



# EQUAL JUSTICE

Through awareness, education and action

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*An official publication of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission*

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## **ABA CENTER ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY**

### **The Diversity Collection**

The Center on Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the American Bar Association, comprised of the Association's Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity, Council on Racial and Ethnic Justice and Presidential Advisory Council on Diversity, has begun publishing *The Diversity Collection*, a compendium of diversity-related articles published in recent years by ABA groups. These articles explore racial and ethnic diversity issues in the legal profession, educational pipeline and social justice systems. To obtain a free copy of the first edition of *The Diversity Collection* or learn more about the Center on Racial and Ethnic Diversity go to <http://www.abanet.org/diversity>. To read an interview with an author of one of the featured articles go to <http://www.abanet.org/media/youraba/200811/article01.html>.



***Celebrating the Courts in an Inclusive Society***

## **WASHINGTON STATE BAR NEWS**

### **Access to Justice Issue**

The May 2008, issue of the *Washington State Bar News*, titled "Ensuring Access to Justice: What Is Our Role?", features an introduction by

Washington Chief Justice Gerry Alexander and a collection of articles that provide a comprehensive description of the coordinated system for funding, supporting and delivering civil legal aid services to low income people in our state. The issue is available on-line at: <http://www.wsba.org/media/>

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*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 W. Johnson  
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*Co-Chairpersons*

Judge Dennis D. Yule  
*Executive Editor*

Monto Shan Morton  
*Editor*

*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 Monto Shan Morton, Executive Director, Washington State Minority and Justice Commission, Temple of Justice, Post Office Box 41174, Olympia, Washington 98504.

***MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR***

Change has been the topic of much public thought and discussion this year with the historic election of our nation's first African-American president. As you may notice in this issue of *Equal Justice*, change is coming to it as well.

Over the past year the Outreach Subcommittee of the Minority and Justice Commission, responsible for overseeing publication of the newsletter, has been looking at ways to refine the role of *Equal Justice* and enhance its effectiveness in serving as an information link between the Commission and those it serves. From that inquiry, including a survey of our readers and discussions with Commission members, one conclusion became clear: there should be more emphasis upon "news" in the newsletter.

As this issue demonstrates, good work and intense activity focused upon justice and diversity abounds in our state and needs to be communicated. Such work and activity inspires more of the same. We look forward to advancing that communication and look to you to let us know what is happening.

With this issue we begin a content shift from a handful of longer articles focused upon a particular issue theme toward more, but briefer and more generally informative, news items designed to provide information across a broader spectrum of current issues and activities in the judicial/legal communities relating to minorities, justice and diversity. As we refine these changes in the content of *Equal Justice* we will begin, in future issues, to modify its format, too, with the objective of making it more "reader friendly."

As we seek to make *Equal Justice* more relevant and helpful to you, our readers, your responses and suggestions, as well as information you provide about programs and activities occurring around the state, will be critically important. We encourage your comments. They should be sent to Monto Shan Morton, Executive Director of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission, at [montomorton@courts.wa.gov](mailto:montomorton@courts.wa.gov), or Post Office Box 41174 Olympia, Washington 98504-1174.

publications/barnews/may08.htm. For a hard copy, contact Joan Fairbanks, Justice Programs Manager, Washington State Bar Association, (202) 727-8282, joanf@wsba.org.



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## **SEATTLE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW**

### **Language Access Project**

Seattle University's Access to Justice Institute (ATJI), in collaboration with the Washington State Coalition for Language Access (WASCLA), has launched a new Language Access Project to: 1) educate future lawyers about providing quality and culturally competent representation to LEP (Limited English Proficient) individuals; 2) collaborate with language access stakeholders to encourage implementation of LEP policies in institutions across disciplines throughout the state of Washington.

The Language Access Project focuses on two programs. The LEP Client Representation Program is a collaboration between the ATJI and the Ronald A. Peterson Law Clinic at Seattle University Law School to prepare student interpreters and student attorneys to work together in representing LEP persons. Student attorneys receive training in working with interpreters and about LEP policies and issues related to cultural competency. Student interpreters receive training in interpreting skills. Student interpreters and student attorneys are then matched to provide interpretation services in Clinic cases.

The Policy Campaign focuses on development of LEP policies at legal services organizations, law firms, government agencies and institutions through the work of Seattle University law students in encouraging institutions to implement formal policies, beginning with the development and implementation of an appropriate and comprehensive policy at the Ronald A. Peterson Law Clinic. Those interested in finding out more about the ATJI and/or the Language Access Project may wish to visit the website at <http://www.law.seattleu.edu/x1864.xml>

or contact Monika Batra Kashyap at [batram@seattleu.edu](mailto:batram@seattleu.edu).

### **Workshops on Lawyering in a Diverse World**

Seattle University School of Law has also launched a year-long series of workshops designed to provide law students with practical knowledge and skills on issues related to diversity that will enhance effective lawyering in an increasingly diverse and complex world. Workshop topics include "Cross-Cultural Lawyering," "The Disability Perspective" and "Bias in the Courtroom". Ada Shen-Jaffe, senior advisor to the dean of Seattle University Law School and practitioners Stacie Siebrecht and David Carlson from Disability Rights Washington, Jeff Robinson from Schroeter Goldmark & Bender and Jill Otake, from the United States Attorney's office are among the workshop facilitators. In addition to the workshops, law students have organized Table Talk events that provide dinner conversations about issues of diversity, such as Race and the Elections.

A Diversity Week Reception will be held at Seattle University School of Law on February 26, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Gallery. All members of the legal community are invited and encouraged to attend.

More information about the Lawyering in a Diverse World workshop series is available at [http://www.law.seattleu.edu/Student\\_Life/Diversity.xml](http://www.law.seattleu.edu/Student_Life/Diversity.xml). Questions or comments may be addressed to Diana Singleton, Director, Access to Justice Institute, at [singletd@seattleu.edu](mailto:singletd@seattleu.edu), or Fé Lopez, Assistant Director for Student Life, at [lopezff@seattleu.edu](mailto:lopezff@seattleu.edu).



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## **WASHINGTON INITIATIVE FOR DIVERSITY GOVERNING COUNCIL**

The Washington Initiative for Diversity Governing Council (IDGC) has been established to identify and implement strategies for ensuring that the Washington justice system and its attorney population reflect the diversity of Washington's population. The IDGC is a consortium of

representatives from Washington's minority, specialty, state and county bar associations; attorney interest groups; and public and private employers of attorneys. Washington's public and private law firms, law schools, and other Washington legal employers are encouraged and invited to become signatories to the Initiative for Diversity in partnership with bar organizations which endorse these efforts to increase diversity in Washington's legal profession. Signatories will agree to a standard set of commitments and develop an individualized diversity plan designed to result in measurable evidence of increased diversity in hiring, retention, promotion, and elevation of diverse attorneys to leadership positions. The IDGC will make resources and tools available for those signatories who request assistance in developing or implementing a diversity plan, and will publicly acknowledge each signatory's achievements toward their goals.

The IDGC has held launch events in Seattle, Spokane, and Yakima and more events will be held in the future. All employers of attorneys in Washington are invited and encouraged to attend. For further information visit the IDGC website at <http://wa-initiativefordiversity.org>.



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**KING COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION**

The King County Bar Association (KCBA) is sponsoring several current diversity initiatives:

**Future of the Law Institute [FLI] Program**

FLI is a year-long mentor program for minority and/or economically disadvantaged high school students in the greater Seattle area. FLI engages students with substantive legal workshops, career counseling, a mock trial, courthouse tour, and opportunities to meet with legal professionals. Students are also matched with an attorney, judge or law student mentor for the school year. Additionally, FLI offers competitive paid and unpaid summer student internship opportunities in law firms and courts. To learn more about the FLI

program and to find out about volunteering/mentoring opportunities, contact Shametrice Davis, Diversity Programs Manager at (206) 267-7052 or [shametriced@kcba.org](mailto:shametriced@kcba.org).

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Luncheon**

This year's Martin Luther King, Jr. Luncheon will be held on Friday, January 16, 2009, at the Red Lion Inn Hotel in downtown Seattle. The keynote speaker at the luncheon will be Henry Louis Gates, Professor of African and African American Studies at Harvard University.

**Law Student Courthouse Tour**

The Ethnic Diversity in the Legal Profession [EDILP] committee annually coordinates the Minority Law Student King County Courthouse Tour. This event serves as an opportunity for minority law students to see the inner workings of the court and to also network with attorneys from the King County Bar. The tour is tentatively scheduled for late February, 2009.

**Book of Business Seminar**

The EDILP committee also hosts the annual Book of Business Seminar, in which attorneys of color have an opportunity to hear from experienced lawyers about ways to network and acquire new clients. The seminar includes dinner and is tentatively scheduled for early February 2009.

**Minority/Specialty Bar Leaders Luncheon**

Every year, KCBA invites all minority/specialty bar leaders to attend a luncheon to share ideas, updates, initiatives and identify those areas in which KCBA staff can provide assistance.

The website for the King County Bar Association is <http://www.kcba.org>.



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**THE ALLIANCE FOR EQUAL JUSTICE**

The Alliance for Equal Justice is Washington's network of over 30 programs that provide legal assistance to those with nowhere else to turn. The Northwest Justice Project (NJP), the largest legal aid program in the network, is a 115 attorney non-profit law firm with 17 client service locations throughout the state. Local legal aid programs in nearly every county work alongside the NJP to extend legal services to persons with low incomes; thousands of private attorneys throughout the state provide civil legal help to eligible low income individuals and families on a volunteer—or pro bono—basis. Complementing the work of staffed legal aid programs, volunteer attorneys, coordinated through local pro bono programs, provided more than 54,000 hours of free legal aid services in 2006 to low income people in Washington. At an average value of \$175.00 per hour that work represented nearly \$9.5 million in donated legal services.

As impressive as those contributions are, however, the Alliance notes that even in good times, funding for civil legal aid falls far short of the statewide need. In 2003, the Washington Supreme Court published the Civil Legal Needs Study, which reported that over 80% of low income individuals and families with urgent legal problems are forced to face those problems without any legal help or representation.

Both the need for and benefit of civil legal aid programs, always manifest, become even more acutely apparent in the current climate of growing economic distress. Timely legal assistance helps low income persons preserve their housing, healthcare, employment, and family safety, and, in doing so, reduces demand for over-burdened public services and shrinking governmental resources.

The Alliance reports that the current, severe economic downturn seriously jeopardizes the primary funding for legal aid, Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA). Plummeting interest rates in the past year have substantially reduced IOLTA funding and future revenue levels are uncertain, at best. Federal funding for legal aid remains stagnant, and Washington State faces an

unprecedented \$5.7 billion deficit for the 2009-2011 budget cycle.

The dual impact of increasing poverty in recent years—since 2000, the poverty rate in Washington State has increased by nearly 20%—and a rapidly deteriorating economic environment increases stress on low income people and the under-funded legal aid system. Heightened financial stress results in more abused families seeking personal safety and protection from domestic violence. Fallout from the sub-prime mortgage crisis has resulted in an alarmingly large and rapidly growing number of families who face homelessness. Too many reasonably prudent consumers, including seniors, have been victimized by predatory lending scams and risk losing everything. Increasing numbers of military personnel and their families need assistance with an array of legal problems.

The Alliance reminds members of the legal community that they can make a difference by committing to just one pro bono case a year, and by urging elected officials to maintain and expand public investment in legal aid and invites them to join the Equal Justice Coalition at [www.ejc.org](http://www.ejc.org).



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**NORTHWEST WOMEN'S LAW  
CENTER**

**Legal Wellness Project for Senior Citizens**

The Northwest Women's Law Center (NWLC) is working to create a new Legal Wellness Project for Senior Citizens in Washington State. The project is designed to increase the number of seniors who are aware of their legal rights and options and to connect more seniors with legal and social services, particularly seniors who are disabled, live in rural areas, or have cultural and/or language barriers in accessing legal information and assistance.

The NWLC reports that the population of residents over 65 years of age is growing rapidly in Washington State, and is predominantly female and

poor. The population of Washington residents 65 or older was 11.5% in 2000, and is projected to grow to 12.2% by 2010 and 18.1% by 2030 (U.S. Census Bureau, Interim State Population Projections, 2005). Women represent 57.4% of Washington residents 65 or older and 68.8% of those 85 or older. A high proportion of this population is poor: Senior Services of Washington helped more than 56,000 seniors in 2006, of whom 72% were women, and more than 71% were low-income.

Washington seniors have rights and resources available to protect their health and economic security, but many in this large and growing population are not aware of their rights and cannot access the resources they need to exercise those rights. The NWLC Self Help Program formed a Senior Outreach Workgroup in 2007 to develop strategies to strengthen Self Help services for Washington seniors.

The 2003 State Civil Legal Needs Study by the Washington State Supreme Court Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding found that nearly half of low-income people with a legal problem did not seek legal assistance because they did not know that there are laws to protect them. That lack of understanding about rights and available resources is compounded among the many seniors who are disabled, or in rural and immigrant communities.

Legal needs assessments in Washington in which NWLC has participated have identified a number of legal issues and service barriers among seniors, particularly those who are disabled, have cultural or language barriers, or live in rural areas. NWLC tracking of language access needs in Washington courts confirms that Spanish-speaking residents are the largest population in need of language-appropriate services, and are also the least likely to use the Internet to access resources. Hispanics are now the largest racial minority in the state and the fastest growing racial minority among its senior citizens. NWLC's work with the State Coalition for Language Access and King County Superior Court Language Access Workgroup shows a need for language/culturally-appropriate legal resources in more than 20 languages. Information gathered through the NWLC's Women of Color Law Project and the Chinese

Information & Service Center includes increasing reports among immigrant seniors of elder abuse by children and neglect by caregivers who must hold two jobs, in addition to persistent needs for assistance with health insurance, housing, public benefits and legal access. NWLC findings echo a recent call by the State Access to Justice Board to increase access to legal services for seniors "who experience social, cultural, ability-based, linguistic, and other barriers that limit their ability to know of and timely access civil legal aid services."

NWLC's goals for this project include:

- Development and publication of a Senior Citizen's Handbook for Washington State
- Development and publication of a Spanish language edition of the Senior Citizen's Handbook
- Creation of a Senior Legal Wellness Page at the NWLC website
- Dissemination of the Senior Citizen's Handbook among Washington senior citizens and service providers
- Development and initiation of Senior Legal Wellness trainings for service providers
- Development and initiation of Legal Wellness Workshops for Seniors around Washington State
- Provision of Self Help support and legal assistance to seniors citizens and service providers

The NWLC Senior Workgroup has developed the list of topics, identified volunteer attorneys to write many sections of the Senior Citizen's Handbook, and begun reviewing the first drafts. Each section will also be reviewed by a social service provider or community representative. The center anticipates final editing and publication by May 2009, and welcomes input and offers to review sections of the handbook from interested members of the diverse communities in Washington State. Requests for information about this project and offers of assistance may be directed to June Krumpotick, Self Help Program Manager, at

jkcrump@nwwlc.org or (206) 682-9552. The Center's website is <http://nwwlc.org>.



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**NORTHWEST IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PROJECT**

The Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) is the only organization in Washington State providing comprehensive immigration legal services to low-income immigrants and refugees. It serves over 10,000 low-income individuals each year, providing assistance in cases involving asylum claims, immigration protections for victims of domestic violence and other crimes, citizenship applications, family petitions, deportation defense and advocacy on behalf of immigrant children. NWIRP is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009 and currently operates through community offices in Seattle, Granger, Tacoma and Moses Lake. For more information, visit the Project's website at: <http://www.nwirp.org>.



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**CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

**Law and Justice Department**

Central Washington University's Law and Justice Department includes within its mission statement providing students with a broad background in the history, philosophy, and cultural trends in law and society with a particular emphasis on diverse social, ethnic, cultural, gender and sexual orientation issues. The pursuit of its mission is reflected in the past five years.

In 2003, the five tenured/tenure track faculty in the department included one female and four males, including one visible minority. In 2008 the department faculty is one of the most diverse in the University. The department's tenured/tenure track faculty includes five men and four women and three people of color: a Hispanic, an African-American and an Asian. The department

majorities are also one of the most diverse in the University, 18% of whom have racial/ethnic minority status.

One of the department's core required courses is *Ethics, Diversity and Conflict*. A new course, *African-Americans and the Constitution*, has been added as part of the newly established Africana and Black Studies minor. Professors Teresa Francis and Charles Reasons teach the course. Professor Francis serves as the faculty advisor for the CWU Black Student Union and has participated with several students in the annual Oregon Students of Color Coalition Conference. In 2007, Professor Francis received the Central Washington University ALLY Certificate of Excellence in recognition of her valuable contributions to the lesbian, gay and questioning students at CWU.

Professor Sarah Britto has written extensively about the roles of gender and race/ethnicity in the media. She teaches a new course, *Crime and the Media*, examining stereotypical depictions in the media concerning gender, race/ethnicity. Professor Rodrigo Murataya is the director of the University's Yakima program and has been heavily involved in studying issues of immigration and justice for Hispanics. His involvement with the Hispanic community in Central Washington is extensive. In 2006, Professor Murataya was awarded special recognition for organizing Michoacanos in Washington State. Professor Key Sun, director of the Pierce program, focuses research and writing about Taoist philosophies and psychology in correctional treatment.

In 2009, new courses will be offered in the Law and Justice Department addressing diversity issues. *Comparative Criminal Justice* will address the cultural content of justice from Cuba to China, Mexico and Canada. *Sexual Minorities: The Law and Justice* will focus upon gays, lesbians, bi-sexuals, and transgendered (GLBT) in civil and criminal law.

Information about the Law and Justice Department is available at <http://www.cwu.edu/~lajhome>.



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# EQUAL JUSTICE

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