



Copyright © Sekio Matsumoto, 1994

EQUAL JUSTICE

Through awareness, education and action

"Ethnic Minority Bar Associations"

An official publication of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission

January 2002

Volume 5, Number 1

Message From the Editor

Erica S. Chung

In our continuous effort to use *Equal Justice* as a venue to share information of interest with our members, the judiciary, and the legal community, we have decided to devote this issue to "Ethnic Minority Bar Associations" and their contributions. Many are aware of various ethnic minority bar associations, but may not know intimately or be aware of the amazing programs and services in existence to assist their respective communities. We applaud their dedication, commitment and service to improve access to the justice system and to promote equal justice for all regardless of race, gender, disability status, ethnicity, culture and belief.

Services and programs seem to vary greatly. More established bar associations with English-proficient constituents focus on promoting access to the justice system and diversity on the bench while bar associations with limited English-proficient constituents seem to focus on providing bilingual legal services and basic knowledge.

In the State of Washington there are currently ten ethnic minority bar associations. The ones that have responded to our questionnaire are featured. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Jack E. Tanner Bar Association, the Washington State Hispanic Bar Association, the Korean American Bar Association, the Washington State Bar Association's Committee for Diversity, and the Loren Miller Bar Association for their input and thought-provoking responses. It is with regret that we were not able to also feature: the Asian Bar Association of Washington; the Filipino-American Legal Association of Washington; the National Conference of Black Lawyers; the Northwest Indian Bar Association; and the Pierce County Minority Bar Association.

We recognize that the information contained in the articles is limited. Therefore, we implore you to seek additional information from the various ethnic minority bar associations and support their efforts. In an environment of fear and mistrust of multi-culturalism after the tragic events of 2001, our greatest contribution is to open our hearts and minds to diversity and inclusiveness. Happy New Year!

◆◆◆

IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
Message From the Editor.....	1
<u>MINORITY BAR ASSOCIATIONS</u>	
Jack E. Tanner Bar Association.....	2
Hispanic Bar Association.....	3
Korean American Bar Association...4	4
WSBA Committee for Diversity.....4	4
Loren Miller Bar Association.....	5
<u>OTHER FEATURES</u>	
WSBA Membership Demographics....	6
New Maryland Commission.....	7
<u>SPOTLIGHT</u>	
Myrna I. Contreras.....	3
RESOURCES.....	6

EQUAL JUSTICE

Equal Justice is the official publication of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission whose goal is elimination of racial and ethnic bias, where it exists, from our state courts. The newsletter is a communications and networking tool providing information about Commission programs, projects and issues of concern.

Editorial Committee

Justice Charles Z. Smith

Co-Chairperson

Justice Charles W. Johnson

Co-Chairperson

Myrna I. Contreras

Brian A. Tsuchida

Executive Editors

Erica S. Chung

Editor

Washington State
Department of Printing

Printer

Equal Justice may not be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from the Commission. The Washington State Minority and Justice Commission welcomes information and articles related to its mission. We are interested in programs and projects in the Washington courts addressing racial and ethnic bias, workforce diversity and cultural diversity. Please send information about your program to Erica S. Chung, Executive Director, Minority and Justice Commission, Temple of Justice, Post Office Box 41174, Olympia, Washington 98504-1174.

Telephone: (360) 705-5327

E-mail: Minority.Justice@courts.wa.gov

Website: www.courts.wa.gov/mjc/home/cfm

"*Equal Justice*" logo copyright ©
Sekio Matsumoto, 1994



Jack E. Tanner Bar Association

The Jack E. Tanner Bar Association is the newest addition to the ethnic minority bar associations. It was formed on November 10, 1999 and became an affiliate chapter of the National Bar Association in April 2000. The purpose of the Tanner Bar Association is to facilitate professional growth, development, and relationships among African American attorneys residing or practicing in Lewis, Mason, Pierce and Thurston Counties; to foster diversity in the legal community; and to serve as the pulse of the Lewis, Mason, Pierce and Thurston black communities on legal issues and laws affecting those communities.

The Bar is named after Jack E. Tanner, a sitting Federal Judge for the Eastern and Western Districts of the State of Washington, and selected in honor of his achievements while practicing law in Pierce County.

In October 2001, the Jack E. Tanner Bar Association hosted its first Annual Speech Scholarship Competition in Tacoma for inner city high school youths. Four scholarships, named after the late prominent African American attorney Carl Maxey, were awarded to deserving students to assist with their college education expenses.

In January 2002, in memory and honor of Attorney Deia Peters, the Jack Tanner Bar Association established its second scholarship foundation, The Deia Wallace-Peters Scholarship Fund.

The Tanner Bar Association believes primary racial and/or cultural challenges facing its community are a need for greater representation of people of color as judges and commissioners; a need to educate youths regarding their rights and responsibilities under the law; and, lastly, a need for role models and mentors to help youths better understand and navigate within our legal system.

In regards to the challenges the Tanner Bar Association has the following goals: implementation of an eight-week Neighborhood Law School program for lay citizens; support of qualified African American candidates for judgeships and commissions; hosting a county-wide high school mentorship reception; continuation of the Carl Maxey Scholarship for inner city high school youths; and establishment of collaborative and supportive relationships with the Loren Miller and Pierce County Minority Bar Associations.

◆◆◆

Response to questionnaire submitted by Jerry Lee, Jr., President. Contact information: Jerry Lee, Jr., President (206) 464-6731, Selwyn Walters, Vice President (360) 753-3790. Mailing address is 2315 10 North Pearl Street, #252, Tacoma, WA 98406, E-mail: Tannerbar1999@aol.com

Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society

**Washington State
Hispanic Bar Association**

The **Washington State Hispanic Bar Association** (WSHBA) was established in February 1986 with the purpose of representing concerns and goals of Hispanic attorneys and Hispanic people of the State of Washington. To accomplish its purpose, the WSHBA encourages and promotes active participation of all Hispanic attorneys throughout the State and seek the involvement of Hispanic political, governmental, educational and business leaders.

The WSHBA has identified several goals in relation to its purpose: to encourage and assist Hispanic students to participate and voice their concerns; to promote Hispanic judicial appointments; to encourage respect for the integrity of the judicial system and the pursuit of fairness, justice and equality.

Current programs include: mentoring and scholarship fundraising for students of the University of Washington School of Law and the Seattle University School of Law; co-sponsoring the King County Bar Association Spanish Legal Clinic; and planning, in conjunction with other minority bar associations, a Continuing Legal Education event "Survival Skills for Minority Attorneys in Law Firms and Other Work Places". The WSHBA is also working on a project with the KING-TV called "Legally Speaking", which would explore various subjects that would help increase the public's awareness of legal issues.

In response to a question regarding racial and/or cultural challenges in the judicial system, the WSHBA responded that there needs to be increased sensitivity towards undocumented immigrants on a statewide basis. He fears that some prosecutors may not be aware of sentencing problems that automatically affect immigration status. Also, a lack of interpreters continues to be a problem along with an overall lack of understanding of the rights of non-English speaking litigants.

The WSHBA hopes to address some of the challenges in the justice system by developing a working relationship with police officials to overcome miscommunication and misunderstanding, which would reduce unintended consequences and avert targeting of Latinos regarding their immigration status. The WSHBA also hopes to make local Immigration and Naturalization Service officials more accountable in addressing issues such as

inaccessibility and disrespect towards immigrants. Hector Steele Rojas solicits input from readers on how to best address issues identified in the article.

◆◆◆

Response to questionnaire submitted by Héctor Steele Rojas, President. Mr. Steele Rojas may be reached at (206) 838-0163, Post Office Box 21134, Seattle, WA 98111-3134, E-mail: steelerojas@nwlawcenter.net. For more information, visit their website: www.wshba.org.

Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society

SPOTLIGHT

**Myrna I. Contreras Recognized
for Outstanding Commitment
To Community**

Ms. Myrna I. Contreras, a member of the Minority and Justice Commission and co-chairperson of the Outreach sub-committee, received an *Outstanding Commitment to Community Service Award* from the Washington State Hispanic Bar Association during its Annual Holiday Banquet on Thursday, December 6, 2001, in Seattle.

According to Hector Steele Rojas, President of the WSHBA, the recipient of the *Outstanding Commitment to Community Service Award* is chosen annually by the WSHBA Board which considers the nominee's cultural contribution, dedication, commitment and service to its community. Mr. Steele Rojas stated that the Board heard many wonderful things about Ms. Contreras.

Myrna Contreras sits as judge pro tempore in the Yakima County Superior and District Courts. Every three months she dedicates a morning to review ten cases referred to her by the YMCA/YWCA for free legal advice, some she accepts pro bono. She also mentors young lawyers in the Yakima area.

Ms. Contreras is the founder of the Washington State Hispanic/Latino Democratic Caucus, serves on the Education Partnership Committee of the Yakima School District and contributes as a task force member of the Upper Valley Vision.

◆◆◆

Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society

Korean American Bar Association

The purpose of the **Korean American Bar Association** (KABA) is to serve the Korean American community by providing access to the justice system, legal services and attorneys. The KABA also serves as a venue for Korean American attorneys to foster professional growth and camaraderie among its members.

For the past several years, the KABA has directed a large portion of its outreach efforts through the Pro Bono Legal Clinic. The Pro Bono Legal Clinic, located at the Korean Community Counseling Center, provides free legal advice and referral to the Korean American attorneys in the King County area. Every Thursday and Saturday one to three Korean American attorneys are available to provide legal advice on a variety of topics, including contracts, criminal, immigration, landlord-tenant disputes, and more. At the discretion of the attorneys on site, he or she may accept pro bono cases.

Last year, the KABA established a golf tournament to build relationships among its members and the Korean American community. The proceeds raised were donated to the Korean Community Counseling Center, which provides social services to first generation Korean Americans with limited English proficiency. The KABA hopes to continue the golf tournament on an annual basis.

The KABA hopes in the near future to expand the Pro Bono Legal Clinic to incorporate law students which will hopefully expand the number of volunteers and provide real world experience to Korean American law students. The KABA is also attempting to establish a scholarship fund as the annual dinner banquet becomes profitable.

The KABA believes primary racial and/or cultural challenges facing their community are fear of the justice system; lack of basic knowledge and understanding of their rights and of the justice system; lack of translated materials; and lack of interpreters. According to Mr. Han, "The first generation relies on 1.5 or second generations for guidance regarding the American legal system."

◆◆◆
Response to questionnaire was submitted by Young J. Han, outgoing President. Ms. Grace Han (no relation) is the incoming President at (206) 264-6483, Perkins Coie, 1201 Third Avenue, Suite 4800, Seattle, WA 98121, E-mail: hangr@perkinscoie.com.

**Washington State Bar Association
Committee for Diversity**

The objective of the **Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) Committee for Diversity**, formerly known as the *Opportunities for Minorities in the Legal Profession Committee*, is the promotion of diversity throughout the legal community through:

1. Increasing diversity within the membership and leadership of the WSBA
2. Promoting opportunities for appointment and election of minorities to the bench
3. Supporting and encouraging opportunities for minority attorneys
4. Aggressively recruiting and advertising employment opportunities for minorities, and
5. Raising awareness of the benefits of diversity

Current programs and projects to accomplish the WSBA objective are mentoring of students at college and law school levels, speaking at high schools on the importance of diversity, participating in law week programs of the Washington State Bar Association, sponsoring an annual reception with the Minority Bar Coalition and the Board of Governors of the WSBA, co-sponsoring events which promote diversity and equality, participating in the annual WSBA bar leaders conference, and participating in the WSBA pilot project called "The Lawyer-to-Lawyer Program" to pair experienced lawyers with new lawyers. The Committee is reviewing the WSBA judicial appointment process and discussing a series of CLE programs to address legal issues affecting diversity.

In response to a question regarding racial and/or cultural challenges in the judicial system, committee co-chairperson Bonnie Glenn responded that one of the principal challenges of the Committee is to provide their members with the opportunity to gain legal experience in all areas of legal practice and to broaden their experience with the legal system. It is important to provide reinforcement and mentoring to lawyers, to break down isolation and build a network of support, to be participants at all levels, so that members can participate as leaders and have the opportunity to serve in ways that are meaningful.

◆◆◆
Response to questionnaire submitted by Ms. Bonnie Glenn and Rafael Gonzales, Co-Chairs. For more information, please contact Ms. Glenn at (206) 714-1954 and Mr. Gonzales at (509) 574-1160 or visit their website: www.wsba.org/diversity.htm. WSBA Committee for Diversity's mailing address is 2101 Fourth Avenue, 4th Floor, Seattle, WA 98121.

Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society

Loren Miller Bar Association

The **Loren Miller Bar Association** (LMBA), established in August 1968, is the oldest and perhaps the most well-known minority bar association in the State of Washington. The LMBA is an affiliate of the National Bar Association, which is the oldest minority bar organization and the largest organization of African American attorneys in the United States. The LMBA was named after **Loren Miller**, the famed Los Angeles civil rights attorney who successfully argued *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 U.S. 1 (1948), which struck down race-based restrictive covenants in housing. Beginning as the Loren Miller Bar Club, on October 14, 1978 the members officially changed the name to the Loren Miller Bar Association.

The LMBA describes itself as, first and foremost, a civil rights organization. "From its infancy, LMBA adopted a vigorous platform of confronting institutionalized racism and the myriad social and economic disparities affecting the African American community." In addition to its strong civil rights platform, fighting discrimination in employment, housing, education, public contracting, and disparate treatment, the LMBA has expanded its sphere of influence within Washington's judicial and legal communities.

The LMBA has member representation on Washington State Bar Association and the King County Bar Association. It screens judicial candidates for the bench and hosts political forums providing a venue for debate and public discourse.

Programs and projects abound through the Loren Miller Bar Association. They include monthly membership meetings during which LMBA features local or national speakers who present current issues of concern to the LMBA constituency; the annual Philip L. Burton Scholarship Dinner, the proceeds of which are distributed to third year law students studying for the bar exam; co-hosting the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with the King County Bar Association; and co-hosting the celebration of United States Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall during Black History Month with the King County Superior Court. Additional programs include participation at job fairs, co-sponsorship of the "Youth in the Law Forum" where members of the legal community are invited to

interact with African American youths regarding the legal system, and hosting a Young Lawyer Orientation Program where senior LMBA members share their wisdom with new LMBA attorneys.

When asked about racial and cultural challenges faced by lawyers or litigants in the judicial system, the LMBA responded that it perceives the primary challenges to be the number of racial minorities inside the prison system; the limited number of minority lawyers and judges relative to the number of minority litigants, which gives rise to the appearance of disproportionality and unfairness; limited employment opportunities and lack of quality mentors; and the lack of or limited positive interaction amongst members of the bench, the bar, and racial minorities. The only experience a juror, judge, prosecutor, or civil litigator may have with a racial minority is that of an antagonist or criminal defendant, which may skew their understanding and their point of view.

Although the LMBA is unwavering in its desire and struggle to overcome the aforementioned challenges, the LMBA recognizes that positive progress will require a concerted effort from every facet of the legal and judicial communities. The LMBA has suggested the following programs to improve racial and/or cultural challenges in the judicial system:

- Participation in proven sensitivity programs by judges and court personnel
- Community outreach to minority communities by judges and legal professionals
- More interaction between minority bar associations and judges
- Community forums

◆◆◆

Response to questionnaire submitted by David C. Reed, current President. For more information, please contact Mr. Reed at (206) 254-7332, Karen W. Murray, President-Elect at (206) 624-8105, ext. 247, JD Smith, Vice-President at (206) 521-6515, Mark Roberts, Treasurer at (206) 903-8800, or visit their website: www.LMBA.net. Loren Miller's mailing address is Post Office Box 21964, Seattle, WA 98101-3964.

Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society

EQUAL JUSTICE

Voluntary Demographic Information of Active WSBA Members

The Washington State Bar Association has collected demographic information about its membership through voluntary responses to demographic questionnaires contained in the bar license renewal forms sent annually to its current members and to newly admitted members of the bar. According to the WSBA, as of November 2001, there are 22,515 active members licensed to practice law in the State of Washington. Of those, 13,961 members or 62% of its membership voluntarily submitted questionnaire responses regarding ethnicity; 14,154 members or 62.9% regarding its gender; and 12,671 members or 56.3% regarding its disabled status. Although participation in answering these demographic questions was not 100%, responses provide a clearer picture based on a numerical tabulation of the membership's distribution by WSBA District, years in the WSBA, age, ethnicity, gender and disabled status.

While there are no preexisting demographic statistics on the WSBA's memberships, the statistics appear to confirm changes in law school enrollments and other changes in Washington State which have only been anecdotally observed. For example the great increase in the number of women who are attending and graduating from law schools is clearly reflected by the fact that 30.8% of the WSBA members are female. And the anecdotal observation of the increase in the number of lawyers of Asian and Pacific Islander ethnicity is reflected by the fact that there are now nearly 400 WSBA members from this ethnic group. Over time, it will be interesting to note how the WSBA demographic statistics mirror or diverge from other demographic data regularly compiled in Washington State.

◆◆◆

Voluntary Demographic Information by WSBA as of 11/1/2001

Count by Ethnicity

American Indian/Alaska Native	93	0.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	399	2.9%
Black/African American	218	1.6%
Caucasian	12,866	92.2%
Hispanic	145	1.0%
Multi-Racial	92	0.7%
Other	148	1.1%
Total Respondents	13,961	62.0%
Non-Respondents	<u>8,554</u>	
	22,515	

Count by Gender

Female	4,356	30.8%
Male	<u>9,798</u>	69.2%
Total Respondents	14,154	
Non-Respondents	<u>8,361</u>	
	22,515	

Count by Disabled Status

Yes	148	1.2%
No	<u>12,523</u>	98.8%
Total Respondents	12,671	
Non-Respondents	<u>9,844</u>	
	22,515	

"Active" Includes Members with Status

Active	22,423
Emeritus	20
Foreign Law Consultant	4
House Counsel	<u>68</u>
	22,515

Provided by and printed with permission from WSBA

RESOURCES

This section is offered to our readers as a reference to articles of interest as they relate to persons of color in our justice system and does not necessarily represent the perspective of the Commission or its members.

- *2001 Annual Report*, January 2002, Washington State Minority and Justice Commission
- *Juvenile Offenders: A Study of Disproportionality and Recidivism*, December 2001, State of Washington Sentencing Guidelines Commission

- *Reducing Disproportionate Minority Confinement: The Multnomah County, Oregon Success Story and It's Implications*, January 2002, Justice Policy Institute
- *Representation and Equity in Washington State: An Assessment of Disproportionality and Disparity in Adult Felony Sentencing — Fiscal Year 2000*, December 2001, State of Washington Sentencing Guidelines Commission

Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society

**Excerpt from
Maryland Bar Journal:
New Court Commission to Investigate Racial
and Ethnic Bias Concerns**

*By Janet Stidman Eveleth
November 2001*

(Reprinted with permission)

To address growing concerns over racial and ethnic bias in Maryland's court system, the Honorable Robert M. Bell, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Maryland, has created a new court Commission on Racial and Ethnicity Fairness in the Judicial Process. The new Commission, chaired by Judge Dale Cathell of the Court of Appeals, will investigate racial and ethnicity problems and perceptions cited in the Select Committee on Gender Equality's "2001 Retrospective Report."

The primary focus of the court's new Commission will be "the examination of court-related equality issues affecting African American, Hispanic and Asian communities," according to Bell. Its primary mission is to "raise both public and professional awareness of the impact of race and ethnic origin on the fair delivery of justice in Maryland."

Bell announced the creation of the new Commission on October 26, 2001, at the Maryland State Bar Association's Bar Presidents' Conference, during a special session devoted to the 2001 Gender Equality Report. "It is imperative that our legal system operate without bias of any kind, and be perceived as dispensing justice fairly and equitably," asserted the Chief Judge. "This is an area we must address."

Racial and ethnic bias issues in the state's judicial system indeed surfaced during the Select Committee on Gender Equality's 2000 survey. The most alarming revelation is "the perception that racial and ethnic bias is more prevalent than gender bias." According to the Committee's final report, "a significant percentage of judges, attorneys and court employees believe that racial and/or ethnic bias is a factor in the administration of justice and affects the treatment of litigants, attorneys and court employees."

Under Cathell's leadership, the Commission will: "address equality issues affecting court processes or those resulting from court processes; develop methodology to reduce or eliminate unequal access to, and unequal treatment in, the judicial processes within the court system; and develop and schedule educational programs for the bench and bar as to the

means by which racial and ethnic bias may be eliminated in the state's legal system." ◆◆◆

Janet Stidman Eveleth is the Director of Communications with the Maryland State Bar and is the editor of the Maryland Bar Journal. Full text of the article is available at http://www.msba.org/departments/commpubl/press_ctr/articles/2001/Index.htm.

Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society

**Excerpt from Press Release:
Bar and Bench Announce Gender Equality
Strides in Maryland Court System:
New Court Commission to Explore Racial
and Ethnic Equality**

(Reprinted with permission)

Although many strides have been made in the area of gender equality in the last decade, incidents of gender bias persist in Maryland's court system, and perceptions of racial and ethnic bias have surfaced. According to a new Bar/Bench study, many of the court system's existing gender bias problems have been eliminated, through educational programs, judicial training, new legislation and other corrective measures. Yet, problems of gender, racial and ethnic bias still exist in the state's judicial system, so Maryland's Judiciary and the Maryland State Bar Association are implementing new measures to promote equality and eliminate bias.

Growing concerns over racial and ethnic bias in Maryland's court system have prompted the Honorable Robert M. Bell, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Maryland, to create a new court Commission on Racial and Ethnicity Fairness in the Judicial Process. This new Commission, which will be chaired by Judge Dale Cathell of the Court of Appeals, will examine racial and ethnicity problems and perceptions cited in the **Select Committee on Gender Equality's "2001 Retrospective Report."**

"It is imperative that our legal system operate without bias of any kind, and be perceived as dispensing justice fairly and equitably," states Bell. "Working together, the Bench and Bar have responded effectively to gender fairness issues. Now, we will begin to look more closely at issues of racial and ethnic equality." ◆◆◆

Full text of the article is available at <http://www.courts.state.md.us/pr10-29-01.html>

WASHINGTON STATE MINORITY AND JUSTICE COMMISSION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT MEMBERS

Justice Charles Z. Smith	Jeffrey C. Sullivan	Michael J. Killian
Justice Charles W. Johnson	Ms. Mary Alice Theiler	Lonnie Davis
Judge William W. Baker	Brian A. Tsuchida	David J. Della
Judge Monica J. Benton	Judge James D. Cayce	Larry M. Fehr
Judge Ronald E. Cox	Judge Patricia Hall Clark	José E. Gaitán
Judge Anne L. Ellington	Judge M. Karlynn Haberly	Charles A. Jardine
Judge Deborah D. Fleck	Judge Anne Levinson	Ms. Ada Ko
Judge Richard A. Jones	Judge Douglas W. Luna	Ms. Leana D. Lamb
Judge Kenneth H. Kato	Judge Richard F. McDermott, Jr.	Ms. Lorraine Lee
Judge Ron A. Mamiya	Judge Albert M. Raines	Ms. Terry Mark
Judge Ricardo S. Martinez	Judge Philip A. Thompson	Ms. Denise C. Marti
Judge James M. Murphy	Judge Vicki J. Toyohara	Ms. Mary Elizabeth McKnew
Judge LeRoy McCullough	Judge Mary I. Yu	Tony Orange
Ms. Myrna I. Contreras	Judge Dennis D. Yule	Ms. Esther L. Patrick
Dean Donna Claxton Deming	Jeffrey A. Beaver	Kenneth E. Payson
Ms. Lourdes Fuentes	Robert C. Boruchowitz	José J. Quintana
Guadalupe Gamboa	Ms. Madelyn Botta	Ms. P. Diane Schneider
Ms. Mary Campbell McQueen	Dr. George S. Bridges	

Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society

EQUAL JUSTICE



Washington State Minority and Justice Commission
Temple of Justice
Post Office Box 41174
Olympia, Washington 98504-1174



Printed on Recycled Paper