

# EQUAL JUSTICE

Newsletter of the Washington Bar Association  
Dedicated to the Principle "Equal Justice Under Law"



## President's Message

By Robert L. Bell

April 4, 1968 is a day the music both died and restarted for many of us. It was a day we were forced to face the reality of our struggle for equality without the inspiring voice, vision and leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was a day that refocused me on the important role that we can all perform for a brief period in advancing the cause for equal justice. This renewed focus kept me on the path to law school and beyond. In fact, in my study of Dr. King's life and death, I learned that he once seriously contemplated becoming a lawyer in order that he might pursue equal justice for all in the courtroom. Historian and classmate of Dr. King,

Lerone Bennett, Jr., reports regarding Dr. King's decision at one time to become a lawyer. Dr. King stated: "I was at that point...where I was deeply interested in political matters and social ills. I could envision myself playing a part in breaking the legal barriers to Negro rights." See, Lerone Bennett, *What Manner of Man*, p. 20 (1964).

In 1988, the Washington Bar Association awarded the Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit to Dr. King (posthumously), the first non-lawyer recipient of the highest honor bestowed by the WBA. Today, 40 years after his death, we are face-to-

face with new realities that Dr. King helped establish, i.e., enabling African-American lawyers and judges to have an effective opportunity to participate as equals in wielding the power of the state and the economy at our disposal in a post-Dr. King world.

While we commemorate the 40th anniversary of Dr. King's death, and annually celebrate his birthday, we must not forget his true dream and vision — equal justice for all. We must create opportunities for equal justice daily and not merely imitate the behavior and conduct of others. We

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## WBA Book Club & Kids Reading Group

By Felicia L. Chambers

As part of our exciting bar year, the Washington Bar Association ("WBA") instituted an activity that is new and that we hope will be a refreshing and enduring outlet for our Membership. The WBA started a Book Club geared towards bringing all facets of the Membership together in a relaxed environment. While the Club's primary purpose is to facilitate interaction between the members, the Book Club also seeks to reach out to the community at large,

consistent with our organization's objective "to encourage professional and citizenship responsibilities among the Membership." Constitution, Art. I, § 2.

The Book Club meets every two to three months, so as not to overwhelm the members with yet another appointment to add to the schedules of busy professionals. The members select the books, which will not be limited to those that concern the law, and meet in mem-

bers' homes or other places that they might select.

The first Book Club event was held during the Ollie May Cooper Program and Founders' Lecture on October 18, 2007, at Howard University School of Law. In partnership with the Washington Council of Lawyers, the Book Club hosted a book signing by Angela J. Davis, Professor of Law, American University Washington College of Law,

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**April 2008**



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# Calendar of Events

## May 2008

**May 3**— WBA Annual Law Day Dinner and Conferment of the Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit. J.W. Marriott, 1331 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.

## June 2008

**June 19**—WBA's Inaugural Annual Conference, including: Luncheon, WBA Hall of Fame, Elections, Seminars and Reception

## President's Message, *Cont'd from Page 1*

must continue to work hard and with focus. We must not be ashamed to struggle, achieve and entertain with purpose and zest. Now that we are participants in an emerging power base in the nation's capital, what are we going to do with it? Are we going to be the models of a new generation of leaders in establishing equal justice for all? Or will we settle for being mere reflections of neo—justice for some. When the demand of equal justice calls, we must be prepared and we must answer the call. The spirit of Dr. King, other medallion recipients and our founders, demand no less of us. Let history chronicle how well we will meet the new challenges of the new realities we must confront 40 years after the death of Dr. King.

As we approach Law Day 2008 on May 3, 2008, let's wholeheartedly embrace this year's Law Day Dinner theme: "Implementing Houstonian Jurisprudence: Securing Equal Justice in the Courtroom and the Boardroom." This year's honorees, Senior United States District Court Judge Robert Carter and lawyer extraordinaire Vernon Jordan, Jr., are both worthy exemplars of this year's Law Day theme and timely recipients of the Houstonian Medallion of Merit. They have met the pioneering call for service and embody the continuing quest to secure equal justice in the courtroom and the boardroom.

## Let's Do Ethical Pitfalls Seminar Annually

Kudos to the WBA/YLD for its able and steadfast leadership in sponsoring the

"Ethical Pitfalls for Young Lawyers to Avoid" seminar. This CLE approved seminar was a milestone event for the WBA. Special thanks are extended to D.C. Bar Counsel, Wallace E. Shipp, Jr., for his presentation, to Johnnie Bond and Dolores Dorsainvil for guiding this event to fruition, and to Dickstein, Shapiro, LLP for the use of its conference space for this important seminar. Let's make an ethical seminar of this nature and caliber an annual event for the membership of the WBA.

Thank you.

**Robert L. Bell**

## NEWSLETTER



Submit newsletter articles by  
May 5 to  
Natalie L. Smith at:  
[NSmith@WFHCPLaw.com](mailto:NSmith@WFHCPLaw.com)

of her new book *Arbitrary Justice: The Power of the American Prosecutor*, from which she gave the Founders' Lecture.

On November 17, 2007, the Club held its first meeting which was devoted to organizational matters. The Book Club chose *Arbitrary Justice* as its first selection and hosted Professor Davis at its second meeting on January 26, 2008. The setting was informal and the members had an opportunity for a spirited give-and-take discussion with Professor Davis about her theses.

The WBA has a long history of reaching out to the community. The Book Club will be used to provide a link between our members and our children. Its first project began on March 7, 2008, when seven individuals associated with the WBA read to students from kindergarten to second grade at Amidon Elementary School in Southwest Washington. About forty children attended and were delighted to hear about how much lawyers and judges like to read. The WBA Book Club will be reading to the students once a month for the remainder of the school year.

The Book Club can also be used as a tool to benefit the entire WBA Membership. One such benefit would be for Book Club Members to write reviews of various legal works to be published in *Equal Justice*, the WBA's newsletter. This way, we tie the Book Club's casual setting to one of the fundamental goals of our organization "to encourage legal research and excellence consistent with the philosophy of Houstonian Jurisprudence." Constitution, Art. I, § 2.

If you are interested in joining the WBA Book Club, contact Felicia Chambers at [flcesq@yahoo.com](mailto:flcesq@yahoo.com). ■

## Advocacy Competition to be Held at NBA Convention

By Robie Beatty

The National Bar Association will again hold the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition at the 2008 Annual Convention in Houston, Texas. This is an opportunity for graduating high school seniors to perfect their essay writing and oral presentation skills, while also having an opportunity to win some money for college.

The various Regions of the Association will hold contests to select a winner who will represent each Region at the convention. Region XII (Washington, D.C.) will hold a local competition in May 2008. Although an exact date for the competition is still pending, persons wanting more information about this competition may contact Robie Beatty ([robie.beatty@dc.gov](mailto:robie.beatty@dc.gov)), Board Member of the Washington Bar Association, with any other questions about this event and for a copy of the essay topic. ■

### Did you receive a pink newsletter? Send in your dues

#### Annual WBA Membership Dues

Young Lawyers Division Regular—\$50  
Young Lawyers Division Sustaining—\$65  
Young Lawyers Division Sponsor—over \$65  
Regular Membership—\$75  
Sustaining Membership—\$100  
Sponsor Membership—over \$100  
Life Membership—\$1000  
Law Student—\$35

Send your membership dues to:

WBA  
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### Slate of Candidates for the District of Columbia Bar Elections

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Paul M. Smith  
Lucy L. Thomson  
Marna S. Tucker



We congratulate Kim Michele Keenan, former WBA President from 2001-2003 and NBA President 2004 on her nomination for President-Elect for the District of Columbia Bar.



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***“Equal Justice Under Law”***



*Washington  
Bar Association*

## **LAW DAY 2008**

*Honoring:*

*Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. and The Honorable Robert L. Carter*

***Saturday, May 3, 2008***

*J.W. Marriott, 1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.*

*Cocktail Reception: 6:30 p.m., Dinner: 7:30 p.m.*

### ***Equal Justice Table***

***\$10,000.00***

*Full Gold page ad in program  
Video Display of Logo  
Signage  
Listing in Newsletter  
Reserved seating for ten  
Champagne toast*

### ***Platinum Table***

***\$7,500.00***

*Full Gold page ad in program  
Video Display of Logo  
VIP Reception  
Reserved seating for ten  
Champagne toast*

### ***Gold Table***

***\$5,000.00***

*Full Gold page ad in program  
Video Display of Logo  
Reserved seating for ten  
Champagne toast*

### ***Silver Table***

***\$3000***

*Full page ad in program  
Reserved seating for ten*

### ***General Table***

***\$1500***

*Reserved seating for ten*

*For further information, contact Ronald C. Jessamy, Law Day 2008 Chair  
(202) 434-8358, (202) 434-8359 fax, [rjessamy@jessamylaw.com](mailto:rjessamy@jessamylaw.com).*