

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 director to chair National Association of Bar Executives Diversity Committee

Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) Member Outreach and Diversity Director Kelly McNeil Legier was named chair of the National Association of Bar Executives (NABE) Diversity Development Committee during the NABE Annual Meeting in San Francisco, Calif., in August. The committee assists local and state bar leaders in gathering information, resources and skills needed to address and manage a broad range of minority involvement issues.



Kelly McNeil Legier

Legier received her BA degree, *magna cum laude*, in 1989 from Loyola University in New Orleans and her JD degree, *cum laude*, in 1993, from Loyola University College of Law.

Before accepting the LSBA position, she worked in the Staff Attorney's Office of the United States 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. She also practiced law with Stone, Pigman,

Walther, Wittmann & Hutchinson, L.L.C.; Shook Hardy & Bacon, L.L.P. (a Kansas City-based firm); and Proskauer Rose, L.L.P. (a New York-based firm).

Legier is a member of the board of directors of the New Orleans Chapter of the Federal Bar Association and the Bureau of Governmental Research. She is a Fellow of the Louisiana Bar Foundation. She served on the LSBA's Board of Governors and on the American Bar Association Presidential Diversity Report *Next Steps* Subcommittee in 2010. She is an instructor for the National Institute of Trial Advocacy and the Louisiana State University Trial Advocacy Program and is a volunteer for the Pro Bono Project and Teen Court Program.

She has been recognized for her service and achievements by various organizations, most recently receiving the 2013 National Diversity Council's Multicultural Leadership Award, the 2012 Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.'s Legacy Award and the 2012 Greater Baton Rouge Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.'s Vanguard Award. 

Human Rights, Trailblazer Award deadline

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

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 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 will

receive the Human Rights Award and one person will receive 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.asp. 

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

Check future print and online LSBA publications for more information!

Professional Development Symposium: Preparing Practice-Ready Attorneys a Phenomenal Success

The LSBA's Minority Involvement Section celebrated its 25th annual Job Fair by renewing the event's purpose and making it more meaningful for employers and law students within today's economic reality. The Section's re-designed event – "Professional Development Symposium: Preparing Practice-Ready Attorneys" – occurred on Saturday, September 14th, at Loyola University College of Law and attracted approximately 65 students and 50 judges and attorneys.

The program, which increased its focus on professional development of the students, rather than job placement, featured information panels, tables, mock interviews and a networking breakfast (including a speed networking activity). Watch for a more detailed article in a future *Louisiana Bar Journal*.

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- Louisiana Department of Justice, Attorney General James D. "Buddy" Caldwell
- NeunerPate
- Whitehead Law Firm

Disabilities Summit set for Oct. 24 in New Orleans

The Louisiana State Bar Association's Committee on Diversity and the Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee are partnering with the United States Attorney's Office to host a Disabilities Summit on Thursday, Oct. 24, in New Orleans. The summit, "Building An Enabled Era,"

is 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana, Ste. 1600, 650 Poydras St., New Orleans.

During the event, challenges and solutions for attorneys with disabilities will be discussed. The program has been approved for 5.83 hours of CLE credit, including pro-

fessionalism. Early-bird registration for \$65 is available by Sept. 27.

To register online, to download a registration form or for more information, go to: www.lsba.org/cle.

in the SPOTLIGHT

Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver, L.L.C.

Since its inception in 2003, the law firm of Barrasso Usdin Kupperman Freeman & Sarver, L.L.C. (Barrasso Usdin) has been dedicated to giving back to the community and actively participating in the ongoing development of New Orleans. The firm continues to promote diversity, equality and acceptance of cultural differences in the legal profession and community.

Barrasso Usdin has been a strong supporter of the public education reform efforts in New Orleans, having partnered with Edna Karr High School, the New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics High School, Langston Hughes Academy Charter School, the International High School of New Orleans, Joseph S. Clark Preparatory High School and Teach for America in various programs and sponsorships.

The firm recently partnered with Allstate Insurance Co. for the second time in the Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program benefiting students of Edna Karr High School. The Street Law Program encourages law firms to partner with high schools comprised of diverse, underprivileged students. The program's goal is to make students feel empowered to use their knowledge of the law to become active participants in the community and to shatter

the misperception that a career in the legal field is off limits to students from diverse backgrounds. The 2013 program included three classroom visits and a half-day event at Barrasso Usdin's offices with 10th and 11th graders. Through lectures and interactive workshops, the students were taught about social host liability and legal principles surrounding distracted driving. In the workshops, the students learned to develop arguments based on the legal principles they learned in the classroom, and then later joined in oral arguments before a mock judge and jury. At the close of the event, Judge Tiffany G. Chase of Orleans Parish Civil District Court and Kim M. Boyle, a partner in the New Orleans office of Phelps Dunbar, L.L.P., and former president of the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) and the New Orleans Bar Association, spoke to the students. Both Judge Chase and Boyle encouraged the students to realize the limitless possibilities in store for their futures. The program was a huge success.

The firm also recently formed a partnership with Joseph S. Clark Preparatory High School, creating opportunities for the firm's employees to participate in activities with the Clark students. The activities will include mentoring, attendance at career days,

guest lectures and assisting the debate team.

In its efforts to promote diversity in the legal profession, Barrasso Usdin has sponsored or participated in various LSBA programs, including the Minority Job Fair, the Conclave on Diversity and the "Suit Up for the Future" High School Summer Legal Institute and Internship Program.

The firm strongly supports the work of the Anti-Defamation League, a social justice and human relations organization dedicated to combating anti-Semitism and bigotry among diverse groups. Many of the firm's partners and associates have served on the South-Central Regional Board. Partner Stephen H. Kupperman has served as chair and vice chair on the board and was honored with the ADL Torch of Liberty Award in 2011. Partner Jamie L. Berger and associate Sarah L. Rubin were honored with the new leadership award in 2012 and 2013.

Barrasso Usdin partners also have led the growth of women in the legal community. Partner Andrea M. Price serves on the board of the Association of Women Attorneys (AWA) and is president of the New Orleans Chapter. Partner Judy Y. Barrasso was recognized by the AWA as a recipient of the Michaelle Pitard Wynne Professionalism Award.

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 Kelly McNeil Legier; (504)619-0129, kelly.legier@lsba.org.