

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.

LSBA hosts record-setting Disabilities Summit in October

About 110 attorneys and judges attended the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) third annual Disabilities Summit, "Building an Enabled Era," on Oct. 24 at the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Orleans. Coordinated by the LSBA's Committee on Diversity and the Committee for Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities, the summit provided information and resources for attorneys who represent people with disabilities.

After U.S. Attorney Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. and LSBA President Richard K. Leefe provided welcome remarks, attendees received practical information to assist them when representing people with disabilities. Additionally, the program addressed challenges and solutions for attorneys with physical and unseen disabilities.

Keynote speaker Joseph I. Giarrusso III's heart-felt and captivating presentation about depression and suicide among attorneys included an account of the days before and after his father's suicide.

"The legal profession has an obligation to address mental health problems — problems that are staring the profession right in the face. Until we can begin a dialogue, mental health issues will be shrouded in secrecy and will remain unnecessarily stigmatized," Giarrusso said.

Summit organizers said this was the largest audience attracted to the summit — and, based on feedback from many, the best summit yet.

More information and photos on the summit will be published in a future *Louisiana Bar Journal*. 

SAVE THE DATE!

► **2014 Diversity Conclave**
New Orleans • March 21, 2014
Seventh annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession, Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel, 2 Poydras St., New Orleans



Joseph I. Giarrusso III was the keynote speaker for the Louisiana State Bar Association's third annual Disabilities Summit on Oct. 24. He discussed depression and suicide among attorneys. *Photo by LSBA Staff.*

LSBA partners with MCCA, Entergy for first Academy for Leadership and Inclusion

The Louisiana State Bar Association partnered with the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) and Entergy Corp. for the first Academy for Leadership and Inclusion in New Orleans on Nov. 13. The MCCA has hosted the Academy in various other cities since 2012.

Joseph K. West, president and CEO of MCCA, explained the purpose behind the Academy. "We created this training program to help organizations go beyond diversity as merely a numbers game and to focus on inclusion in order to create workplaces where all of an organization's talent is valued and developed, with opportunities to thrive and succeed. This not only benefits the talent, but the organizations as well," he said.

About 50 attorneys were inspired

by facilitator Arin N. Reeves, Ph.D., of Nextions, Inc. who explained the research underlying diversity and inclusion obstacles. The program provided practical information regarding how to shape new diversity and inclusion conversations, policies and organizational systems to promote more inclusive environments within law firms. It also highlighted the role of bias, power and privilege on diversity and inclusion as well as the legal system. Attendees gained an opportunity to leave the Academy with tools to realistically and practically make adjustments within their offices to promote more inclusiveness.

A reception followed at Phelps Dunbar, L.L.P., in New Orleans. 

LSBA Human Rights Award and Trailblazer Award deadline set

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, 2014.

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 2014.

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

Sponsors sought for LSBA seventh annual Conclave on Diversity

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) is seeking sponsors for the statewide Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession, scheduled for March 21, 2014, in New Orleans. Sponsors who commit by Dec. 15 will appear in the Conclave mailer.

For more information on sponsorship levels, contact LSBA Program Coordinator/Marketing and Sections Christine A. Richard at (504)619-0105, email crichard@lsba.org or go to: <http://files.lsba.org/documents/News/Div/Conclave-2014SponsorForm.pdf>. 📄



Data: Meaningful diversity remains elusive goal for legal profession

The latest data show that diversity remains an elusive goal for the legal profession and that growth in the number of minority lawyers has not kept pace with increases of the past. Demographic data collected from a variety of sources as of August 2012 are presented in the second annual review of the state of diversity in the legal profession, issued by the Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession.

The review provides an in-depth look into the current state of diversity and inclusion in the profession, including scholarly essays and examples of programs and policies that have proved effective. Findings point to the fact that the profession continues to lag behind other professions in providing opportunities for inclusion to members of minority groups.

Highlights from the 2012 demographic summary include:

▶ Aggregate minority representation in the profession has increased from roughly 10 percent in 2000 to roughly 13 percent in 2010, according to U.S. Census data.

▶ Minority representation among lawyers is significantly lower than minority representation in most other professional and managerial jobs. According to the Department of Labor, minorities represented 12.7 percent of lawyers in 2011, compared to 26.4 percent among accountants and auditors, 36.5 percent among software developers, 28 percent among physicians and surgeons, and 22 percent in the management and professional labor force as a whole.

▶ African-Americans are the best represented minority group among lawyers at 4.3 percent with Hispanics and Asian-Americans each comprising 3.4 percent, according to 2010 Census data.

▶ The pace of African-American entry into the profession has slowed in recent years, however. In 2011-12, African-Americans made up 7.1 percent of law students, compared to 7.5 percent in the mid-to-late 1990s. The number of Asian-Americans law students also

has dropped after decades of steady gains. Hispanic representation among law students has increased from 5.8 percent in 2000-01 to 7.5 percent in 2011-12.

▶ Women's representation among lawyers increased from 28.7 percent in 2000 to 31.5 percent in 2010. Among law students, women's representation has declined from a high of 49 percent in the early 2000s to 46.7 percent in 2011-12.

▶ Women represented 47.3 percent of law school graduates in 2011-12, down from 49.5 percent in 2003-04.

▶ Women are better represented among lawyers than in some other professions, such as software development, architecture and engineering. Women's representation among lawyers is lower than their representation among accountants, social scientists and post-secondary teachers, however, and significantly lower than their representation in the professional and managerial workforce as whole.

▶ Women also are underrepresented in top-level legal jobs, such as law firm partner (19.4 percent), federal appellate judge (26.8 percent) and law school dean (20.6 percent).

▶ Minority women, in particular, are underrepresented in law firm partnerships, comprising only 2 percent of partners nationally in 2011.

There are no national data on the employment of lawyers with disabilities or LGBT lawyers, beyond initial employment. Outside of law firms, the profession lacks even basic gender and ethnic breakdowns by employment category, not to mention more detailed breakdowns by title, seniority and region, or more inclusive efforts covering sexual orientation and disability status. The profession would benefit greatly from better data on the demographics of practicing lawyers.

The demographic summary was written by review Editor-in-Chief Elizabeth Chambliss, professor and director of the Nelson, Mullins, Riley & Scarborough Center on Professionalism at the University of South Carolina. The full review can be downloaded at: <http://theiilp.com/IILPReview2012>. 📄