes that the messages of equality and diversity must be spread, and she devotes much of her time to school volunteering. Tananarive Due, who co-authored

a book with her mother in 2003 called *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights*, also is strongly committed to civil rights.

## **Planting the Seeds of Inspiration**

Anne Robinson, vice president and senior counsel at American Express Travel Related Services Company, Inc., credits her parents for her devotion to civil rights law—William Robinson is a prominent civil rights attorney, and Arlene Robinson’s entire legal career has been in the public sector. William Robinson is the founding dean of the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law and a tenured member of its faculty. He worked



*Anne Robinson and parents William and Arlene Robinson.*

for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where he ran the Litigation Division. He also served as executive director of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. He argued the first Title IV gender discrimination in the workplace case before the Supreme Court. Arlene Robinson worked as a children's advocate in the Washington, DC, Corporation Counsel's office before being appointed a magistrate judge in the Washington, DC, Superior Court. Although she retired a few years ago, Mrs. Robinson still hears cases as an independent hearing officer for the Department of Justice's Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program.

"[Anne] certainly had the opportunity to observe me and her

mother as we went through professional life," says Mr. Robinson. The parents' public interest legal work spilled over into their home, as well. Just as John and Patricia Due often did, William and Arlene Robinson invited their children into the discussions and experiences that were fundamental to their work. The company they kept was far from ordinary and had a profound impact on Anne Robinson's character and aspirations. "I remember Thanksgiving dinners, sitting at a table with all lawyers and two judges," she says.

Mr. Robinson adds that when colleagues came to their house, they interacted with his daughter in such a way as to respect her as an individual. "Anne would observe and interact with some of the more

prominent civil rights leaders in the country and form her own relationships with them," he says. The impact was significant. "I remember being comfortable with debate discussions and the role of authority," Anne recalls. "Questioning authority, as well, was very much a part of my upbringing."

In fact, much of Anne Robinson's formative years involved lawyer-like experiences. "I practiced litigating on my children," says Mrs. Robinson, noting that before appearing in court, she often rehearsed her oral arguments and opening statements using Anne and her siblings as a practice audience. Mrs. Robinson says, "I thought I'd have three lawyers, quite frankly, after giving presentations and then listening to their critiques."

It was Anne in particular who latched on to her mother's work. In fact, on many occasions, she chose to accompany Mrs. Robinson to court, sit in on panel discussions, and join her parents at legal meetings. "I went to more American Bar Association meetings growing up than I do now," Anne says with a laugh.

Though Anne was not always the only child in attendance, Mrs. Robinson says she was the only child who showed a genuine interest in participating. "I was a little fearful once when she really got into debating at an ABA forum," she says, laughing. Mr.

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Robinson remembers that occasion as a milestone in his daughter's path toward the practice of law. "I distinctly recall when she was a junior or senior in college. She was with us and there was a program on the death penalty, and Bruce Fein was arguing in support of the death penalty. Anne, as part of audience participation, stood up and took him on. Arlene was trying to get her to sit down and making comments like, 'Sit down, baby. He'll tear you apart!' But other people in the audience said, 'Be calm, Mom. She's doing just fine.'"

Ironically, it was not evident to Mr. Robinson that his daughter was being affected by his work. It wasn't until he saw the papers she wrote in college that he realized she had developed into a talented, driven, intelligent individual with an eye for civil rights law. "We were having an influence but I wasn't aware of it. We weren't trying to mold a lawyer; we were trying to nurture a young woman," Mr. Robinson says.

"The seed was always there," Anne explains. "My father's influence was inspirational and aspirational. My desire to be a lawyer probably came from my father. Understanding what it meant to be a lawyer came from my mother." Although she anticipated following directly in her father's footsteps, things changed during the summer after her first year at Columbia

**"We really learned by example that one person can make a difference...it's your responsibility to give back to the community and do what you can."**

**— Johnita Due**

Law School. As an intern for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, she worked on a death penalty case that resulted in the execution of her client. She decided that the magnitude of the responsibility attached to representing individual clients was too intense, so during her second year of law school, she explored alternative legal outlets. Eventually she decided to pursue a career outside of the public service arena and took a position working for the private firm of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley and McCloy.

Now Anne Robinson works with small business owners through the OPEN division of American Express. In this role, she provides legal support for credit products, loyalty and acquisition partnerships, new product development initiatives, and general marketing. Although she does not directly deal with public interest law, her devotion to civil rights remains as strong as ever. "I never did, and never will, abandon my commitment to civil rights," she says. "I'm a mentor with an organization called Legal Outreach, and I'm still a very strong supporter of the Legal

Defense Fund. I'm certainly no Sandy Weill, but I am not conservative with my time or checkbook with respect to organizations that I think are really trying to advance a cause and a purpose."

### **Then vs. Now**

Though Anne Robinson and Johnita Due were shaped by their parents' work, professionally and personally, their career experiences have not been the same as their parents' experiences, partly because being a black lawyer in 2008 is different than it was the 1960s. "In 1966, when I entered Columbia Law School, only nine out of 1,000 students were African American," Mr. Robinson says. In fact, he adds, there were only a thousand African American lawyers practicing nationwide. "Now half the school or more are women and, routinely, there are 20, 30, or more African Americans in a first-year class."

While the small numbers in the 1960s meant countless hurdles and obstacles for minority lawyers, one aspect of the situation was

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constructive: It created a close-knit community of black lawyers with ample mentoring opportunities. “I knew all the black students at Columbia, Yale, Harvard, Penn, and George Washington University,” Mr. Robinson says, adding that because only a few law firms were brave enough to hire black lawyers, there was no pipeline to produce mentors for the current generation of young graduates. “It’s in that mainstream law firm context that the inclusiveness has not yet produced an effective system of mentors to black lawyers who are now being hired in more significant numbers.”

But, he says, the profession as a whole has become much more inclusive. Mrs. Robinson agrees and notes that the field of law has also opened up to women. “When Bill first started law school, there may have been a few women in his class. By the time I started at Howard [University], we may have been close to a third of the class. And that got even higher, to 50 percent. Now, in a lot of law schools, there are more women than men.”

The Robinsons agree that there is better representation of all categories of lawyers, a situation in which Mr. Robinson has had a direct role. He recently won an award from the ABA’s Commission on AIDS for work he did 20 years ago for a task force on the rights

**The small numbers of minority lawyers and law students in the 1960s did have one constructive aspect: creating a close-knit community of black lawyers with ample mentoring opportunities.**

of gay and lesbian attorneys. “He was acknowledged by the Section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities for starting the task force on AIDS back when it was not fashionable to be an advocate for gay and lesbian rights and for the rights of AIDS victims,” Anne Robinson explains.

Johnita Due credits much of the momentum behind diversity to corporate America’s recognition of the need to connect to a diverse customer base. “In the past, it was a moral obligation. Today, a lot of businesses and companies look at it as a business imperative,” she explains. “CNN recognizes that it helps our journalism and it helps our business to be inclusive in our programming.”

As for the future of diversity in the profession, the Due family emphasizes that it is imperative to learn from the past and take responsibility for the future. This means reaching out to college students, educating them on diversity issues, building bridges, and impressing on others that everyone has a stake in promoting diversity.

Mr. Due believes that the next generation of lawyers must understand that, while their parents’ generation elevated minorities from second to first class, the ship is headed for catastrophe and it is their responsibility to continue that legacy and avoid hitting an iceberg. “They have a mission for saving America,” he says. “They have to accept responsibility—just like my wife and I accepted responsibility back in the 1960s—to change society.”

For Mr. Robinson, his daughter’s commitment to furthering civil rights and diversity in the profession is a step in the right direction. “[Anne continues] to have good values and respect the profession for all the reasons that it is one of the noble professions,” he says, adding that seeing her carry on the legacy that he and his wife worked so hard for is infinitely satisfying. “It’s an enormous source of personal pride and gratification.” **DB**

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*Kara Mayer Robinson is a freelance writer based in northern New Jersey.*



# Rainmakers Part 2: Mentors and Role Models

By Patrick Folliard

**I**n the last issue of *Diversity & the Bar*<sup>®</sup>, ten partners of color shared some thoughts on how they “make it rain,” and reflected on how their careers developed. Now, in the following pages, those same ten rainmakers discuss the importance of mentors and role models in building a successful legal career.

“If it takes a village to raise a child, then it takes an entire metropolitan area to raise a partner of color,” says **Joan M. Haratani**, litigation partner at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius’s San Francisco office. “I’m literally the result of dozens of people caring about me and wanting me to succeed in a profession that has traditionally been less than welcoming to women and minorities.” Those dozens include Daniel Johnson, an African American partner also at Morgan Lewis whom Haratani describes as “one of the best trial lawyers in the nation.”

Haratani continues, “[Johnson] was a classmate of Hillary Clinton at Yale, he possesses an incredible skill set, and his track record as a trial lawyer is unparalleled. He also cares a great deal about the partners and associates at the firm, and he is refreshingly forthcoming with honest advice that other partners are understandably hesitant to offer.” For example, Johnson gave Haratani tips on ways to maximize her delivery and presence in any situation, from a law firm management meeting to the courtroom.



“He took a risk in pointing out an area where I needed improvement,” says Haratani. “But he told me in a very supportive way, letting me know that as an attorney of color he’s walked in my shoes and made similar mistakes. He did me an amazing service.”

Among her many mentors, Haratani counts attorneys of color like Johnson, but she also stresses that a minority associate needs white male mentors as well: “The power structure is still predominantly white male, and if you don’t have a fan in management, you are history. When it comes to mentors, you must have both.”

**Joseph B. Alexander**

Jr., the co-head of Hunton

& Williams’s private equity practice group in its Atlanta office, agrees.

“While the black mentor/mentee relationship is critical,” says Alexander, who is African American, “it’s also critical for an

African American attorney

to forge relationships with as many white partners as possible. It’s especially important to connect with power partners, those who either have seniority or large books of business, and preferably someone within your own practice area.”

The first partner that Alexander worked for—Katherine B. Seaborn at Gardere in Dallas—also was his first mentor. Alexander credits Seaborn with instilling in him the concept of business development as a way of life, something that wasn’t intuitive to him as a young attorney. “Katherine promoted my relationship-building with junior level people at her clients, people who would be in a position in the future to give me work.”

Later, when he lateralled into Hunton & Williams in 1995 as a third-year associate, a then-partner, J. Stephen Hufford, guided Alexander on his way to becoming a senior associate. According to Alexander, Hufford broke down his associate years into three very lucid, manageable stages, with business development becoming more important as the stages progressed.



“Without Katherine and Steve,” says Alexander, “I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

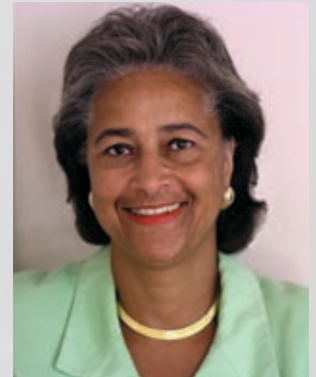
“I try to effectively mentor people who work for me, as well as some of the African American associates in the office, but I don’t believe you should rely primarily on formally arranged mentor relationships,” says Alexander. “You need a solid personal connection for it to really work; these relationships can’t be forced or they’re ineffective.”

**Pauline A. Schneider,**

a public finance partner in Orrick, Herrington, & Sutcliffe LLP’s DC office, cites two formidable women as seminal role models in life—her mother, who had six children, always worked, found time for community activities, and talked about

the importance of giving back; and Eleanor Farrar, an academic who employed Schneider prior to her attending Yale Law School and taught her important lessons in work/life balance. “When I headed off to law school to pursue my practice area as a single mother with two kids, I already had a pretty good idea about how to manage things—forget about a perfectly clean house, and while it was important to have a dinner as a family, it wasn’t important whether or not I had actually cooked the meal.”

Among the professional mentors who have given guidance to Schneider are lawyer and presidential advisor Vernon Jordan, and another high profile African American male: “This may surprise a few people, but [former Washington, DC, mayor] Marion Barry was a wonderful mentor to me,” says Schneider, who, after leaving a non-legal position at the Carter White House, went to work under then-Mayor Barry as the head of the DC Office of Intergovernmental Relations. “Barry believed that if people are smart they can do things, so despite my lack of experience he hired me. I made some mistakes early on, but he was very supportive, as well as shrewd, savvy, and thoughtful. I definitely learned a lot.”



## Rainmakers Part 2

**W. Ray Persons**, a litigation partner in the Atlanta office of King & Spalding, says, “It’s terrific to have a person of color as a mentor if you can find one. As a young black attorney thirty years ago, I didn’t have anybody who looked like me doing what I wanted to do.”



Nevertheless, Persons did have a mentor—William E. Knepper, the late senior partner of the national law firm of Arter & Hadden—and Persons speaks of him in glowing terms. “Bill [Knepper] was not a minority, but we shared a passion for the law and a commitment for excellence. He saw those qualities in me and provided me coaching to ensure my success,” says Persons. “As the head of the Columbus office, Knepper gave me my first job, and in doing so brought the first African American into the office in any capacity. He also made sure the firm hired its first woman attorney. Bill possessed an unmatched skill set, and was a phenomenal human being. Throughout my career, I’ve strived to emulate him.”

Because Persons was without a professional black role model at the start of his career, he goes out of his way to mentor minority associates. In today’s environment, where there are attorneys of color doing the things that young minority attorneys aspire to do, Persons notes that it would be foolhardy for these associates not to take advantage of the more senior attorneys’ knowledge and experience.

An original thinker and corporate partner at Haynes and Boone LLP’s Dallas office, **Wilson Chu** says, “I really didn’t have formal mentors per se, but throughout my life and career, I’ve had friends who were the source of valuable advice—I guess I could call them ‘virtual mentors.’” Likewise, he doesn’t do any formal mentoring, but he does concede that he is friends with younger lawyers whose careers he has undoubtedly helped along. For instance, former Haynes and Boone associate Lu Pham, now partner at a Dallas boutique employment firm, often greets Chu as “*sensei*”

(Japanese for “teacher”). “Lu’s done so well in his career,” says Chu. “We now joke that ‘the teacher has become the student.’”

“Whether you label it mentor or friend, you must have people around to bounce ideas off of; you can’t develop your career in a vacuum,” says Chu. “There’s a lot to learn from people who’ve done it before you—young associates can either learn from my mistakes or they’re free to make their own. At NAPABA [National Asian Pacific American Bar Association], the in-house counsel committee has formally established a very successful mentor program. And our ‘Best Under 40’ group co-sponsors, with MCCA, 8-Minute Mentoring events in which some of NAPABA’s most outstanding young Asian attorneys ‘speed mentor’ interested law students.”



**Nagendra (Nick) Setty**, managing principal at Fish & Richardson LLP in Atlanta, says “My first mentor was Larry Nodine, a law professor at Emory and a partner at my first firm. He taught me how to behave and how to excel in a law firm. And because I came to law school with a science background, meaning little true writing experience, Larry taught me from scratch how to write persuasively.”



Early on, Nodine instilled in Setty the sense that to make it in the legal profession, a young attorney must learn to be the best secretary, paralegal, associate, and partner that he could be. In other words, one needs to learn how to carry a project from point one to completion, and recognize that ultimately the individual attorney must be responsible for all the aspects of the project.

Today, Setty shares his mentor’s sage advice with his younger associates. “I call it thinking like an owner: everything you touch, you own,” says Setty, who is a

mentor to Fish's diverse group of attorneys. "I've been fortunate to have had very good patent, trademark, and other attorneys who've taken me under their wings, and now I feel it's my turn to return the favor by mentoring," he explains. "When someone calls me for thoughts on something that they're facing in a case or in advising a client, I try to provide more than legal analysis, perhaps adding some sense of the nuance involved in delivering the advice."

"Throughout my career, all of my mentors have been white," reflects Setty. "Recently I learned that I was the first Indian attorney to be partner in a major Atlanta firm. Now there are Indian partners in at least half a dozen major firms around town. It's important that we serve as role models and give our younger colleagues a leg up."

"I want minority African American associates to be able to say **Victor Vital** was one of my mentors," says Vital, a litigation partner at Baker Botts LLP's Dallas office. "I feel it's my obligation to share what I know with as many young law students and attorneys coming through the pipeline as possible. There were senior African American partners who could have extended themselves to me but chose not to, and frankly it bothered me. I don't want people coming behind me to feel the way that I've felt."

In his third year of law school, Vital externed for the Honorable Calvin Botley, a federal magistrate judge in Houston and Vital's first professional mentor. "He advised me on the importance of doing certain things as an African American attorney, including giving 110% on any project or assignment, because, unfortunately, there are misperceptions and stereotypes that African Americans have to fight through." Another early role model for Vital was African American attorney Troy Cotton, a current ExxonMobil attorney and client of Vital's. "Troy was a year ahead of me at [Texas Southern University's Thurgood Marshall School of Law], and I noticed him because he was



good in mock trial, and mock trial was my passion in law school." After graduation, Cotton moved on to the Harris County's District Attorney's Office in Houston. When Vital applied to the same office a year later, Cotton provided him with assistance and recommendations. And after Vital was hired by that office, Cotton—unbeknownst to him—remained a role model for the young Vital.

"Of course, it's fine and helpful to have majority role models too," adds Vital, who has been mentored by majority partners throughout his career, including at Haynes and Boone, his previous firm. Currently, Vital is on the lookout for his next mentor. "When you reach a more senior level it becomes harder to find mentors," he explains. "Still, I continue to observe and emulate superstar trial lawyers from afar, thinking to myself 'in 10 or 20 years, I'd like to have his career.'"

**Stephen A. Riddick,**

a corporate partner at Greenberg Traurig LLP's Washington, DC, and Tysons Corner, Va., offices, says "I believe minority associates should take their mentors as they find them...without regard to race or gender. As a young professional, if you find a veteran professional in your or a related field who can—and is willing to—take an interest in your career and personal life (if appropriate), you are quite lucky and should, by all means, take advantage of that opportunity."



"As a matter of fact," he continues, "the associate in my group with whom I work most closely is a majority associate. Over the past few years, I have spent a great deal of time mentoring him on topics ranging from substantive legal work to career strategies to personal matters. His name is Christopher Davis."

Among Riddick's first professional mentors was George L. Russell Jr., Baltimore's first African American judge and later a partner at the firm (then-titled Piper & Marbury) where Riddick began his career. Because Russell was a trial lawyer, the pair's connection was not substantive; nevertheless, the

## Rainmakers Part 2

mentor did enlighten still-green Riddick on how to gauge people and survive in a large firm while remaining grounded. It was from another man, Richard C. Tilghman (who is white), that Riddick learned the nuts and bolts of corporate lawyering. Riddick worked primarily with Tilghman for six years at Piper, and credits Tilghman with laying out the successful four-year plan that allowed him to make partner.

**Deryck A. Palmer**, a financial restructuring partner in Cadwalader, Wickersham, & Taft LLP's New York office, notes that "an African American attorney really needs both minority and majority mentors. Obviously, minority mentors are helpful



because they can more easily relate to, and understand, the unique experiences of African American attorneys. Such empathy facilitates more candid and fruitful discussions on a variety of issues. But majority mentors are equally critical in creating opportunities and facilitating relationships at a majority firm, and in serving as an important reality check. While a minority attorney may conclude that a negative firm experience stemmed from issues related to race, the majority mentor can offer a different perspective, explaining that a particular issue 'is not one of race, but instead something that all attorneys go through as part of the development process.' Gaining such insight into varied points of view can spell the difference between success and failure for a minority associate."

According to Palmer, mentor/mentee relationships tend to thrive where there is personal chemistry, good work product, and a commonality of interests. Those relationships work best, in his experience, when forged organically, rather than forced upon the parties. However it happens, "having a partner mentor—whether majority or minority—opens doors to work with the partner's client base," reflects Palmer. Indeed, partner mentors are essential to facilitating the integration of African American attorneys into the firm practice, from providing associates with excellent

assignments and training experiences to new business development opportunities to introducing associates to clients and transitioning client relationships, as well as a host of other intangibles, that are valuable for a young lawyer of any race or ethnicity at a private law firm.

For **Gary A. Hernandez**, an insurance partner at Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal LLP, mentors have played an invaluable role in his career. "While I've known many excellent mentors, three have been particularly crucial in helping me to navigate my way," says Hernandez. "Former San Francisco



city attorney Louise Renne groomed me to be a lawyer—she gave me my first law job, and introduced me to the courtroom and jury trial. When I went into government, Rick Baum, then-chief deputy of the California Department of Insurance, took me under his wing and taught me how to manage an organization with 500 people, not an easy task for a lawyer who has been taught to dissect sentences and look for the possibility of a dire outcome in every situation. And here at Sonnenschein, former firm chairman and current partner Duane Quaini generously showed me the ins and outs of building a practice. He was and continues to be an instrumental mentor for me at the firm."

Hernandez, who forewent much of the typical early law firm path by entering private practice as a partner, is surprised by the number of associates who do not seek out mentors: "Many don't ask, or some ask but don't follow up," he says. "Maybe it's because some young attorneys in big law firms have been successfully self-reliant throughout their law school and professional careers prior to being hired by firms? I'm not sure, but from my experience mentors are essential—not to drag you up the ladder, but to work beside you and assist you in becoming the best attorney you can possibly be." **DB**

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*Patrick Folliard is a freelance writer based in Silver Spring, Md.*

# NAPABA'S Best Lawyers Under 40—Leadership in Action

By Ben Lumicao

**A**s an assistant U.S. attorney in Massachusetts, Colin Owyang prosecuted both Al Qaeda-trained shoe bomber Richard Reid and mobster Stephen Flemmi (aka “the Rifleman”). The efforts of Owyang and his colleagues in the Flemmi case were recognized by Attorney General John Ashcroft, who presented them with the Attorney General’s Award.

Now assistant general counsel for commercial litigation at National Grid, Owyang says that handling the high-profile prosecution of a terrorist like Richard Reid “brought me into close interaction with government servants at a variety of law enforcement,

intelligence and other agencies who are vastly underappreciated yet still work to ensure our safety and freedom every day.”

Theo Cheng, a litigator who recently joined Proskauer Rose LLP, represented songwriters and music publishers in *MGM Studios, Inc. v. Grokster*,

*NAPABA named its “Best Lawyers Under 40” for 2007 at its annual convention last November in Las Vegas, Nev. Awardees included (left to right): Jennifer Choe Groves, Khin Mai Aung, Harmeet Dhillon, Vincent A. Eng, Theodore Cheng, Tung Chan, Shirish Gupta, Minh-Duc (“Ducie”) T. Le, Patricia Lin, Marty Lorenzo, Emily Kuo, Judith Kim, Thuy Thi Nguyen, Garner Weng, and William Yu. Not pictured: Christine Chi, Sharon Hwang, Colin Owyang.*



*Ltd.* “It was a copyright infringement action alleging secondary liability against peer-to-peer unlicensed Internet file-sharing companies,” Cheng explains. “On behalf of songwriters and music publishers, I managed all aspects of the litigation, including proceedings before the Supreme Court of the United States.” Cheng says, “The Court ultimately issued a landmark 9-0 ruling setting forth standards for inducement liability under the Copyright Act.”

Owyang and Cheng are just two of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) Best Lawyers Under 40. NAPABA released the Best Under 40 list at its national convention in Las Vegas in November—the group includes public servants, in-house counsel, and law firm attorneys. “NAPABA’s Best Lawyers Under 40 list recognizes the best young attorneys throughout the country,” says Jim Goh, chair of the Selection Committee and a partner with Holland and Hart, LLP. Les Jin, executive director of NAPABA, concurs: “These individuals have not only attained prominence in their respective legal endeavors, they have also exhibited steadfast commitment to community and public service, particularly in the Asian Pacific American community. They have climbed high up the ladder of success; they have tried and won major trials;

they have handled complicated deals; they have been entrusted with the responsibility of heading national practice groups; they have made significant contributions to the public sector—and they have done it all at a relatively early stage of their careers.”

This year’s honorees are noted especially for their accomplishments and dedication to serving the needs of the Asian Pacific American (APA) community. Khin Mai Aung is an attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), where she directs the Educational Equity and Youth Rights Project. When three veteran Cambodian and Latino teachers in Lowell, Mass., were fired after discriminatory English fluency testing, Aung sought and won reinstatement, full back pay and retroactive benefits for all of them.

Besides the *Grokster* litigation, Cheng says his proudest career moment was “handling the summation before a jury in a case representing a Nepalese domestic worker.” Cheng’s representation of the woman’s claims of abuse at the hands of her employers resulted in an award of \$206,000 in compensatory damages and \$20,000 in punitive damages. He says, “It was so gratifying to fight for someone’s rights and to know that justice was served.”



## NAPABA's Best Lawyers Under 40

Harmeet Dhillon, managing partner of Dhillon and Smith in San Francisco, has the decision from her first case framed on the wall of her office. Dhillon recalls, "I obtained asylum for Mohammed Tariq, a refugee from Kashmir whose family had been killed by the military. He was detained in Queens, N.Y., in a federal detention facility during his exclusion proceedings. Over the course of several months, I won his trust, his freedom, and a chance at a peaceful life after a trial before a federal immigration court. Handing my client a one-way ticket I bought for him myself, so that he could go stay with his only living relatives, was one of the proudest moments of my life."

**“These individuals have not only attained prominence in their respective legal endeavors; they have also exhibited steadfast commitment to community and public service.”**

**— Les Jin, Executive Director, NAPABA**

NAPABA's Best Under 40 lawyers aren't just noted for their contributions to the APA community in the courtroom. Thuy Thi Nguyen, whose family fled Vietnam as refugees when she was only two years old and eventually settled in Oakland, Calif., co-produced a publication entitled *25 Vietnamese Americans in 25 Years*, which is archived at the Library of Congress. Her many community service efforts ultimately led the mayor of Oakland to proclaim a day in her honor.

But while some have been inspired to serve the public as attorneys, one member of the Best Under 40 says it was a personal example of public service that inspired her to become an attorney in the first place. Minh-Duc ("Duc") Le, assistant general counsel at Capital One, served as a fellow of the ABA Business Law Section and a board member of the Domestic Violence

Resource Project. She credits her father's concern for the Vietnamese community with inspiring her career choice. Le recalls, "I was a young child living in the Washington, DC, area at the end of the Vietnam War, and my father pulled me out of kindergarten one morning to stand outside of the White House and pass out leaflets aimed at spreading awareness about the devastating situation faced by thousands of Vietnamese refugees who were stranded at sea or in refugee camps. I later realized that what my father, who was also a lawyer, taught me that day was one of the most powerful lessons I'd ever learned. As a solo practitioner, he dedicated countless hours to providing advice and help for many individuals. I remember seeing the looks of appreciation on the faces of the numerous people he helped."

NAPABA's Best Under 40 attorneys can point to the tangible results their lawyering skills have produced for clients. Emily Kuo, associate general counsel at the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, was originally trained as a litigator. But in her first year in-house, she entered the arena of transactional law, negotiating a \$250 million construction and services deal with a manufacturing company in

China. "[The deal] ultimately led to a significant equity stake in the Chinese company's projected multibillion dollar IPO," says Kuo.

Bill Yu, a partner at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP in Chicago, recalls being asked to co-chair a complex product liability trial at the last minute. "I had to completely immerse myself to get up to speed and was responsible for half of the many witnesses. We obtained a verdict for our client," says Yu.

Marty Lorenzo, a corporate and securities partner in DLA Piper's San Diego office, cites "the ability to do a 144A note transaction for a client (a few months after they went public) and nearly simultaneously doing an M&A deal to purchase the oldest company on the New York Stock Exchange. Nothing proves true client

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satisfaction as strongly as an invitation to return—and both deals were extremely significant in helping me shape the practice I have today.”

Patricia Lin, counsel in the Environmental Practice Group of Chevron's law department, sees the importance of her role in “leading the legal team providing support to Chevron's Environmental, Social and Health Impact Assessment standard process, which was created to help all of Chevron's capital projects around the world be examples of world-class performance.”

Jennifer Choe Groves works for the White House as director for intellectual property in the Office of the United States Trade Representative. Her work takes her around the globe. “I've negotiated several international treaties on behalf of the United States and have led numerous U.S. delegations in negotiating intellectual property chapters of free trade agreements in the Middle East and Asia,” Groves says. “It's always interesting negotiating with foreign countries, from a political, cultural, intellectual, and personal perspective. I learn a great deal about each country's economy, politics, and culture, and meet many interesting foreign officials in my work.”

Judy Kim, assistant general counsel for Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., works on the real estate operations team, handling general corporate, climate change and energy matters for the company. She says her responsibility for advising the client on energy issues has “given me the opportunity to work on cutting edge issues such as climate change and renewable energy projects. It's exciting to come to work and pursue projects where I also have a personal interest, such as sustainability.”

Shirish Gupta, a senior litigation associate at Mayer Brown, is in the midst of a number of stock option backdating disputes, representing special committees, officers and directors. “It's exciting working on these high-profile cases, especially when you get to work directly with the senior executives.” Recently, he helped secure the dismissal of securities fraud class action claims against several of his clients.

Tung Chan, the securities commissioner of Hawaii, counts all the citizens of the state as her clients. She led the effort to pass Act 95, one of the first state laws

in the nation that increased penalties for securities violations against seniors, a measure that a number of states and the U.S. Senate are now considering. Her office also has worked with the Securities and Exchange Commission to initiate the first major case resulting from a nationwide sweep to protect senior investors and expanded investor education outreach to more than 60,000 seniors in 2007 alone.

Thuy Thi Nguyen, general counsel for Peralta Community College District, helped reach a settlement in an eminent domain case for the building of the new Berkeley City College, which provided an estimated benefit to the college district of \$1.9 million. She says her negotiation of the deal was important “not just because of the high acquisition costs involved, but because of a long-standing promise to the community that a new campus would be built.” Ultimately, it was this level of service that led to Nguyen's appointment as general counsel in a unanimous vote by the board of trustees.

For Sharon Hwang, a partner at McAndrews, Held & Malloy in Chicago, her proudest moment was her first jury trial victory. She recalls, “In addition to the regular stresses of trial, I had left my four-month-old baby at home for the first time ever to serve as second chair for a contentious patent infringement trial, and our lead attorney fell ill during the trial. I stumbled through my first cross-examination of a very experienced expert witness. Our team was somehow able to persevere, and the extra stress made our victory so much sweeter!”

### **A Sense of the Community's Needs, A Source of Community Strength**

Despite their accomplishments, many members of the Best Under 40 noted concerns about issues facing Asian Pacific Americans in corporate America. To Colin Owyang, “The first step is to firmly establish and maintain APA issues as one set of concerns in the broader context of any discussion about diversity.”

For Garner Weng, a partner at Hanson Bridgett's San Francisco office, the advancement of APAs in the legal profession is a particular concern: “Though there has

been some progress at the entry level, such as the junior associate ranks in law firms, the number of APAs at the partner ranks lags behind, particularly in firm leadership, among general counsel of prominent corporations and among judges.”

Patricia Lin agrees: “The numbers of APAs in senior management are still not reflective of the community at large. I believe that those numbers can be increased and the pipeline to leadership roles can be primed by encouraging a wholesale opening of the APA community and culture to the mainstream—mentoring, networking, cultural exchange, internships, and other programs all can help improve the way corporate America evaluates its APA professionals.”

Vincent Eng, deputy director of the Asian American Justice Center, says that the most gratifying moment in his legal career arose from his efforts to help maintain a pipeline for all minority students to professional careers through his work on the Asian American amicus brief in support of the University of Michigan and affirmative action in the *Gratz* and *Grutter* cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. “The brief was joined by nearly 30 Asian American organizations, an unprecedented level of unity and support from the APA community on a legal brief,” says Eng.

Emily Kuo believes a greater sense of unity among APAs—such as the support generated for Eng’s amicus brief—is critical. Kuo says, “There’s certainly a place for separate Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, and other groups, and I recognize that the separate groups have unique and differing concerns, but we should also make a better effort to reach out to one another and find more common ground for discussion. This would help APAs have a stronger, more unified national voice, especially politically.”

Christine Yong-Hwa Chi, a litigation partner at Dewey & LeBoeuf in New York, sees a deeper concern with the needs of APAs in the legal process generally. “There are issues with all aspects of access to justice,” observes Chi, “including the number of APA judges

on the state and federal level, participation by the APA community in the jury pool, and the lack of adequate court interpreters to serve the needs of APA litigants, crime victims, and witnesses. There are no quick fixes. The work done by bar associations, such as the Asian American Bar Association of New York, on judicial screening panels, public education efforts, and organized communication with the legislature and the bench are a start.”

Theo Cheng agrees with Chi, adding, “We need to encourage APA youth to consider possible career paths in politics and in the judiciary, and to participate in politics—at every level—so that we can develop a broad base of interest and support.” Harmeet Dhillon says, “I think that APAs must try to increase their influence in the political process, which in most states and at the federal level is the key to getting candidates recognized and promoted to the bench.”

Marty Lorenzo, a partner at DLA Piper who has served in the Marine Corps reserves for nearly two

## NAPABA’s Best Under 40 attorneys can point to the tangible results their lawyering skills have produced for clients.

decades, wants a spotlight on warriors of a different generation, focusing on the plight of Filipino World War II veterans. “Americans have forgotten that the Philippines was a U.S. territory before, during, and after World War II. Filipinos fought under the U.S. flag under military orders issued by President Roosevelt even before the attack on Pearl Harbor. These veterans fought proudly alongside and under the command of U.S. forces, but then were denied veterans benefits promised by the same government they took an oath to defend. When Congress passed the Rescission Act of 1946, it even went out of its way to single out Filipino veterans, saying that the efforts of these brave men would not count as active service entitling them to veterans benefits, despite their bloodshed and struggles in some of the most ferocious combat of the war.” Lorenzo

## NAPABA's Best Lawyers Under 40

urges passage of a bill before Congress that would grant full veteran status to the Filipino veterans who are still alive. He says, "The number of Filipino veterans has dwindled from well over 200,000 at the beginning of the war to about 5,000 in the United States and 12,000 in the Philippines, and even the youngest are in their late 70s, with most in their 80s and 90s. There's a Filipino veterans equity bill, Senate Bill 1315, headed for a floor vote. Among other things, the bill would restore pension and other benefits for these

veterans with nonservice or noncombat disabilities." An impassioned Lorenzo adds, "The bill still falls short of treating all the Filipino veterans on par with the U.S. veterans they fought alongside, but after 61 years of this injustice, honor requires nothing less than enacting this bill into law." **DB**

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*Ben Lumicao is counsel with Allstate Insurance Company. Mr. Lumicao was featured in NAPABA's 2006 Best Under 40 list.*

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### **Khin Mai Aung**

Khin Mai Aung is a staff attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), where she directs the Educational Equity and Youth Rights Project. She filed a Supreme Court amicus brief supporting the school districts in the recent Seattle and Louisville desegregation cases, and is working with local partners to preserve racial integration in San Francisco and Chicago schools. She was active in the battle against Michigan's anti-affirmative action Proposition 2, and won reinstatement for three veteran Cambodian and Latino teachers in Lowell, Mass., who were fired after discriminatory English fluency testing. Ms. Aung is a 1996 graduate of Boalt Hall School of Law at University of California at Berkeley, where she was on the *California Law Review* and *Asian Law Journal*.



Appeals, 10th Circuit, and for the Constitutional Court of South Africa. She is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations and graduated from Dartmouth College and the University of Michigan Law School.

### **Theo Cheng**

Theo Cheng recently joined Proskauer Rose LLP, where he handles complex litigation involving patents, copyrights, trademarks, and commercial disputes. Previously, he played integral roles in the *Napster* and *Grokster* litigations. He has also served as a law clerk to the Honorable Julio M. Fuentes (3rd Circuit) and the Honorable Ronald L. Buckwalter (E.D. Pa.). Committed to public service and *pro bono* work, Theo is active in several bar associations, has been appointed a special prosecutor on criminal appeals, and maintains a docket involving civil rights and intellectual property matters. Governor Eliot Spitzer recently recognized this commitment by appointing Theo to a statewide diversity commission. Theo graduated from Harvard (A.B. with honors) and NYU (J.D.), where he was editor-in-chief of the Moot Court Board.



### **Tung Chan**

As Securities Commissioner of Hawai'i, Tung Chan led the effort to pass Act 95, one of the first state laws in the country increasing penalties for securities violations against senior citizens. A number of other states and the U.S. Senate are now considering similar measures. Her office has also worked with the Securities and Exchange Commission to initiate the first major case resulting from a nationwide sweep to protect senior investors and expand investor education outreach to more than 60,000 senior citizens this year. She clerked for Chief Judge Stephanie K. Seymour on the U.S. Court of



### **Christine Yong-Hwa Chi**

Christine Yong-Hwa Chi is a litigation partner at Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP in New York. Her practice focuses on representing organizations and individuals in criminal and regulatory investigations and related civil litigation. She regularly conducts internal investigations and counsels companies on regulatory and legal compliance issues. From 1997 until 2003, Christine

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was an assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of New York, where she conducted criminal investigations, jury trials, and appeals in cases ranging from bank, wire, and securities fraud to racketeering. Christine served on the board of the Asian American Bar Association of New York from 2005 until 2007, currently serves on the advisory board of the School of the Blessed Sacrament, and is an active member of the Harvard Law School Alumnae Association.



### Harmeet Kaur Dhillon

Harmeet Kaur Dhillon is managing partner of Dhillon & Smith, a San Francisco commercial, real estate, and entertainment boutique. Throughout her career in private practice, Harmeet has devoted substantial *pro bono* assistance to victims of domestic violence, human rights violations, ethnic/religious discrimination, and hate crimes. She is civil rights chair of the South Asian Bar Association of Northern California, trustee of the Sikh Foundation, counsel for the South Asian Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF), former director of the ACLU and numerous other nonprofits, and a Schwarzenegger appointee. Harmeet immigrated to the United States from India as a child, earning her B.A. from Dartmouth and her J.D. from the University of Virginia. She served as law clerk to the Hon. Paul V. Niemeyer (4th Circuit) before joining Shearman & Sterling in New York and London.



### Vincent A. Eng

Vincent A. Eng is the deputy director of the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC). Before joining AAJC, he was managing editor of Bernan Press and prior to that position he was an attorney-advisor at the U.S. Department of Justice. Vincent is an adjunct professor of law at American University, Columbia University, and The



George Washington University, where he lectures on Asian Americans and the Law, Criminal Sentencing, and Legal Research. He is also the faculty advisor for the National Security and Law Society at American University Law School. He has written and edited more than ten books on various legal and political matters. His latest major publication, "Sentencing, Sanctions, and Corrections," a law school casebook, was published by Foundation Press, a division of West Publishing.

### Jennifer Choe Groves

Jennifer Choe Groves works for the White House as director for intellectual property in the Office of the United States Trade Representative. She coordinates U.S. intellectual property (IP) policy, leads international treaty negotiations for the United States, and oversees IP in Russia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and North Africa. Jennifer chairs the Special 301 Committee on international IP and authors the annual Special 301 Report. Previously, she was a prosecutor with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and an IP and entertainment litigator with several prominent law firms. She graduated from Columbia Law School, Rutgers Law School, Princeton University, and the Juilliard School of Music. She serves on the Asian Pacific American Bar Association (APABA)-DC's Judicial Nominations Committee and Educational Fund (AEF) Executive Committee and is past-president of AEF.



### Shirish Gupta

Shirish Gupta is a senior litigation associate at Mayer Brown, focusing on high tech, securities, derivative, consumer law, and employment cases. Increasingly, Shirish has been defending employers in arbitrations and administrative proceedings brought by former executives. Shirish is the president of the South Asian Bar Association of Northern California and recently co-chaired the North American South Asian Bar Association (NASABA) Annual Convention, which was attended by 750 attorneys from around the country and South Asia. Recently, he fought for and obtained



insurance coverage for an Indian family whose house had been burned down in a hate crime and secured the release of a prisoner who had been convicted of a third-strike offense for stealing a bottle of vitamins.

### **Sharon A. Hwang**

Sharon A. Hwang is a shareholder at McAndrews, Held & Malloy in Chicago, where she practices intellectual property law with an emphasis on patent litigation. A graduate of Boston College Law School, with a B.S. in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois, Sharon has successfully litigated significant patent cases from coast to coast in technologies ranging from digital cellular telephony to orthopedic implants. Sharon currently serves on the board of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) Chicago affiliate, while also serving as her firm's marketing partner. She recently established her firm's Diversity in Patent Law Fellowship and represents her firm in the Chicago Women's Leadership Initiative to promote the advance-



ment of women in large law firms. Sharon is actively involved with raising three daughters, including serving as vice president of their school's parent-teacher organization.

### **Judy Kim**

Judy Kim is assistant general counsel at Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., in Bentonville, Ark. A member of the Realty Division, her responsibilities include negotiating and drafting various contracts on behalf of the energy management and facilities maintenance departments. She is the former president of the Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association. Before moving to Bentonville, she assisted in establishing a monthly legal referral clinic focused on serving the Asian American and Latino American communities in metro Atlanta. Her current project is helping to establish an Arkansas affiliate of NAPABA. She received her B.A. from Columbia University, magna cum laude, and her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.



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### Emily T. Kuo

Emily T. Kuo recently joined The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center as associate general counsel, practicing corporate and health law. She graduated with honors from Harvard University, received her J.D. from Harvard Law School, and clerked for U.S. District Judge Sim Lake. Emily is the 2007 president of the Asian American Bar Association of Houston and the 2007–2008 vice-president for membership of NAPABA. She also serves as appointed member to the State Bar Committee on Judiciary Relations and the Mayor's International Affairs & Development Council, director of the Society for the Performing Arts, and director of Houston Early Music. This year, Emily was named a Texas Super Lawyer—Rising Star and also received the inaugural “Young Achiever's Award” from the Chinese Professional Club.



### Minh-Duc (“Ducie”) Le

Minh-Duc (“Ducie”) T. Le is an assistant general counsel at Capital One, where she advises the business lines on consumer banking laws. Prior to joining Capital One, Minh-Duc was with the Federal Reserve Board handling such matters as mortgages, fair lending, financial privacy, and unfair or deceptive acts or practices. She was also an attorney at the U.S. Department of Justice, and a law student intern for Baker & McKenzie in Bangkok and a refugee organization in Hong Kong.



Minh-Duc is a frequent speaker on banking at American Bar Association conferences. She recently served as a Fellow of the ABA Business Law Section and board member of the Domestic Violence Resource Project. She graduated from the College of William & Mary and the Georgetown University Law Center.

### Patricia Lin

As counsel in the Environmental Practice Group of Chevron's law department, Patricia Lin manages environmental litigation in the Gulf Coast region, advises Chevron's supply and trading companies on asset transfers, and leads the legal team assigned to

supporting Chevron's global risk management and capital project impact assessment processes. Patricia is a member of Chevron's Law Function Diversity Council, previously served on the Houston Bar Association's Gender Fairness Task Force, was the youngest person to serve as president of Houston's Asian American Bar Association, and founded the Asian American Bar Foundation of Houston in 2005. Patricia also performs in the Houston Bar Association's annual Night Court musical, chairs the Houston Young Lawyer Foundation's Grant Committee, and is an avid underwater photographer and gourmet cook.



### Marty Lorenzo

Marty B. Lorenzo is a partner in the Corporate and Securities Group of DLA Piper's San Diego office. He represents public and private growth companies, venture capital firms, and investment banks in capital markets transactions, mergers and acquisitions, and SEC matters. He is a member of DLA Piper's National Diversity Committee and Chairman of its San Diego Diversity Committee.



Marty is chairman of the Southwest Center for Asian Pacific American Law, NAPABA regional governor for Southern California, and a past-president of the Filipino American Lawyers of San Diego. He is also a member of the San Diego Asian Business Association Board and the University of San Diego School of Law Alumni Board. He has proudly served for more than 19 years in the Marine Corps Reserve.

### Thuy Thi Nguyen

Thuy Thi Nguyen has been general counsel since 2003 at Peralta Community College District, which consists of Laney College, Merritt College, Berkeley City College, and College of Alameda. She also oversees risk management and serves as District-wide Strategic Planning Manager.



Thuy is active in several community organizations and is a frequent keynote speaker at community events.

She co-produced a publication titled “25 Vietnamese Americans in 25 Years,” which is archived at the Library of Congress. In recognition of her community service, the Mayor of Oakland proclaimed June 23, 1993, “Thuy Thi Nguyen Day.” In 2002, she was named one of “30 Most Influential Asian Americans Under 30” in the country by PoliticalCircus.com/Rainmaker Political Group.

Thuy received her B.A. at Yale College and J.D. at UCLA School of Law.

### **Colin Owyang**

Colin Owyang is assistant general counsel for commercial litigation at National Grid, the second largest electricity and gas utility in the United States. Colin was previously an assistant U.S. Attorney in Massachusetts, where he prosecuted al-Qaeda terrorist Richard Reid (the “Shoe Bomber”) and mobster Stephen Flemmi (the “Rifleman”). Outside of work, Colin has served on the boards of community nonprofit organizations, including



the Boston Center for Community and Justice and the Chinese Economic Development Council, as well as by political appointment to the Massachusetts Governor’s Judicial Nominating Commission and the Middlesex District Attorney’s External Diversity Committee. Colin is a graduate of Yale College, Yale University, and the University of Michigan Law School. He and his wife, Emmeline, have two sons, Ryan, age 7, and David, age 4.

### **Garner Weng**

Garner Weng is a partner at the San Francisco office of Hanson Bridgett, a firm of about 140 attorneys. When he was elected partner in late 2002, Garner became the fastest to make partner out of law school at the firm in roughly 30 years. He then became one of the youngest to chair a practice group and one of the youngest to serve on the Management Committee. With a practice focusing on technology and IP, Garner has handled multimillion-dollar transactions and litigation, and



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represents leading Fortune 500 companies, emerging companies, and public agencies. He is currently treasurer of the Asian American Bar Association (AABA) and serves on the executive committee and board of the California Minority Counsel Program. He has also written and spoken widely on diversity issues.

### William Yu

William Yu is a partner in the Chicago office of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP. His practice includes commercial litigation, class action litigation, products liability and professional liability. He has successfully tried high exposure cases in both federal and state court. His service includes the following: regional governor to NAPABA, president of AABA Chicago,

Federal Magistrate Judge Merit Selection Panel, and the City of Chicago's and Lt. Governor of Illinois' Advisory Councils on Asian Affairs. He was recently appointed to the boards for the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, the Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Education, Heiwa Terrace senior residence, and the Abraham Lincoln Marovitz Lend-A-Hand Program. He graduated from Oberlin College and earned his J.D. from the John Marshall Law School while working as an aldermanic aide to Chicago's City Council. **DB**







MINORITY CORPORATE COUNSEL ASSOCIATION

## Join the 10x10x10 Campaign!

By Francisco Ramos Jr.

**A**s MCCA concludes the celebration of its tenth anniversary, the association looks back on all it has done to help diversify the ranks in the legal community. MCCA has been true to its mission: to advocate for the expanded hiring, retention, and promotion of minority attorneys in corporate law departments and the law firms that serve them. But over the course of its ten year history, MCCA's scope has expanded to include advocacy for greater inclusion of women, people with disabilities, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender ("LGBT") community. Recently, the association has also started to more closely examine issues of generational diversity in the workplace in order to understand what legal employers might do better to meet the needs of their increasingly diverse workforces. At the start of its second decade, MCCA also looks ahead to confront those who seek to turn back the clock and reverse the diversity progress that has been made.

"Gains made over the past decade in diversity efforts have stirred up those who seek to preserve the status quo, and in recent years they have been a lot more aggressive about marshaling their forces to strike down the diversity efforts underway in leading companies and law firms," says Veta Richardson, MCCA's executive director. "Yet at the same time, we see a wonderful opportunity because the commitment to diversity has never been stronger than it is today at leading companies and law firms." In its attempt not only to preserve current gains but also to advance and firmly establish the rights of diverse attorneys, MCCA has developed the 10x10x10 Campaign (the Campaign).

The genesis of the Campaign began three years ago when the MCCA leadership began thinking strategically

about the milestone of its upcoming tenth anniversary. As the strategy was evolving, Richardson approached Robert Zimmerman of Zimmerman Lehman, a consulting firm that assists nonprofits in their fundraising efforts, about what MCCA could do to raise funds to advance its diversity goals further and faster. Zimmerman reflects, "We conducted a feasibility study to gauge reactions to the types of programs and services MCCA had in mind, and determined that MCCA could raise \$10 million to make a significant impact on diversity efforts." Once Zimmerman's firm realized that they could help to turn MCCA's dream into a reality, Zimmerman worked with Richardson and MCCA's Board of Directors to develop a plan to raise the money.

First, they had to demonstrate why the Campaign was necessary. Why have this Campaign, and why hold it now? The fact remains that, despite the progress in the past decade, minority women constitute just 1.48% of partners in the nation's major law firms, and minority men account for only 3.53% of partners in those firms. Furthermore, only 7.6% of Fortune 500 general counsel are minorities. Worse, the recent trend is toward reversing the gains minorities have made over the past 40 years. Aggressive challenges to affirmative action have been raised, along with efforts to revive segregation-oriented practices in the school districts and the perpetuation of the myth that minorities lack the qualifications to succeed at large law firms. "Diversity within the legal profession is at a crossroads," notes Thomas L. Sager, vice president and assistant general counsel for DuPont Company. "We continue to hash and rehash the same subjects with only incremental gains. The Campaign will help to identify those truly committed to greater inclusiveness and meaningful

progress in the industry through their active collaboration and collective involvement with those who share MCCA's vision and execution plan."

The ultimate goal of MCCA is to work itself out of existence—to no longer be needed, because every organization will embrace the tenets of diversity by reflecting diversity in the words they speak and in the people they hire, promote, and place in positions of leadership. Through its efforts, MCCA will empower the legal community, making it less dependent on the organization. The hope is that this Campaign will help transform MCCA into an anachronism.

Many of MCCA's member corporations have embraced the Campaign. Hinton Lucas, associate general counsel for DuPont Company (which has been involved with MCCA from the beginning), was completely supportive of MCCA, its Campaign, and its methodology in achieving its objectives. "MCCA has transformed corporate America and outside counsel," Lucas states. "Because of all the success MCCA has had, we wanted to do something more spectacular. We wanted to make the tenth anniversary the year where the pursuit of the Association's goals would be kicked into high gear."

Michael Nannes, chairman of Dickstein Shapiro LLP, could not agree more. "MCCA is a fine, committed, and exceptionally well-regarded organization. Dickstein Shapiro has worked with MCCA and Veta for many years, and was the proud recipient of a Thomas L. Sager Award in 2006. Tom reached out to the firm and asked for our support of the Capital Fundraising Campaign, and we are most proud to be one of the earliest subscribers to the initiative, providing the single largest contribution in the firm's history—the cause and the people are that special. We believe the MCCA has been, and will continue to be, the leader in the diversity arena, and that is why we chose to support this effort."

To clear the path toward full and equal participation by minorities and women at law firms and corporate law offices, Richardson and the MCCA Board of Directors have undertaken this ambitious Campaign to build on the association's past success. In other words, in its tenth year, the MCCA launched an effort to raise \$10 million by the year 2010. The Campaign

is designed to raise funds to dramatically expand MCCA programs to make diversity—true diversity, in every facet of the word—a reality. The response to date has been extraordinarily supportive. "Our steering committee has been very successful in making connections with donors, who appreciate the importance and significance of the Campaign," remarks Zimmerman.

To ensure its success, Lucas notes, MCCA had to explain where the money would go. "When you are talking about a large campaign, you need to be able to answer some basic questions, like, 'What are you going to do with that money?' 'How will it be different from what you are doing now?'" MCCA will use the money to expand existing programs and develop new ones. To achieve its objectives, MCCA plans to use the proceeds of the Campaign to fund three major areas of activity: \$5 million for research and education; \$3 million for diversity training and credentialing; and \$2 million for scholarships and other activities to prime the pipeline of future minority attorneys.

## Research and Education

MCCA is already engaged in programs and services that help firms and corporations become more diverse. MCCA recognizes, however, that more can be done to study and learn about the impact of diversity, its importance, and ways to advance the interests of women and minorities. With the money it will raise, the MCCA plans to build on its previous success through the following courses of action:

- (1) *Reinvest in current research* by making existing research materials easier to navigate and more accessible to assist firms and corporations to meet their diversity goals;
- (2) *Undertake new research projects*, such as probing the "myth of meritocracy," investigating the alleged dearth of qualified minority attorneys, delving into attrition rates for minority and women attorneys, and examining success models for minority and women attorneys; and
- (3) *Lead scholarly debate* aimed at building coalitions to counteract current efforts to thwart or derail diversity efforts at corporations, law firms, and law schools.

## 10x10x10 Campaign

This research and education will serve as a catalyst for change, convincing the uninitiated about the benefits of diversity—and possibly even converting some naysayers.

### Diversity Training and Credentialing

MCCA plans to build on its existing efforts in these areas by initiating diversity training programs designed to provide “how-to” guidance. These intense, goal-oriented programs will provide practical, real-world advice. Diversity training has been shown to be effective, which is why MCCA’s emphasis on it will help to diversify law firms and legal departments.

In addition, MCCA will develop and offer training and credentialing programs for diversity managers. MCCA plans to launch a voluntary instructional program with a curriculum aimed at the design, management, and monitoring of successful diversity initiatives in legal workplaces.

These programs will advance diversity one law firm and one company at a time, by strengthening the knowledge skills and abilities of those who lead diversity efforts.

### Scholarships and the Pipeline

Many supporters of MCCA believe that its scholarship program is the most important activity that MCCA undertakes. In fact, subsidizing the education of minorities may have a greater impact than any other effort to advance diversity, and the need for scholarships is increasing dramatically. Just as important are pipeline activities seeking to interest young people in the area of law.

MCCA plans to build upon and expand existing programs, including the Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program. The organization also intends to enter into joint efforts with the Council on Legal Education Opportunity and the national bars of color aimed at increasing the number of successful minority applicants to law school.

Furthermore, MCCA is committed to using online media to enable more students to have access to professional development programs. MCCA plans to establish a Web-based national mentoring program to ensure that greater numbers of minority law students receive

the benefit of experienced mentors at all stages of their careers.

Although many supporters of MCCA have made generous financial contributions in the past, the 10x10x10 Campaign represents a new and exciting purpose. This is an aggressive campaign focused on expanding programs and services at a critical time when the forces aligned against diversity are very well funded and enjoy substantial spheres of influence. Through this Campaign, MCCA hopes to speed progress toward equal representation among minorities in law firms and the general counsel offices of America’s leading companies.

Now is the time to stand with the MCCA in this Campaign and help it advance the interests of diversity in every law firm and in every corporate law department. It is only through your generosity that MCCA’s goals can become a reality. So far, the Campaign has been an overwhelming success. Sager notes, “To raise in excess of \$1.5 million through the contributions of 10 law firms and corporate legal departments is incredible. These donations will hopefully inspire others to do the same and create a ‘huge ripple effect’ for other contributions of a similar magnitude. Let me thank these organizations once again for their overwhelming generosity.”

Alex Vasquez, Associate General Counsel of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., shares Sager’s enthusiasm. “Wal-Mart is excited about this Campaign, and we hope that other companies will join us and the MCCA in carrying out the vision of diversity in the legal profession.”

The Campaign is constructed to facilitate several tiers of giving. We ask that you reflect upon the significance of this Campaign and how it may make diversity more than just a goal, but a reality; MCCA’s ultimate vision for this Campaign may ultimately put the MCCA out of business, because diversity will become part of the fabric of all law firms and of corporate America.

If you (or your company/firm) are interested in participating in this worthwhile program, please contact Veta Richardson to discuss what you and your organization can do. MCCA looks forward to hearing from you. **DB**

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*Francisco Ramos Jr., is a freelance writer and partner at the Miami-based offices of Clarke Silvergate Campbell.*

# The Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program: Making a Difference One Student at a Time

By Naomi K. McLaurin

**T**he Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program (Scholarship Program) welcomes its third class of law students. Established in 2005 to increase the number of diverse attorneys, the program is currently supporting 55 students. The scholarship program was named after Lloyd M. Johnson Jr., a visionary leader in the legal profession and founder of the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA).

The program helps law students meet basic needs, such as tuition, books and fees. Fellows receive \$10,000 a year for three years to help defray the cost of law school. Scholars receive a one-time award of \$10,000 to assist with their first-year expenses. In the three years since the program was launched, MCCA has awarded more than 30 fellowships and more than 20 scholarships.

Sponsors rely on MCCA, a leader in the legal profession, and the United Negro College Fund, one of the nation's most respected and experienced scholarship administrators, to affiliate the best and brightest law students with their companies. In recognition of the donation, each award bears the name of the sponsoring organization; for example, the Microsoft Corporation Fellowship under the Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program.

Applicants to the scholarship program must have a financial need, must be outstanding students who have been accepted to an accredited U.S. law school, and must have demonstrated leadership and an interest in and commitment to diversity. Applications are reviewed by a Selection Committee consisting of many of the nation's top lawyers and executives.

According to the American Bar Association, in 2006, minorities comprised 21.6% of total law school enrollment and 22.3% of first-year enrollment.<sup>1</sup> According to the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), minorities account for 5.4% of partners and 18.07% of associates in the nation's major law firms. Minority women constitute a mere 1.65% of partners and 10.07% of associates in the nation's major law firms.<sup>2</sup>

Lovita T. Tandy, a partner at King & Spalding LLP, looks forward to the selection process each year. "We all know about the serious pipeline issues facing the profession; reviewing the applications each year gives me renewed hope. It is heartwarming to receive that binder each year and review application after application from talented students who continue to choose law as their profession. The program provides invaluable opportunities and funding to some of our nation's brightest law students."

MCCA's support of the students' professional development and advancement is a key component of the scholarship program. The support includes career counseling, cover letter and resume review, and sessions on interview tips and exam-taking techniques. MCCA also conducts Web-based seminars on topics such as "How to Have a Successful Summer Experience" and "How to Write Effective Legal Memoranda." In addition, MCCA meets with students and offers individual career development advice. "Although the financial contribution to my education is substantial, I have also gotten so much more out of this program," says Lisa Gonzalo, Groom Law Group Fellow. "MCCA regularly monitors my progress, provides various networking and business opportunities, and actively seeks to help us secure summer employment." Gonzalo is a second-year student at Fordham University School of Law.

American Airlines provides air transportation so the students can attend MCCA's Diversity Dinners, Continuing Legal Education Expo and Creating Pathways to Diversity® Conference. At the events, the scholarship recipients are introduced to their sponsors and to other attorneys in MCCA's vast network of supporters. Jerome Coenic-Taylor, a Vault, Inc. Fellow, attended the November 2007 Anniversary Dinner and Eighth Annual Creating Pathways to Diversity Conference in New York City. "I was exposed to hundreds of successful, diverse attorneys and attended programs that really gave a broad perspective on my future career in the legal profession," says Coenic-Taylor. "The networking session was the most helpful program. I met a number of people by applying the techniques that I learned." Coenic-Taylor is a first-year student at the University of Iowa College of Law.

MCCA also encourages and facilitates the establishment of mentoring relationships with sponsoring organizations and MCCA's network of supporters. Emily Liu, a Pfizer, Inc. Fellow and third-year student at the University of Michigan Law School, sums it up this way: "Throughout my journey as a law student, I've learned that one of the most powerful tools to success is a set of great mentors. Some of my best mentors have come from this scholarship program. The program has exposed me to individuals who have made significant

contributions to the legal profession while paving the way for diverse individuals to follow in their footsteps. For example, Sandra Phillips, senior vice president and associate general counsel at Pfizer, Inc., serves as a role model and mentor to me."

Like Liu, Lisa Gonzalo also has established mentoring relationships as a direct result of the scholarship program. "In addition to their generous financial commitment to my education," Gonzalo says, "the Groom Law Group has followed through on a personal level. Several attorneys stay in contact with me and act as mentors while I progress through law school. The benefits that I receive from this program not only help me as a law student but will serve me well later as I transition into practice."

When it comes to mentoring, Lloyd M. Johnson's motto is "Each one reach one." Johnson says that he hopes to establish a significant connection with the three or four students who are geographically accessible through face-to-face meetings and with the other students via email. Heidi Abreu, a Microsoft Corporation Fellow, will graduate from Cornell Law School in 2008. When, like many students, she was unsure about what her next step should be, she called Johnson. "Despite his busy schedule," Abreu says, "he always took the time to listen to my concerns and provide invaluable advice and help." Johnson says, "I try to help the students understand that they do have an angel who is looking out for them; and that angel is the MCCA networking family."

The Summer Internship Program is another key component of the scholarship program. MCCA provides scholarship recipients with information about paid corporate internship opportunities in the hope that their first-year summer experience will be a positive one. Feedback about the internship program from students and sponsoring organizations has been quite positive. "The Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program opened doors where they otherwise would have been shut," says John Oh, a Crowell & Moring LLP Fellow. "I was offered several interviews with Fortune 500 companies based upon my status as a scholarship recipient." Oh is a second-year student at Boston College Law School.

## Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program

Sandy Brown, a senior attorney and manager of Microsoft's Legal Intern Program, is pleased with the students. She says, "We have had the pleasure to work with several of the scholarship recipients as part of Microsoft's Legal and Corporate Affairs Intern Program, and our company has benefited from their talent, passion and commitment to excellence. Microsoft is both inspired by and proud to participate in this invaluable program."

Working with Microsoft Corporation as a legal intern afforded Willie White an opportunity to enhance his legal skills while gaining a greater understanding of what it means to be an attorney and to practice law. "Most of all," White says, "I've built lasting relationships with Microsoft's magnificent attorneys and staff that will last a lifetime." White is a Microsoft Corporation Fellow and a second-year student at North Carolina Central University School of Law.

When Melanie N. Baptiste, an Adorno & Yoss, LLP Scholar, was seeking a summer associate position in Atlanta, MCCA reached out to McGuireWoods LLP. The firm was so impressed with Baptiste that it offered her a job. Gordon R. Alphonso, a partner in the firm's Atlanta office, gave Baptiste one of her first assignments. Says Alphonso, "[Melanie] is a very intelligent person whose work ethic is as strong as any I have observed. She did a phenomenal job and definitely possesses the qualities and characteristics necessary to be a successful lawyer." Baptiste is a second-year student at the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Shannon L. Wilson, a King & Spalding LLP Scholar, spent the summer at the firm's Atlanta office. Lovita T. Tandy, who oversees the firm's diversity efforts, says, "For our firm, working with the scholars is one of the most important benefits of this program. We have participated in minority 1L hiring programs for more than a decade and view the program as an invaluable opportunity to provide minority law students with a quality summer associate experience that they can add to their resume and leverage into future employment." Wilson is a second-year student at New York University School of Law.

In the spring of 2008, MCCA's inaugural class of 17 fellows and scholars will graduate from law school and enter a profession that anxiously awaits them.

Sandy Brown says, "Microsoft has been honored to be an inaugural sponsor of the Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program. MCCA has created and delivered on a successful formula, which gives sponsors the opportunity to develop lasting relationships with these students to help them economically and professionally."

For Martha Casillas, a Fulbright & Jaworski LLP Scholar and third-year student at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, being in the inaugural class is a bittersweet experience. She says, "It's a sweet feeling because I'm proud to be part of the legacy of the scholarship program, to have kicked it off, to reflect the success of the program and look to future recipients to continue that success. It's a bitter feeling because having received this scholarship in 2005 makes me think of all of the people years before me who could have benefited, who could have made a difference had they received the opportunity I have received. But because I can't go back in time, I am committing myself to ensuring that the program is even more successful in years to come, to reach more students and reach more corporations."

Reflecting on the scholarship program's three years in existence, MCCA's founder, Lloyd M. Johnson Jr., says, "Most people rarely get the opportunity to see how they've impacted the life of just one person. Through the program and on a number of different levels, I've been able to observe the significant impact the scholarship program and MCCA have had on the students. This is humbling on one level and surreal on another."

To learn more about the scholarship program, contact Veta Richardson, executive director (vetarichardson@mcca.com), or Naomi K. McLaurin, managing director, Southeast Region (naomimclaurin@mcca.com). **DB**

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*Naomi K. McLaurin is the managing director for MCCA's Southeast Region in Atlanta, GA.*

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### NOTES

1. February 21, 2007 News Release titled "Law School Enrollment Edges Upward, Minorities Show Slight Gain, Women Slight Drop" [www.abanews.org](http://www.abanews.org)
2. November 1, 2007 Press Release titled "Minority Women Still Underrepresented in Law Firm Partnership Ranks—Change in Diversity of Law Firm Leadership Very Slow Overall" [www.nalp.org](http://www.nalp.org)

# 2007 Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Award Recipients

MCCA® is pleased to announce its third class of fellows and scholars under the Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program. The program was founded to prime the diversity pipeline by helping law students meet their financial needs and to expose them to a group of leaders who can help mentor and guide their entry into the profession. MCCA's goal is to help produce a diverse group of young lawyers who are prepared to lead and reshape the legal profession.

Through the Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program, MCCA has committed more than \$390,000 to its third class of 19 students, the largest single financial commitment ever made by a legal association in support of diversity scholarships. Ten corporate fellows will receive \$10,000 per year for each of their three years of law school, and nine students will receive a scholarship award of \$10,000. All 19 students will receive our ongoing professional development support, including an invitation for a paid internship in a leading corporate law department.

These law students and the organizations that sponsor them embody the diverse perspectives and experiences that MCCA advocates in the legal profession. Join us in congratulating these award recipients. We also sincerely thank these sponsoring organizations listed.

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## Baker Botts L.L.P. Fellow



Student: **Ana Hurtado**  
Law School: Harvard Law School  
Undergraduate School: University of Texas at Austin  
Undergraduate GPA: 4.00

Ana Lucia Hurtado graduated with a perfect 4.0 GPA from the University of Texas at Austin with a B.A. in psychology. Ms. Hurtado's parents escaped the guerilla forces in Peru and fled to the United States when she was only four years old. Her interest in the law arose when she interned as an undergraduate at the University of Texas School of Law Children's Rights Clinic and at Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid. Ms. Hurtado is a first-year student at Harvard Law School and is interested in providing legal counsel in the areas of employment, health, and immigration law.

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## The Goldman, Sachs Group, Inc. Fellow



Student: **Estephanie Resnik**  
Law School: University of Florida Levin College of Law  
Undergraduate School: University of Miami  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.98

Estephanie Susan Resnik graduated summa cum laude with a B.S. in print journalism and political science and a minor in business administration from the University of Miami in May 2007. She is currently a first-year student at the University of Florida Law School. As the child of a single working mother who emigrated from Cuba, Ms. Resnik showed responsibility and drive at an early age by working part-time and volunteering in her community. Her goal after law school is to serve as a corporate lawyer in the media industry.

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## Gordon Rees, LLP/Palm, Inc. Fellow



Student: **Samika Boyd**  
Law School: University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law  
Undergraduate School: Howard University  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.92

Samika Nicole Boyd was born in New Orleans. Ms. Boyd graduated as valedictorian of her high school class. She received a B.A. summa cum laude in political science from Howard University in 2005 and completed a master's in American government and black politics in 2007. She is currently a first-year student at the University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law.

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## Microsoft Corporation Fellows



Student: **William Nevin**  
Law School: University of Alabama School of Law  
Undergraduate School: University of Alabama  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.99

William C. Nevin pursued a B.A. in journalism and political science from the University of Alabama. He graduated summa cum laude with a 3.999 GPA in May 2007. As a Native American, he saw firsthand how the small Poarch Creek Indian tribe of Alabama had to fight for decades to combat poverty and meet the basic needs of its members. Mr. Nevin is currently enrolled in the University of Alabama School of Law.



Student: **Dalisai Nisperos**  
Law School: University of Pennsylvania Law School  
Undergraduate School: University of California, Berkeley  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.61

Dalisai Sheri Nisperos is a first-year student at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Ms. Nisperos graduated cum laude from the University of California, Berkeley with a B.A. in ethnic studies and a minor in Spanish. She also attended the Graduate School of Public Policy and Administration at California State University, Sacramento.



Student: **Jonathan Steele**  
Law School: University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law  
Undergraduate School: University of Kansas  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.80

Jonathan Thomas Steele graduated from the University of Kansas with a B.A. in political science. As a poor Native American, he often experienced racial discrimination growing up. As a result of his background and heritage, Mr. Steele developed an interest in the law and social justice at an early age. This interest was reinforced when he spent a summer as an intern at Winston & Strawn LLP. He is enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, Boalt Hall School of Law.

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## Vault, Inc. Fellows



Student: **Anthony Scott**  
Law School: Indiana University School of Law, Indianapolis  
Undergraduate School: Indiana Wesleyan University  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.70

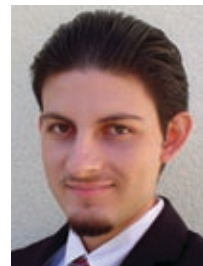
Anthony Ryan Scott is in his first year at Indiana University School of Law, Indianapolis. Mr. Scott graduated cum laude with a B.S.

in business information systems from Indiana Wesleyan University in 2002. During college, he enlisted and spent seven years in the U.S. Army. He was a sergeant and served in Panama, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Haiti. His success as a soldier inspired him to study law so he can provide underrepresented people with adequate representation.



Student: **Jerome Coenic-Taylor**  
Law School: University of Iowa College of Law  
Undergraduate School: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.89

Jerome Coenic-Taylor grew up in Chicago. He was valedictorian of his eighth grade class, which enabled him to attend Morgan Park High School, one of the top three public schools in Chicago. Mr. Coenic-Taylor attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and graduated summa cum laude in 2007 with a B.A. in sociology. He is a first-year student at the University of Iowa Law School. Mr. Coenic-Taylor plans to pursue a career as a corporate lawyer.



Student: **Roberto Valenzuela**  
Law School: Pepperdine University School of Law  
Undergraduate School: George Wythe College  
Undergraduate GPA: 4.00

Roberto Antonio Valenzuela graduated magna cum laude from George Wyeth College in Cedar City, Utah, with a B.A. in statesmanship/diplomacy and a minor in political science. Mr. Valenzuela is multilingual—he speaks Spanish, French, and Japanese. He is a first-year student at Pepperdine University School of Law. He grew up near the Arizona-Mexico border. With the support of his family, he escaped a limited future in Mexico to pursue his education in the United States. His ultimate goal is to become a corporate lawyer with a focus on international trade law.



Student: **David Zhou**  
Law School: Yale Law School  
Undergraduate School: Harvard University  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.90

David Zhou received a B.A. in government from Harvard University; he was a Phi Beta Kappa and graduated with highest honors. His Chinese heritage and firsthand knowledge of the human rights violations perpetrated by an oppressive Chinese regime led Mr. Zhou to decide at an early age that he wanted to be a lawyer and an advocate for justice. As an undergraduate, he interned on Capitol Hill under the sponsorship of the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies. He is a first-year student at Yale Law School. His long-term goal is to become an international corporate lawyer.



## 2007 Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Award Recipients

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### Adorno & Yoss, LLP Scholar



Student: **Francis Arvelo**  
Law School: University of Pennsylvania Law School  
Undergraduate School: University of Massachusetts at Amherst  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.55

Francis S. Arvelo graduated magna cum laude from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst with a B.S. in sports management. Mr. Arvelo is currently a first-year student at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He plans to pursue a career with a large corporate law firm.

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### Baker & McKenzie LLP Scholar



Student: **Alexander White**  
Law School: Georgetown University Law Center  
Undergraduate School: Washington & Lee University  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.50

Alexander Bernard White graduated magna cum laude from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia with a B.A. in psychology and sociology/anthropology. He attends Georgetown University Law Center. He spent three summers as a legal intern at Heinz Corporation, where he worked with the in-house counsel. In addition to his legal aspirations, Mr. White was on the men's basketball team at Washington and Lee. He is interested in pro bono work in the area of social justice; his goal is to become in-house counsel for a corporation before transitioning back into academia.

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### Crowell & Moring LLP Scholar



Student: **Elissa Johnson**  
Law School: Loyola University Chicago School of Law  
Undergraduate School: Fisk University  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.95

Elissa Francis Johnson graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in English and sociology from Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn. She is currently a first-year student at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Ms. Johnson is an activist for children's rights and spent two years mentoring and tutoring youth enrolled in after-school programs. Her volunteer activities include the foundation of a service learning initiative at Fisk University called Fisk CARES (Compassionate Activism through Responsible Engagement and Service).

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### Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. Scholar



Student: **April Gu**  
Law School: New York University, School of Law  
Undergraduate School: New York University  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.67

April Gu is a first-year student at New York University School of Law; she is interested in pursuing a career in corporate law. She graduated cum laude with a B.S. in economics and international business from New York University's Stern School of Business. After graduation, Ms. Gu conducted economic development research in Beijing for a year as a Fulbright Fellow. Her dedication to diversity started early on in her education: During her junior year of high school, she was a U.S. delegate to the United Nations Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, where she worked to combat racism and intolerance.

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### Kelley Drye Collier Shannon Scholar



Student: **Pauline Chow**  
Law School: University of Wisconsin Law School  
Undergraduate School: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.53

Pauline P. Chow graduated cum laude from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a B.S. in statistics and international studies. An Asian Pacific American with a Chinese heritage, Ms. Chow co-founded the National Asian American Women's Forum and lobbied for minority rights, using her skills in project management, research, and business planning to recruit like-minded leaders. She is enrolled at the University of Wisconsin Madison Law School, where she hopes to continue to provide a voice for minorities in society.

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### King & Spalding LLP Scholar



Student: **Leslie Lang**  
Law School: Harvard Law School  
Undergraduate School: University of California, Berkeley  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.92

Leslie Lang is a first-year student at Harvard Law School. She graduated with highest honors with a B.S. in business administration and B.A. in rhetoric from the University of California, Berkeley. As an undergraduate, she interned at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a war crimes tribunal set up by the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone to seek justice for atrocities committed during the civil war. Ms. Lang deferred her admission to Harvard for one year so she could work at the Africa division of the World Bank, improving access to finance in Africa.

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### Patton Boggs LLP Scholar



Student: **Noelle Chung**  
Law School: Stanford Law School  
Undergraduate School: Whitman College  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.97

Noelle Lea Chung is attending Stanford Law School. By the age of 13, Ms. Chung had earned an associate of arts degree with honors from Walla Walla Community College; she then received a full academic scholarship to Whitman College. As an undergraduate, she spent a year at the Sorbonne in Paris, completing a course study in European culture. She received a B.A. summa cum laude from Whitman College in 2004 and was class salutatorian. In 2006, she received a master's degree from Yonsei University Graduate School of International Studies in Seoul, South Korea. Ms. Chung plans to pursue a career in international law.

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### Robert Half Legal Scholar



Student: **Natalie Sanders**  
Law School: Harvard Law School  
Undergraduate School: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.91

Natalie Nicole Sanders graduated summa cum laude with a B.S. in business administration and a minor

in Spanish from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May 2003. After graduation, Ms. Sanders traveled and taught mathematics and thematic studies. She accepted teaching assignments in classrooms all over the world, from one-room shanties in Naivasha, Kenya, to university lecture halls in Monterey, Mexico. She worked with people of all ages, backgrounds, and colors, and decided that she should study law to effectively achieve social change. She is enrolled in Harvard Law School.

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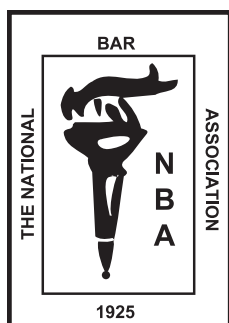
### Wheeler Trigg Kennedy LLP Scholar



Student: **Brandon Loggins**  
Law School: University of Illinois College of Law  
Undergraduate School: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Undergraduate GPA: 3.50

Brandon J. Loggins graduated cum laude with a B.A. in political science and a minor in history from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in May 2005. After graduating from college, Mr. Loggins became a fourth grade classroom teacher. As a teacher in a low-income school district, he was committed to overcoming educational inequality and serving his community. Currently, he is a first-year student at the University of Illinois College of Law.

By Francisco Ramos Jr.



## National Bar Association—Commercial Law Section

**T**he Commercial Law Section (CLS) is one of 21 sections of the National Bar Association (NBA). For six of the past seven years, the CLS has been named “Section of the Year.” One of its greatest achievements is bringing together its members with in-house counsel who seek to diversify their outside counsel ranks.

The section’s commitment to fostering these relationships between in-house and outside counsel began more than 20 years ago. In 1987, several members of the CLS brainstormed about how they could bring together their members with in-house counsel to develop professional relationships and foster diversity. After months of planning, these pioneers organized the first Corporate Counsel Conference in Chicago.

At the inaugural conference, CLS Chair Cora T. Walker noted,

[T]he purpose of the Corporate Counsel Conference is to afford general counsel and chief executive officers of major corporations with an opportunity to meet NBA members from across the country and acquaint themselves with the wealth of virtually untapped resources available to them through use of NBA members as outside counsel.

The inaugural conference was a success in every sense of the word. CLS had created a venue where major corporations could meet and interact with minority attorneys they might never have met otherwise. Those who might have been asking where to meet qualified minority attorneys needed to look no further

than this conference. This rare opportunity attracted in-house counsel from a multitude of law departments, including Allstate Insurance Company, Amtrak, Consolidated Rail Corporation, DuPont Chemical, Ford Motor Company, General Motors Corporation, IBM, McDonald’s Corporation, Mobil Oil Corporation, Shell Oil Company, Sterling Drug, The Travelers Insurance Company, and many others.

As the years have passed, the Corporate Counsel Conference has continued to grow. Over the years, more than 1,000 NBA CLS members have connected with more than 100 corporations. Many of these connections have blossomed into lasting and meaningful attorney/client relationships.

The current CLS chair, Kimberly Phillips, in-house counsel for Shell Oil Company, remembers the first conference she attended seven years ago: “The experience was very fruitful. I met many in-house and outside counsel, and developed relationships that remain strong and vibrant seven years later. Quite simply, I have that conference to thank for a number of friends I have today.”

The conference also has served as a model for similar programs put on by other organizations. “The section leaders

*Kimberly Phillips*



had extraordinary vision to create such a program, which has now been imitated by many other bar associations,” Phillips notes. The program includes seminars, a luncheon, and networking breakfasts and receptions each night, among other activities. “It truly is a testament to the CLS members and its leadership.”

The most innovative aspect of the conference is the one-on-one corporate interviews. Prior to the conference, in-house counsel review questionnaires completed by NBA CLS members and preselect outside counsel to interview for possible business opportunities. Interviews are conducted in 15-minute intervals on designated conference dates. The interviews offer a unique opportunity for outside counsel to meet and network with in-house attorneys. “Through these interviews, many companies have demonstrated their dedication to diversity and their commitment to the goals of our [NBA] section. We see many of the same companies returning year after year to the conference and participating in these interviews,” reflects Phillips.

In 2007, the conference celebrated its 20th anniversary at the Doral Resort and Spa in Miami, where members looked back and honored the founders of the event. They also looked ahead. “Ten years from now,” Phillips predicts, “the conference will be the foremost avenue for in-house attorneys to meet lawyers of color, and I hope that the number of lawyers of color providing legal services would have grown so much that the conference, though it will still exist, will not need to exist in its current form.”

At its 2007 event, CLS presented a Diversity Town Hall Meeting, which featured a moderator-led panel of corporate counsel and national bar leaders. The panel examined why diversity in the workplace is necessary. The panel members started with the obvious: the purpose of corporate America is to make money. Where does this money come from? Increasingly, it comes from minority consumers, and diversity in the workplace has been shown to attract dollars from minority consumers. More and more, corporate America understands that diversity not only is the right thing to do from a moral imperative, but that it also makes financial sense.

Wilson J. Campbell, a CLS member who attended the 20th conference, called it a “networking mecca for African American and other corporate and outside counsel. It was also about making sure that we did not lose the stride set by the lawyers who preceded us.” Another attendee helped him attend three meetings with in-house counsel of large companies. As more senior CLS members have held out their hand to help him, he in turn is following their lead and helping others. “If a young associate fails at a large majority firm, we collectively have failed him or her. If an in-house counsel fails, again, we collectively have failed him or her. Ultimately, we all win together or we all lose together.” Clearly, the NBA CLS is showing by example how we can all win together. **DB**

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*Francisco Ramos Jr., is a freelance writer and partner at the Miami-based offices of Clarke Silvergate Campbell.*

*Support the 21st Annual Corporate Counsel Conference NBA CLS! February 21–23, 2008, Ritz Carlton Hotel, New Orleans, La.*

## Dr. Benjamin Hooks: Diversity Founding Father

**O**n November 7, 2007, Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, legendary civil rights leader, former NAACP executive director, and current head of Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs LLP's diversity practice group in its Memphis office, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in a ceremony at the White House. "When the president called for Frances, my wife of over 55 years, to join me as I received the award [our nation's highest civilian honor], it was the proudest moment of my life," says Hooks.

Lauded for a life of service, hard work, and accomplishment shaped by an unyielding passion for justice, Hooks says, "Most of my career decisions have been driven by racial conflict. After two and a half years spent in a fully segregated army during World War II, I embraced more fully the concept that we could not live as a nation as things stood. Henceforth, I made my mind up to do what I could to bring about change, and I knew that it had to come from within the South."

The fifth of seven children, Hooks grew up in a middle-class Memphis family where education was valued. "My father was a successful photographer, and his studio was in a professional building where

I was exposed to an [African American] doctor, dentist, and lawyer," says Hooks. "Because my talents tended more toward the liberal arts, I decided as a teenager to pursue a career in the legal profession."

After graduating from DePaul University Law School in Chicago in 1949 (no law school in the South would admit him), rather than accept the assistance of a well-connected family friend and take a legal position in the Windy City, Hooks returned home to join the struggle as one



*Dr. Benjamin Hooks*

of the two black attorneys then practicing in Memphis. “While Martin Luther King Jr. and Floyd Abernathy were trained in other areas, the movement had a pressing need for black attorneys; there were so few of us at that time.”

“During all those years of fervent segregation and racial prejudice that I spent in those courts, there was never a time that I felt that I had lost a case because I was black or because the judges were not fair,” recalls Hooks. In 1965, against much local protest, Hooks was appointed to serve as a criminal judge in Shelby County, Memphis. “After all the hell that was raised regarding my appointment by some sectors, not one lawyer or judge demonstrated disrespect toward me while I was on the bench,” he adds. “There was that much respect for the judgeship.”

As well as being a legal professional, Hooks has been an early leader of NAACP-sponsored boycotts and sit-ins; an entrepreneur who pushed for economic parity for African Americans; and an ordained minister. In 1972, Hooks was tapped to fill an opening on the Federal Communications Commission, where he made great strides in opening the industry to minorities and women. He success-



fully expanded the NAACP as its director from 1977 until he retired in 1993 to a career of public speaking.

In 2002, just when Hooks was about to call it quits professionally, he joined Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs, a full-service regional law firm with more than 230 lawyers. Despite some health problems, he remains a very valuable resource on matters that primarily include issues about diversity, both to Wyatt and its clients.

Today, when Hooks looks at his Medal of Freedom, he reflects what his friend Dr. King might think: “I’m certain he’d be happy with the progress we’ve made, and unhappy with how much further we have to go.” **DB**

*Seated, left to right: Tom Dyer, Dr. Hooks, Glen Reid; standing, left to right: Bill Hollander, Cheryl Patterson, Odell Horton, and Bob Craddock.*

*NCCA Celebrates African American History Month by honoring Dr. Hooks and the many pioneers who have paved the way for countless lawyers of every race, ethnicity, and national origin.*

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*Patrick Folliard is a freelance writer based in Silver Spring, Md.*

# MOVERS & SHAKERS



**MICHELE COLEMAN MAYES**  
*Vice President and  
General Counsel*  
**The Allstate Corporation**

Michele Coleman Mayes has been named vice president and general counsel of The Allstate Corporation, and senior vice president and general counsel for Allstate Insurance Company. As Allstate's chief legal officer, Ms. Mayes will be responsible for guiding Allstate's strategy to ensure sound compliance of governance practices. Her experience in corporate legal departments has included positions at Burroughs Corporation, Unisys Corporation, Colgate-Palmolive Company, and Pitney Bowes. Prior to her in-house career, Ms. Mayes served in the U.S. Department of Justice as Assistant United States Attorney in Detroit and Brooklyn, eventually assuming the role of Chief of the Civil Division in Detroit. Ms. Mayes received her bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and her J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School.



**JAMES J. SANDMAN**  
*General Counsel*  
**D.C. Public Schools**

James J. Sandman, a senior partner at the law firm of Arnold & Porter LLP who served as the firm's managing partner from 1995 to 2005, has been hired as the new General Counsel for the DC Public Schools. Mr. Sandman is an experienced litigator and counselor. He has worked to promote pro bono legal services for the poor, serving as Arnold & Porter's senior pro bono partner. Mr. Sandman is the immediate past president of the 85,000-member District of Columbia Bar. He formerly served as secretary and a member of the board of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program in Washington. Additionally, Mr. Sandman has worked for increased diversity in the legal profession. Earlier this year, Mr. Sandman received the Alumni Award of Merit in 2007 from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, his alma mater.



**THERESA CROPPER**  
*Perkins Coie LLP*  
**Director of Diversity**

Theresa Cropper has joined Perkins Coie as its new director of diversity and professional development. She joins the firm from DLA Piper Rudnick Gray, where she was the national director of diversity, responsible for coordinating the efforts to recruit, retain, and promote diverse attorneys. Prior to DLA Piper, Ms. Cropper served in a number of roles at Northwestern University School of Law, including associate dean, dean of students, and director of minority affairs. In her role as dean of students, she developed programs designed to provide professional development outside of the classroom, covering a variety of areas such as leadership development, team-building, diversity training, problem-solving, and networking. As director of minority affairs, she created the Office of Minority Affairs with the goal of developing a proactive approach to issues important to minority students.



**SRI SRINIVASAN**  
*Partner*  
**O'Melveny & Myers LLP**

Sri Srinivasan, former Assistant to the Solicitor General of the United States, has joined O'Melveny & Myers LLP's Appellate Practice as a partner. Mr. Srinivasan was a former counsel at O'Melveny from 1998 until 2002. As an Assistant to the Solicitor General, Mr. Srinivasan argued 12 cases before the Supreme Court on behalf of the United States, including some of the most important cases for business. Mr. Srinivasan also has briefed critically important national security cases in the Supreme Court and in lower federal courts. He received two major awards for his government service. Mr. Srinivasan obtained his B.A. from Stanford University in 1989, followed by his J.D. from Stanford Law School in 1995 and his M.B.A. from Stanford Business School in 1995.

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**Please send your submissions to our Movers & Shakers feature to [robtruhn@mcca.com](mailto:robtruhn@mcca.com). Please include a high-resolution photo (300 dpi or greater), along with an electronic version of the applicable announcement.**

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## MCCA's Accomplishments Recognized by ACC

On October 29, 2007, as part of its 23th Annual Meeting, the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) presented MCCA with the 2007 Matthew J. Whitehead, II Diversity Award. This marks the second time in 10 years that MCCA has been recognized in this fashion. This



From left to right: Fred Krebs, President of ACC, presents the award to Veta Richardson and MCCA Board members Don H. Liu and N. Cornell Boggs III.

award is given “[t]o recognize outstanding achievement by a corporate counsel, a group of corporate counsel, a diversity project, or a corporation in creating an initiative or providing leadership, the ends of which result in increasing awareness of and commitment to corporate legal diversity, and/or the improvement of employment, retention, advancement and career path opportunities for attorneys of color.”

During the awards program, ACC proclaimed that MCCA “has developed practical resources and research offering important empirical data that—for the first time—truly informs and directs the focus of in-house and law firm diversity efforts.

It delivers these resources through its magazine, *Diversity & the Bar*, its research projects, its educational programming, an awards program, leadership forums, a top-notch web site, mentoring programs, and more.

“For their leadership in promoting one of ACC’s core values—diversity at every level of the legal profession—ACC once again salutes MCCA as a change agent for the legal profession and a leader in helping us all to realize the pathways to ensuring that our shared values are more than discussion points.... because of MCCA, our values of diversity may truly become our profession’s future reality.”

For more information about ACC, please visit [www.acc.com](http://www.acc.com).

## Bank of America Recognizes Thompson & Knight’s Chief Diversity Officer



On Thursday, November 8, 2007, Pauline E. Higgins, Partner and Chief Diversity Officer of Thompson & Knight LLP, was named a recipient of The Local Heroes Award by Bank of America. This award recognizes five members of the Houston community who notably contribute to neighborhood vitality through their accomplishments and leadership. The awards were presented at the Houston Neighborhood Excellence Initiative Awards Celebration Reception.

Bank of America provides \$5,000 to each of the five award recipients for them to donate to a charitable organization of their choosing. Ms. Higgins will donate this money to the Jamaican Foundation of Houston’s Minority Scholarship Fund.

For more information on The Local Heroes Award and the reception ceremony, please visit [www.bankofamerica.com/foundation](http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation). **DB**



