



EQUAL JUSTICE

Newsletter of the Washington Bar Association

2011 - 2012

December

Dedicated to the Principle "Equal Justice Under Law"

Edition

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President's Message

By Iris McCollum Green



On behalf of the officers and board members of the Washington Bar Association, I wish you "Seasons Greetings." This is truly the season for giving. As we approach the end of the year, this is a time for reflection on our good fortunes as well as the plight of those who are not currently enjoying the American dream. While the economy may be showing signs of improving, the millions of unemployed Americans are still doubtful. The legal profession, like many others, has not escaped the fallout of a stagnant economy. Many lawyers, especially African Americans, are unemployed or are not working as lawyers. Locally, many African American lawyers depended on court appointments as a means of practicing their profession and earning their livelihoods. However, the competition for those court appointments, especially from the criminal docket, has intensified.

With the downsizing of some large firms, many lawyers who expected to be hired by firms had to seek other means of employment, which has, in turn, adversely impacted some of the attorneys who have traditionally earned their living as court appointed counsel. The paucity of legal jobs is widespread. I learned recently that some members of the Bar are volunteering with federal agencies and private nonprofits or working as legal support with the hope of eventually being hired as a lawyer by that agency or business.

While we lament the plight of lawyers, far too many other individuals continue to face the fear of having their mortgage foreclosed, and becoming homeless. Although the Making Homes Affordable/American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) is intended to stem the tide of foreclosures, it is still difficult for many individuals to successfully pursue and take advantage of ARRA.

On November 30, 2011, the WBA sponsored a fantastic seminar entitled, "Mortgage Modification and Asset Preservation," held at the Arnold and Porter Law Firm, which gave the attendees considerable insight into the obstacles that prevent many homeowners from being able to qualify for the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP). Andre Stevens, a banking industry insider who had worked in management for several well known mortgage lenders and banks, gave us an historical perspective on the tactics employed by the industry that created the current mortgage fiasco as well as the stringent requirements for a mortgage holder to qualify for a loan modification. Mr. Stevens can be an invaluable resource for attorneys who have clients for whom they are assisting to negotiate the loan modification process and preserve their assets.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members, directors and supporters of the Washington Bar Association for your overwhelming support of the programs and activities presented during this half of the bar year, and for helping to make them a success. We could not have done it without you. We are excited by some of the activities and programs we have in store for the coming year and believe that you will be as well.

As you know, at the WBA's annual Law Day Dinner at which the Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit is awarded, we traditionally present scholarships to the winners of the Charles Hamilton Houston Scholarship Writing Competition. Details of the 2012 writing competition are described elsewhere in this Newsletter.

This year, we are proud to announce that the Washington Bar Association Educational Foundation, Inc. together with the Washington Bar Association will present the Eugene Hamilton Trial Advocacy Prize in honor of the Late Chief Judge of the D. C. Superior Court. Details for participation in the competition for the Eugene Hamilton Trial Advocacy Prize will be described in the January issue of this Newsletter.

The Washington Bar Association Educational Foundation, Inc. is pleased to invite you to join us for the first Annual Red Dress Red Tie Ball to be held on February 11, 2012, at The Fairfax at Embassy Row, 2100 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. The Red Dress Red Tie Ball is reminiscent of those Gala Affairs introduced in the 80's through the National Association of Black Women Attorneys and its trailblazing leaders, Mabel Haden, Wilhemina Rolark and Ruth Hankins Nesbitt. The WBAEF has selected the Red Dress Red Tie Ball to serve as a fundraising vehicle to support the Charles Hamilton Houston Scholarship Writing Competition as well as to help endow the Eugene Hamilton Trial Advocacy Prize.

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Calendar of Events

[The particulars will be on the WBA web site]

YLD General Body Meeting
Tuesday, January 17, 2012 at 6:30pm
The John A. Wilson Building, Room 120
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

Red Dress Red Tie Ball
February 11, 2012
The Fairfax at Embassy Row
2100 Mass. Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

President's Message (Continued)

By Iris McCollum Green

In closing, I'd like to share a few Christmas and Holiday facts:

- * Americans, on average, send out 28 holiday cards and receive 28 holiday cards.
- * The "X" in Xmas comes from the Greek letter "chi," which is the first letter of Christ's name in Greek.
- * Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Maulana Ron Karenga, a professor of black studies at California State University.
- * Kwanzaa means "first fruits of the harvest" and is observed from December 26 to January 1.
- * It takes 44 candles to observe all of the nights of the Hanukkah.
- * Hanukkah falls at a different time each year, because it is based on the lunar rather than the solar calendar.

Whatever your faith or beliefs, I wish you a "Merry Christmas," "Happy Holidays" or the right to be a nonbeliever.

Judicial Council Update

By Claudia A. Crichlow - Chair

The Judicial Council has been very busy planning programs for the coming year. To close out 2011, the Judicial Council had its holiday celebration on Saturday, December 17, 2012 at the home of The Honorable Anita Josey-Herring. At our January 24, 2012 meeting, we plan to have guest speakers that will talk about the recent challenges faced by some African American families and their impact on the community.

The Judicial Council meets the 4th Tuesday of every month except in March and June in the Judge's Dining Room of D.C. Superior Court, 500 Indiana Avenue, NW, 6th floor. If you are interested in joining us, please contact me at Claudia.crichlow@dc.gov.

Donald A Thigpen, JR. Receives The National Bar Association's Wiley E. Branton Issues Symposium Award

Past Washington Bar Association President, Donald A Thigpen, Jr. was awarded the National Bar Association's Wiley E. Branton Issues Symposium Award on November 4, 2011 at the symposium luncheon at the Howard University School of Law. Presented by NBA President Darryl Parks, the award is presented annually for leadership on the cutting edge of law for civic, social and economic justice.



Parks and Thigpen



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YLD Discusses Financial Planning in a Fragile Economy

By Jason A. Grant

On November 15, 2011, the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) held a general body meeting focused on financial planning in a fragile economy. This presentation was a follow-up to the "Financial Planning for Young Professionals" event YLD held last year. Last year's presentation was generally about retirement savings plans including, IRAs and 401Ks, as well the importance of setting up personal economic plans to increase savings. The event on November 15th was focused on how to best invest personal funds when the economy is unstable, and how to manage personal funds when income is low or inconsistent.

Presenters for this event included, Rheanna Derrick, financial advisor from Northwestern Mutual, and Keith Holmes and James Selvaggi from Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, LLC. Ms. Derrick discussed some important ways to generally manage personal funds, in particular when the economy is unstable. Ms. Derrick suggested to the audience that individuals should divide their money in to different "buckets." One bucket is the "now bucket," which would hold the funds needed for everyday use and paying bills. Another bucket would be an emergency fund. In the emergency fund, there should be enough money to sustain an individual for three to six months. Another important bucket is for saving to buy a home or starting a business.

The presentation by Keith Holmes and James Selvaggi concentrated on investing money and saving money for retirement. Holmes and Selvaggi advised the audience to be aware of the risks associated with investing in the stock market. Risks mentioned include "currency risk," which deals with the value of domestic and international dollars, and political and legislative risks associated with economic policy changes in local and national government. Holmes and Selvaggi also stressed the importance of diversifying assets to minimize systematic risks. Diversification allows for some personal economic stability, even as the market may be unstable.

As the presenters answered questions from the general body, an essential idea that was encouraged was to plan for every bit of money you receive. One of the ways to do that is to have a good financial advisor that you trust. Attorneys have a lot on their minds when it comes to their careers and personal lives. How to properly save and invest money will sometimes be ignored. Also, Mr. Holmes emphasized that financial advisors are not just for individuals worth millions of dollars. Even if a young professional is just starting their careers, a financial advisor can be invaluable to their economic future.

CHARLES HAMILTON HOUSTON

2012 SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

The Washington Bar Association Charles Hamilton Houston Scholarship (CHH) Committee is pleased to announce the 2012 CHH Essay Competition. Currently enrolled first, second, third year as well as fourth-year-evening law students are invited to participate in the Washington Bar Association (WBA) and Washington Bar Association Educational Foundation, Inc. (WBAEF)'s Charles Hamilton Houston Scholarship Essay Competition. Monetary scholarships will be awarded to the first, second and third place winners. Last year, the first place winner received \$5,000.00.

Winners of the CHH Essay Competition will be presented during the Washington Bar Association's Annual Law Day Dinner at the J.W. Marriott in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, May 5, 2012. Essays must be no longer than seven 8 ½ x 11" pages.

Entrants should submit an essay on the topic below:

There have been a number of recent legislative proposals that concern our right to vote, ranging from redistricting for purposes of Congressional voting districts to laws affecting voter eligibility. Please identify one or more examples of such proposed or actual laws from anywhere in the country and discuss whether these laws unconstitutionally infringe on the right to vote. You may want to consider any manner in which these laws affect the right to vote, either by strengthening or weakening our republic. For example, you might want to consider whether these examples are modern day poll taxes, efforts to suppress the vote or needed improvements to avoid voter fraud.

Essays must be submitted on or before the deadline of April 16. Emails will be accepted until midnight April 16. However, entries sent by mail or hand delivered must be received in the office by April 16, 2010. at 5:00 p.m. Finalists will be scheduled for interviews. Entries will be judged by a panel of attorneys and/or judges, and will be scored on the basis of both substance and form.

Should you have questions or desire any additional information, please contact Attorney Gloria Johnson at 301-390-2222. Submissions will not be accepted by facsimile.

How to apply- Email to: GJLaw75@aol.com or Mail to Gloria Johnson 1300 Mercantile Lane, Suite 139 Largo, Maryland 20774

Gloria Johnson and Antoinette Barksdale
Co-Chairs, Charles Hamilton Houston Scholarship Committee



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Notice of Judicial Vacancy Created by the Retirement of the Honorable Zinora Mitchell-Rankin

December 14, 2011

Members of the bench, bar, and public are hereby notified by the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission (the "Commission") that a vacancy on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia will occur as a result of the retirement of the Honorable Zinora Mitchell-Rankin, effective February 29, 2012. Within 60 days after a vacancy, the Commission is to submit to the President of the United States the names of three persons for possible nomination and appointment to the Court. D.C. Code § 1-204.34. Accordingly, the Commission invites qualified individuals to apply for this vacancy.

Pursuant to D.C. Code § 1-204.33(b), no person may be nominated or appointed a judge of a District of Columbia court unless the person—

- * is a citizen of the United States;
- * is an active member of the unified District of Columbia Bar and has been engaged in the active practice of law in the District for the five years immediately preceding the nomination or for such five years has been on the faculty of a law school in the District, or has been employed as a lawyer by the United States or the District of Columbia government;
- * is a bona fide resident of the District of Columbia and has maintained an actual place of abode in the District of Columbia for at least 90 days immediately prior to the nomination, and shall retain such residency while serving as such judge;
- * is recommended to the President, for such nomination and appointment, by the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission; and
- * has not served, within a period of two years prior to the nomination, as a member of the District of Columbia Tenure Commission or the Judicial Nomination Commission.

All persons interested in applying for this judicial vacancy shall review and comply with the Application Instructions for Judicial Vacancies on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia found on the Commission's website. (See www.jnc.dc.gov.) Applicants shall submit an original and one paper copy of their complete application materials to the Executive Director. All application materials and correspondence shall be addressed to Kim M. Whatley, Executive Director, Judicial Nomination Commission, 515 Fifth Street, NW, Suite 235, Washington, DC 20001. Incomplete or outdated application materials will not be considered. All application materials shall be received by the close of business on January 30, 2012.

Applicants shall also email a copy of their Letter of Interest, Resume, Applicant Questionnaire, and writing samples, in separate PDF format files to the Executive Director and to each Commission member. The email subject line shall include the applicant's name and shall state that the email contains application materials for a judicial vacancy. If the writing samples are too voluminous to send electronically, so indicate in the email and send paper copies of those documents to each Commission member by mail or courier service.

The Commission does not require letters of recommendation, letters of support, or endorsements, but will accept them. Such letters shall be received by the Commission generally within 30 calendar days from the application deadline date, or by February 27, 2012. Consult the Application Instructions for Judicial Vacancies on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of the District of Columbia on the Commission's website (www.jnc.dc.gov) for additional information on the procedures for submitting letters.

Questions concerning the judicial vacancy application process shall be directed to the Commission's Executive Director at (202) 879-0478 or dc.jnc@dc.gov.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2011 WBA MEMBERSHIP DUES?

The WBA's annual membership dues structure is as follows: Regular - \$75; Sustaining - \$100; and Sponsor - over \$100. Life membership is still \$1000. The Young Lawyers Division ("YLD") membership dues are now: YLD Regular - \$50; YLD Sustaining - \$65; YLD Sponsor - over \$65. Law student membership is \$5.

The lower YLD membership dues structure is available to members 35 years old or younger; or to members who have been admitted to their first bar for less than five years. Thus, all WBA members who are not yet 36 qualify for the YLD and its membership rates, as well as anyone older who has been a member of the bar for less than five years.

To those members whose dues are current, we appreciate your support. However, if you have not paid your dues, please visit the WBA website to pay your dues today or mail them to the WBA at P.O. Box 56551, Wash., DC 20040. Remember the WBA depends on receipt of membership dues to help support its programs. Thank you in advance.



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WASHINGTON BAR ASSOCIATION EDUCATION FOUNDATION, INC.

Presents

The Red Dress Red Tie Ball
The 1st Annual Valentine's Holiday Gala

THE FAIRFAX AT EMBASSY ROW
2100 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008
February 11, 2012



Save the Date. Event Details to Follow...



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Photographs from the Ollie May Cooper Event



Photograph from the Freedom Riders Commemoration

