

Louisiana State Bar Association Diversity Statement



The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) recognizes that achieving diversity in the legal profession is an evolutionary process that requires the Association's continued effort and commitment.

The LSBA is committed to diversity in its membership, Board of Governors, staff, House of Delegates, committees and all leadership positions. Diversity is an inclusive concept that encompasses race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation and disability.

The LSBA is a richer and more effective Association because of diversity, as it increases our strengths, capabilities and adaptability. In addition, a diverse group of talented legal professionals is important to the success of law firms, law departments, public service organizations and other organizations that include attorneys.

Through increased diversity, the LSBA and its members can bring more varied perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, talents and interests to the practice of law and the administration of justice.

*Approved by House of Delegates
January 12, 2008
New Orleans, LA*

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January 12, 2008
New Orleans, LA*

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DIVERSITY REPORT CARD 2012-13

The mission of the Louisiana State Bar Association is, *inter alia*, to “assure access to and aid in the administration of justice,” “promote the professional competence of attorneys,” and “encourage collegiality among its members.” GOAL 3 of the LSBA strategic plan is as follows: “The LSBA provides the foundation for a supportive and collegial community of legal professionals.”

The mission of the Committee on Diversity in the Profession, consistent with the LSBA's mission, strategic plan, and diversity statement, is to assess the level of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, age, geographic, sexual orientation and disability diversity within all components of the legal profession in Louisiana; to identify barriers to the attainment of full and meaningful representation and participation in the legal profession by persons of diverse backgrounds; and to propose programs and methods by which the LSBA can most effectively work to remove those barriers and achieve greater diversity.

The Committee on Diversity has successfully initiated and implemented a number of programs on behalf of the LSBA during the past year.

We would like to thank the members of the LSBA 2012-13 Committee on Diversity for recognizing the need to foster greater diversity in the legal profession:

Co-Chairs:
Hon. Karen K. Herman
Chauntis T. Jenkins

Brad J. Axelrod
 Paul S. Balanon
 Jeremy M. Bolton
 Adrejia A. Boutte
 James D. Caldwell
 Ariel A. Campos, Sr.
 Stephanie A. Finley
 Hon. Elizabeth E. Foote
 LaWanda Batiste Gibson
 Lauren Elizabeth Godshall
 Paul D. Hesse

Wayne J. Lee
 Kelly McNeil Legier
 Luis A. Leitzelar
 Maria Pabon Lopez
 David D. Meyer
 Yolanda D. Montgomery
 Barbara B. Ormsby
 V. Elaine Boyle Patin
 Freddie Pitcher, Jr.
 Chantell M. Smith
 Halima Narcisse Smith

Shirley A. Snyder
 Scott J. Spivey
 Bradley J. Tate
 Hon. Max N. Tobias, Jr.
 Monica H. Wallace
 Jack M. Weiss III
 Ruth B. Wesley
 Angela White-Bazile
 Sheila M. Wilkinson

2012-13 Activities

Annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession

- Sixth Annual Conclave: "Leveraging Diversity Through Inclusion: Insights for Action" (March 8, 2013; Baton Rouge)

Statement of Diversity Principles

- Over 273 law firm, law department, court, bar association, and individual signatories

Diversity Awards

- Awarded recipients of the third annual LSBA Human Rights Award
- Developed awards to recognize bar associations demonstrating exceptional efforts to advance diversity and inclusion and to recognize a person accomplishing greatness in the face of great adversity

Diversity Communications and Resources

- Published "Focus on Diversity" newsletters within the LSBA *Bar Briefs* throughout 2012-13
- Coordinated the production of a diversity video

Outreach to Diverse Specialty Bar Associations and Groups

- Co-sponsored and supported events of diverse specialty bar associations, including Superwomen CLE programs in Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and New Orleans and CLE programs regarding issues impacting minority attorneys and communities

Minority Involvement Section Job Fair and Internship Fair

- Worked with the LSBA's Minority Involvement Section to host the 24th Annual Minority Job Fair, held at the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center (August 18, 2012)
- Worked with the Minority Involvement Section to host its 5th Annual Minority Internship Fair virtually (March 2013)

Diversity Outreach to Law Students

- Presented at Academic Success Week, Loyola University College of Law (October 18, 2012)

Outreach to Children to Strengthen the Diversity Pipeline to the Legal Profession

- Coordinated the 3rd annual Suit Up For the Future: High School Legal Internship Program (June 10-28, 2013)
- Implemented the inaugural "Setting the Bar: Louisiana State Bar Association Pre-Law Conference" (February/March 2013)



Suit Up for the Future Interns- Journee Berry, Arielle Brooks, Zenavie Crier, Theodore Davis IV, Romeo Ejiaga, Calli Farrell, Megan Gallo, Abigail Hanemann, William Hauser, Patrick LaBorde, Ashley Ramirez, Angelica Simmons, Jenny Wang, and Phillip L. Washington.

LSBA Interns- Erica A. Ballard, Justin DiCharia, Ashley A. Jones, Kira Schuette

Program Organizers and Coordinators – Hon. Karen Wells Roby, Nandini Kavuri, Kelly McNeil Legier, Mayur Patel, Kimberly T. Turner, Sheila M. Wilkinson

Diversity Outreach to Law Students

The Committee provided a speaker for Academic Success Week on October 18, 2012, at Loyola University College of Law.

Outreach to Children to Strengthen the Diversity Pipeline to the Legal Profession

The Committee hosted for 28 students, in partnership with the Just the Beginning Foundation, its third formal summer high school legal internship program, "Suit Up For The Future: High School Legal Internship Program," from June 10-28, 2013. The program, designed for high school juniors and seniors interested in the legal profession, involved lectures at the Bar Center, law-related field trips and shadowing at participating law firms/courts. Throughout the program, students were taught law school lessons by several law school professors, greeted by practicing and non-practicing lawyers, general counsels, law students, judges, and several inspirational speakers. Participating students drafted a legal memorandum and presented a five-minute oral argument to three federal and state judges. The students each received a stipend.

The Committee also partnered with the Black Law Student Associations at Loyola and Tulane Law Schools to implement its inaugural *Setting the Bar: Louisiana State Bar Association Pre-Law Conference* for over 40 college students from schools around the state. The two-day program occurred February 16th and March 2nd at Loyola University College of Law. The first day consisted of a series of information sessions from key admissions personnel from area law schools and law students, who shared essential information on applications, resumes, personal statements, financial aid and law school experiences. A representative from Kaplan shared tips on preparing for and taking the LSAT. Students were also exposed to a mock law school class. Day two of the workshop gave students the opportunity to take the LSAT under normal testing conditions/times. Students who attended both days of the program were entered into a raffle for a \$1,600 tuition scholarship from Kaplan to attend a future Kaplan LSAT course.

The Committee also assisted its education partners – the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education and Young Leadership Council -- in identifying attorney and judge volunteers for their programs.

Diversity Awards

The Louisiana State Bar Association Human Rights Award recognizes outstanding efforts in promoting diversity in the legal profession. The 2013 recipients (J. Dalton Courson and the Louis A. Martinet legal Society, Inc. – Greater Baton Rouge chapter) were are honored during the LSBA Annual Meeting on June 6, 2013, in Destin, Florida. Additionally, the Committee developed an award to recognize bar associations demonstrating exceptional efforts to advance diversity and inclusion. It also developed a Trailblazer Award to recognize a person from a group underrepresented within the legal profession who has demonstrated excellence or accomplished greatness in the face of great adversity.

Diversity Communications & Resources

The Committee's diversity newsletter, titled "Focus on Diversity," appeared as an insert within issues of the 2012-13 *Bar Briefs*. The Committee also coordinated the editing of interviews with leaders of the profession that will be incorporated into a diversity video.

Outreach to Diverse Specialty Bar Associations and Groups

The Committee provided administrative assistance to diverse specialty bar associations regarding their CLEs; and coordinated statewide receptions, meetings, and activities for the organization of National Bar Association affiliate chapters across the state. On November 16, 2012, the Committee, the Baton Rouge Association for Women Attorneys, the Louisiana Association of Black Women Attorneys, and the Baton Rouge Bar Association hosted "Superwomen... Female Attorneys Mastering the Game and the Strategies that Rule." The successful half-day seminar drew 90 female participants and provided female attorneys many best practice tips for surviving the profession as well as professionalism, law practice management, and work/life strategies. A similar Superwomen program, scheduled for April 2, 2013, in Shreveport, drew an audience of approximately 45 female attorneys and judges. The Committee co-hosted the program with the Shreveport Bar Association. On May 2, 2013, the Committee co-hosted for nearly 100 females in New Orleans a "Superwomen: Female Attorneys Can Run the World" CLE with the New Orleans Association for Women Attorneys, the Louisiana Association of Black Women Attorneys, and the New Orleans Bar Association – Women's Committee. The program addressed the unique challenges women face obtaining leadership positions in a male-dominated legal profession.

Minority Involvement Section Job Fair and Internship Fair

The Committee worked extensively with the Minority Involvement Section in its effort to host its 24th annual Minority Job Fair, which occurred on August 18, 2012, at the Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center in Baton Rouge. The free Minority Job Fair offered about 20 employers the opportunity to compress into a single day statewide interviewing of approximately 60 talented students and recent graduates with diverse backgrounds, primarily from area law schools. Several employers not in attendance also requested resume books in order to contact students directly when positions open within their organizations. During the networking lunch that immediately followed the Fair, Joseph K. West (President & CEO, Minority Corporate Counsel Association) gave participants advice on the benefits of networking. Then Hon. Regina H. Bartholomew, Hon. Paul A. Bonin, Hon. Ivan L.R. Lemelle, Hon. Nannette Jolivet Brown, Hon. Trudy M. White, and Hon. Max N. Tobias, Jr. facilitated a Speed Networking activity for approximately 40 student participants. The Minority Involvement Section also awarded three book scholarships to law students. This year's internship fair occurred virtually by disseminating resume books to participating employers, rather than in person. Approximately 60 students' resumes were sent to 569 employers in the LSBA job fair database.



Morris Dees, founder and chief trial attorney of the Southern Poverty Law Center, addresses the 2013 Diversity Conclave.

Annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession

For the last five years, the LSBA has co-hosted an ABA award-winning Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession. The conclave is co-sponsored with the Louisiana Supreme Court and several local and specialty bar associations. This year's Conclave was held in Baton Rouge for the first time, on March 8, 2013. The theme was "Leveraging Diversity Through Inclusion: Insights for Action." The Conclave included a two-hour interactive workshop (facilitated by Vernā Myers), breakout sessions, and panel discussions focused on inclusion. Highly credentialed speakers provoked discussions regarding hot topics in diversity and inclusion as well as the ethical implications of diversity/inclusion issues. Morris Dees, the founder and chief trial attorney of the Southern Poverty Law Center, served as the keynote speaker during lunch. Attendees received up to 7.25 CLE hours, including ethics and professionalism. For the first time, the program included two additional breakout sessions that were tailored for managing partners and criminal practitioners in order to allow them to discuss diversity/inclusion issues unique to them. A "train the diversity facilitator" breakout session, which occurred several weeks later, equipped 20 members with the tools needed to facilitate diversity and inclusion discussions and trainings upon request from law offices and courts.

Disabilities Summit

The LSBA's Committee on Diversity and the Committee for Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities hosted for nearly 30 attorneys and judges a Disabilities Summit on October 11, 2012, in Baton Rouge. The Summit was titled "The Dawn of An Enabled Era: Unraveling the Myths of Attorneys with Disabilities." The event addressed challenges and solutions for attorneys with disabilities.

Diversity Workshops

Presentations with Local and Specialty Bar Programs

To provide diversity and inclusion education and awareness throughout the state, the Committee arranged for a presenter to facilitate diversity/inclusion discussions within CLEs hosted by the following local and specialty bar associations:

- New Orleans Chapter of the Association for Women Attorneys (9/27, 75 attendees);
- Baton Rouge Bar Association End of Year CLEs (12/6, 45 attendees; 12/7, 40 attendees; 12/13, 110 attendees, 12/14, 90 attendees);
- New Orleans Bar Association Procrastinator's Program (12/18, 100 attendees);
- John M. Duhe, Jr. American Inn of Court (Lafayette) (10/25, 40 attendees);
- St. Landry Parish Bar Association, (10/12, 30 attendees);
- Hispanic Lawyers Association for Louisiana (10/24, 10 attendees);
- Southwest Louisiana Bar Association Law Day (10/26, 45 attendees) and End of Year CLEs (12/6, 40 attendees);
- Louisiana Criminal Defense Lawyers Conference (12/6, 45 attendees);
- New Orleans Bar Association Workshop (11/1, 45 attendees);
- Terrebonne Bar Association CLE (11/30, 50 attendees);
- Lafayette Bar Association End of Year CLE (12/12, 50 attendees, 12/20, 50 attendees);
- Shreveport End of Year CLE (12/12, 85 attendees);
- Southwest LA Bar Association Bench Bar Conference (3/15, 80 attendees);

The topics covered the importance of inclusion, generational differences, micro inequities, diversity basics, cultural competence, unconscious bias, and mentoring.

Additionally, the Committee arranged for a presenter to facilitate diversity/inclusion discussions within the following LSBA CLEs:

- Voodoo Fest CLE (10/16/2012, 63 attendees);
- Ethics and Professionalism's "Watch Your Ps and Qs" CLE (12/7/2012, 158 attendees);
- Immigration Law CLE (4/12, 45 attendees);
- Federal Law CLE (5/3, 25 attendees);
- LSBA free seminars (5/10 Covington, 120 attendees; 5/17 Lake Charles, 60 attendees); and LSBA Annual Meeting panel discussion (6/7, Destin, FL).

The Committee also provided presentations for the Attorney General statewide CLE (9/26), the Gilsbar CLE for title agents and title attorneys (11/12, 100 attendees), and for several Ethics & Professionalism seminars hosted jointly by Gilsbar and the LSBA (9/11, 9/28, 11/2). Further, the Committee provided presenters for a diversity presentation to the New Orleans Paralegal Association in September 2012, and a program sponsored by the Legal Secretaries of New Orleans on January 29, 2013. The Committee also coordinated a stress/quality of life CLE presentation by Lawyers Assistance Program Executive Director J.E. "Buddy" Stockwell III for the Beauregard Bench & Bar Program in DeRidder, Louisiana.

LSBA Midyear Meeting

The Committee hosted for 60 attorneys a free diversity/inclusion workshop during the LSBA Midyear Meeting on January 17, 2013, in New Orleans. Speakers Dominic Gianna and Lisa Marcy presented "Advocacy for the Ages -- Cicero Speaks to the Genders and Generations." The program offered 2.5 CLE hours.

LSBA Institute of Inclusion Roundtable Discussions

The Committee continued its LSBA Institute of Inclusion Lunch and Learn series.

- The Institute partnered with Carver, Darden, Koretzky, Tessier, Finn, Blossman & Areaux, LLC to host for about 10 attorneys a Roundtable Discussion on "The Awful D-Word" on September 18, 2012, in New Orleans. This session helped participants define and discuss the word "diversity" to understand its negative connotations and the true meaning of diversity and to discuss why valuing diversity is important.
- The LSBA presented for 12 attorneys the "What's Your --- ISM?" Roundtable Discussion CLE on September 26, 2012, at the Louisiana Bar Center. This session explored obstacles that arise from communicating without a common language and experience.
- The LSBA hosted the "Chess vs. Checkers: Developing Strategies for Effective Work/Life Balance and Service to the Community" CLE for about 18 attorneys on November 28, 2012, at the Louisiana Bar Center. The roundtable discussion, which focused on the professional development of less-seasoned and new attorneys, provided advice on developing a professional strategic goal that would allow new attorneys to identify professional development opportunities, cultivate mentoring relationships, and improve work-life balance.
- The LSBA hosted for approximately 30 participants the "Waking the Sleeping Giants: Strategies for Managing Unconscious Bias" Roundtable Discussion on December 19, 2012, at the Louisiana Bar Center.
- The LSBA hosted a discussion titled "Unmasking the Truth About Depression: Breaking Stigma, Being Each Other's Keepers, Restoring the Profession," on February 21, 2013, at the Louisiana Bar Center. J.E. "Buddy" Stockwell III (Lawyers Assistance Program, Inc.) facilitated an interactive discussion regarding the impact of depression on a lawyer's practice and on the members of the firm/office; signs that a lawyer is struggling with depression; and what we can do to safeguard ourselves from depression.



Richard K. Leefe presents Marian Mayer Berkett with the LSBA Lifetime Achievement Award during the 2013 Superwomen CLE in New Orleans.

Statement of Diversity Principles

The Statement of Diversity Principles reflects the recognition that meaningful diversity advancements occur when the leaders in an organization embrace diversity and demonstrate through their actions that diversity is a priority to the organization. By executing the Statement, attorneys, judges, law firms and entities agree to use their best efforts to increase the diversity and inclusion in their hiring, retention and promotion of attorneys, and the elevation of attorneys to leadership positions within their organizations. To date, the LSBA has approximately 273 signatories across the state. That figure reflects 124 law firms/offices; 23 courts; 88 individual judges; 31 individual attorneys; 2 corporate counsel; and 5 bar associations. A link to the Statement and entire list of signatories appears on the diversity webpage (to www.lsba.org/diversity). An article regarding the benefits of executing the Statement appeared in the 2012 December/January *Louisiana Bar Journal*.