

# Focus on Diversity

For more information on items in this section, visit [www.lsba.org/diversity](http://www.lsba.org/diversity).

## Mark Your Calendar!

► **Thursday, Oct. 16, CLE Program.** The Diversity Committee's LGBT Diversity Subcommittee is hosting a free CLE program from 9-11:30 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 16, at the Louisiana Bar Center, 601 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans. The program, "Recent Developments: Same Sex Marriage Legal Issues," will be presented by Maria C. Cangemi, an employee benefits expert, and Todd Brower, professor of constitutional law at Western State University College of Law in Fullerton, Calif. Organizers have applied for 2 hours of CLE credit. For more information or registration, email LSBA Outreach Coordinator Michelle Neal, [michelle.neal@lsba.org](mailto:michelle.neal@lsba.org).

► **Friday, Nov. 21, Disability "Lunch and Learn" CLE.** The Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee and the Diversity Committee will co-sponsor a "Lunch and Learn" CLE program from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 21, at the Louisiana Bar Center, 601 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans. Estate administration specialist Joel Mendler will discuss special needs trusts. Lunch and registration will begin at 11:30 a.m., followed by the CLE (organizers have applied for 1.5 hours of CLE credit). For more details, email Michael Schachtman, Self-Represented Litigation Counsel in the Access to Justice Department, at [michael.schachtman@lsba.org](mailto:michael.schachtman@lsba.org).

► **March 6, 2015, Diversity Conclave.** The 2015 Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession is scheduled for Friday, March 6, 2015, at the New Orleans Marriott, 555 Canal St., New Orleans. More details on workshops, speakers and sponsors will be published (as available) in the LSBA's print and online publications.



## "The Beloved Community:" Marriage Equality in Louisiana

By Paul R. Baier

Congressman John Lewis of Atlanta has come out for gay marriage: "I see marriage equality as a step, a necessary step, in completing the long hard struggle for what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., called the beloved community — where we will lay down the burden of prejudice and just let people love each other." The congressman is on YouTube. He continues to inspire lawyers who have challenged Louisiana's constitutional prohibition against any official of the state from recognizing a gay marriage, even those lawfully entered in other jurisdictions.

Angela Costanza and Chasity Brewer of Broussard, La., are such a couple, lawfully married in California. They brought their plea for marriage equality to the bar of the 15th Judicial District Court in Lafayette Parish.

Joshua S. Guillory, a Southern University Law Center alumnus, and his civil rights teacher at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Paul R. Baier, represent Costanza/Brewer pro bono.

The petitioners want their marriage legally recognized in Louisiana. They filed



With the portrait of Judge Albert Tate, Jr. in the background are, from left, attorney Joshua S. Guillory, Chasity Brewer, Angela Costanza and attorney Paul R. Baier. The photo was taken at the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeal Building in Lake Charles. Photo provided by the attorneys.

for an intra-family adoption of their son, born of Chasity Brewer and jointly raised for 10 years by both partners.

Judge Edward D. Rubin granted the adoption and ordered the registrar of vital records to issue a new birth certificate naming Angela as N.B.'s mother. This bold judicial step offended Louisiana's Constitution according to the Attorney General, who took an appeal to the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeal. Special Assistant Attorney General Kyle Duncan flew in from Washington,

D.C., to argue the appeal.

Guillory, Brewer, Costanza and Baier assembled beneath a portrait of Judge Albert Tate, Jr. for a photo before oral argument. "Al Tate was for the little person," Baier explained, with his fingers crossed. The photo helped.

*Adoption of N.B.*, No. 14-314, was handed down by the 3rd Circuit on June 11, 2014. Judge Elizabeth A. Pickett, joined by Judge Jimmie C. Peters and Judge Marc T. Amy, vacated the adoption order, but remanded the matter to Judge Rubin with instructions "to hear arguments on all issues raised by both the petitioners and the Attorney General." Whether Louisiana's constitutional and Civil Code prohibitions against same-gender marriage and incident intra-family adoption violate the 14th Amendment's guarantee of liberty and equality remains to be seen. A hearing on cross-motions for summary judgment is scheduled before Judge Rubin on Sept. 15. Stay tuned.

*Paul R. Baier is the George M. Armstrong, Jr. Professor of Law and the Judge Henry A. Politz Professor of Law at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center.*

# in the SPOTLIGHT

## Jackson Lewis, P.C.

**J**ackson Lewis, P.C., is a law firm with more than 770 attorneys dedicated to representing management exclusively in workplace law with 55 offices throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The firm is committed to promoting an inclusive culture where diversity is valued by everyone and is proud of its role as a leader in educating and training employers in the laws of equal opportunity and affirmative action, as well as best practices for corporate diversity programs and initiatives.

Like the firm's clients, Jackson Lewis seeks to emphasize diversity, integrity and respect for the contribution of every employee. The firm understands the importance of having a workforce that reflects the various communities in which it works, and upon which it can rely to creatively develop preventive strategies and positive solutions for clients. Thus, Jackson Lewis seeks to recruit, hire, retain, develop and advance a diverse team of employees that shares its passion for representing management in all aspects of workplace law.

As a firm, Jackson Lewis strives to consistently act under these guiding principles:

- ▶ encourage a better understanding of how diverse individual experiences and backgrounds can strengthen the firm and its productivity through a continuing firm-wide communication and educational process;

- ▶ strive to help every employee realize his or her professional potential within the firm;

- ▶ treat every person with dignity and respect;
- ▶ promote understanding and acceptance of individual differences; and
- ▶ respect employees' needs to have a work/life balance.

The firm has enhanced its efforts to improve the firm's diversity by enlisting the services of a diverse attorney recruiter. It has formalized retention strategies aimed at supporting attorneys through a mentoring program and periodic roundtable discussions. Jackson Lewis also maintains a Diversity Committee and five Attorney Resource Groups (ARGs). The ARGs address mentoring, business development, pro bono activities and recruiting. The firm's Diversity Committee coordinates the activities of its ARGs, which include African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic, Women, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender attorneys.

The Jackson Lewis Scholarship Program provides more than 30 scholarships to students who are traditionally underrepresented in the legal profession. This is a substantial investment for the firm and underscores its commitment to attracting diverse students to the practice of law generally, and to labor and employment law specifically. Through this program, the New Orleans office awarded \$5,000 scholarships to minority students at Southern University Law Center (SULC) and Loyola University College of Law and will award a scholarship to a student at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center in 2014.

Through its New Orleans office, Jackson Lewis has been a signatory to the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Statement of Diversity Principles since 2009. The firm's local attorneys regularly participate in events designed to advance careers of people typically underrepresented in the legal community. Examples include serving as a moderator to SULC's Corporate Diversity Symposium; hosting a Women's Interest Networking event intended to foster relationships of female attorneys locally; conducting mock interviews for Loyola law students; hosting and lecturing at multiple "A Day in the Life of an Attorney" seminars at SULC; and participating in the LSBA's 2013 Conclave on Diversity roundtable discussion. The firm also has local attorneys who actively serve on external boards and committees whose missions include diversity efforts.

Jackson Lewis proudly supports and participates in events for many other organizations committed to the advancement of diverse attorneys, including the Hispanic National Bar Association, the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the National Association of Women Lawyers, the National Bar Association, the National Employment Law Council, Out & Equal, and the Project for Attorney Retention.

For more information on the firm's diversity initiatives, awards and recognition, newsletters and other diversity information, go to the firm's website at [www.jacksonlewis.com](http://www.jacksonlewis.com). 

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*The "In the Spotlight" section highlights diversity achievements and ground-breaking diversity accomplishments, primarily of signatories of the LSBA's Statement of Diversity Principles. If you have recommendations for attorneys, judges or legal organizations that should be considered for future articles, call or email Tricia Pierre, (504)619-0129, [tricia.pierre@lsba.org](mailto:tricia.pierre@lsba.org).*