

# Focus on Diversity

For more information on items in this special section, contact Louisiana State Bar Association Director of Member Outreach and Diversity Kelly McNeil Legier, (504)619-0129, (800)421-5722, ext. 129, or email [kelly.legier@lsba.org](mailto:kelly.legier@lsba.org).

## LSBA Human Rights Award and Trailblazer Award deadline is Jan. 31

The deadline for nominations for the 2014 Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) Human Rights Award and for the new LSBA Trailblazer Award is Jan. 31.

The Human Rights Award recognizes outstanding efforts made by a bar association, a law firm or law department, an individual attorney or judge, a court or a community organization or individual in promoting diversity in the legal profession, in particular, to recognize efforts ensuring

the full and equal opportunity of all persons for entry and advancement in Louisiana's legal profession. The 2013 awards were presented to J. Dalton Courson and the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. Greater Baton Rouge Chapter.

The Trailblazer Award will recognize a person from a group underrepresented within the Louisiana legal profession who has demonstrated excellence or accomplished greatness in the face of great adversity.

One individual and one organization award will be presented the Human Rights Award and one recipient will be presented the Trailblazer Award during the LSBA Annual Meeting in June.

For more information, contact LSBA Member Outreach and Diversity Director Kelly McNeil Legier, (504)619-0129, email [kelly.legier@lsba.org](mailto:kelly.legier@lsba.org). Or access the nomination forms and guidelines at: [www.lsba.org/Members/Awards.aspx](http://www.lsba.org/Members/Awards.aspx). 

## Sponsors sought for LSBA seventh annual Conclave on Diversity

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) is seeking sponsors for the state-wide Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession, scheduled for March 21 in New Orleans. For more information on sponsorship levels, contact LSBA Program Coordinator/Marketing and Sections Christine A. Richard at (504)619-0105, email [crichard@lsba.org](mailto:crichard@lsba.org) or go to: <http://files.lsba.org/documents/News/Div/Conclave2014SponsorForm.pdf>. 



**LSBA DIVERSITY**

DIVERSITY • INCLUSION • PROFESSIONALISM

[www.lsba.org/diversity](http://www.lsba.org/diversity)

### Mark your calendar!

Seventh Annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession

## INCLUSIVE PROFESSIONALISM: Harnessing the Power of Our Differences



## MARCH 21, 2014

Hilton  
New Orleans  
Riverside  
2 Poydras St., New  
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For up-to-date information,  
visit [www.lsba.org/Diversity](http://www.lsba.org/Diversity)

# in the SPOTLIGHT



## Orleans Public Defenders

The vision of Orleans Public Defenders (OPD) is to create a community-oriented defender office built upon the zealous defense of the poor and indigent while acknowledging the strengths of clients, families and communities. As such, OPD believes a diverse workforce that strives to reflect the diversity of clients and community is consistent with its vision and enhances its ability to achieve the goal of zealous community-oriented defense. The OPD values people of all cultures, races, religions, nationalities and ethnicities regardless of gender, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age or sexual orientation. OPD endeavors to create a workplace that values diversity and respects individuals and their contributions. OPD is passionate about attracting, retaining and developing the most talented and skilled individuals, no matter their background.

As the office has grown, OPD has implemented several initiatives to expand diversity efforts through training, recruitment and retention, as well as community involvement. Through training, OPD aims to equip both its leadership and staff with the knowledge and skills to improve the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication within and outside the office. Many staff members have spent the better part of the last year developing training and educational opportunities. OPD aims to work with various partners throughout the community to not only foster a more inclusive and supportive office, but also to further the understanding of the unique history and culture of New Orleans and the office's clients.

Recruitment and retention remain top priorities. OPD partners with law schools and undergraduates from across the country for its internship and clerk programs. While OPD has always been successful at attracting students from outside New Orleans and Louisiana, the office will continue to focus its efforts on local schools. OPD recently partnered with Tulane Law School's Black

Law Students Association, the Public Interest Law Foundation, NLG and the American Constitution Society for the first symposium on "Gideon: 50 Years Later" in New Orleans. OPD is working with each society, as well as those at Loyola, Louisiana State University and Southern, to further those partnerships, increase clerkships and foster mentorships between attorneys and law students.

Additionally, OPD has formed partnerships with Xavier and Dillard universities and are implementing internship programs in an effort to engage students long before they enter law school. The semester-long internship will partner students with attorneys in court, on case preparation, mentorship and further education on public interest law. OPD's participation in the Louisiana State Bar Association's Suit Up Program has been another integral part of those efforts and another way to work with young students and

expose them to the important work OPD does, as some students have never been aware of the role of public defenders.

The final piece focuses on community involvement. As OPD's mission states, the office is client-centered and community-oriented. By expanding its work outside of the courtroom and into the community itself, that mission can be taken a step further, offering the opportunity to have a better understanding of the clients and the community. A year-long strategy is currently in the planning stages.

Through all its efforts, OPD works to cement that vision. Ultimately, OPD works for, and with, its clients, its fellow community members and its neighbors. The office strives to have the finest group of attorneys, investigators, client advocates, social workers, support and administrative personnel and to equip them with the tools and support to better serve the community. 📱

## 2014 Diversity Conclave Sponsors

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