

LOUISIANA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

11:00 a.m. Thursday, February 19, 2009
Louisiana Bar Center, New Orleans

FNW

The meeting was called to order at approximately 11:10 a.m. with co-chairs Wayne Lee and Hon. Fredericka H. Wicker presiding. The following committee members were present:

In Person:

Wayne J. Lee
Hon. Fredericka H. Wicker
Kelly McNeil Legier
Jesse C. Brown
Ariel A. Campos, Sr.
Jack M. Weiss, III
Veronica Lewis
Claudeidra M. Minor

By Phone:

Kim M. Boyle
Franchesca Hamilton-Acker
Angela M. Leonard
Jennifer M. Medley
Chauntis L. Jenkins
LaWanda B. Gibson

I. HOUSEKEEPING

- a. Minutes. The minutes from the January 14 meeting were approved without amendment.
- b. Mission Statement. Mr. Lee recapped the absence of full alignment between the LSBA Statement on Diversity and the mission statement of the Diversity Committee. The Committee will draft a resolution to present to the LSBA House of Delegates to bring the Diversity Committee mission statement in line with the LSBA diversity statement.

II. CONCLAVE ON DIVERSITY

Ms. Legier reported on the status of the preparations for the Conclave and Diversity Forum scheduled for March 13, 2009 at the Hilton Riverside Hotel in New Orleans. She reported on the speakers, marketing efforts, sponsors, and registration. Ms. Legier stressed the need for members to assist with publicity to managing and hiring partners within firms. Chancellor Weiss questioned whether free registrations were available for law students. The consensus of the Committee was that there will be 10 free registrations per law school instead of five. Ms. Medley reported that she collected diversity experiences for the Conclave workshop. She agreed to type them and send them to Ms. Legier.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Ms. Legier will provide Mr. Lee with a list of all Conclave registrants.
2. Diversity Committee members will publicize the event.

3. Ms. Legier will send information to the law schools. Ms. Legier also will contact the BLSA organizations to disseminate Conclave information.
4. Circulate to Committee members a list of assistance needed for the Conclave, the times, and what people can commit to do.

III.LSBA OUTWARD REFLECTIONS OF DIVERSITY

A. Awards

Mr. Campos gave a report on the status of diversity awards. The subcommittee met and proposed several categories of awards. It also proposed that the awards bear the names of people well-known in various geographic areas throughout the state. The Committee members discussed the proposals. They engaged in a lengthy discussion about the naming issue, including possible LSBA branding problems and potential competition. The committee also discussed the idea that different recipients would be selected from four separate quadrants of the state, including increased bar involvement, control issues, and complexity. They also discussed possible nomination options, possible categories, the timing of the awarding ceremony, and possible publicity for nominees. The consensus of the Committee was to solicit input from all parts of the state but that it should focus on one award per category. The Committee tabled the issue to allow the awards subcommittee to re-evaluate the proposed awards in light of the Committee's comments.

B. Participation Request. Mr. Lee announced that the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus requested representatives from various organizations to attend its State of Blacks in Louisiana Summit. Mr. Lee noted that two Committee members have volunteered to attend the program. He emphasized that the Committee members did not have authority to take positions on behalf of the Bar Association; however they could listen and talk.

C. Diversity Strategic Plan. Veronica Lewis gave a report on the Strategic Plan research regarding bids submitted from facilitators. Mr. Lee said there was not enough time to digest the information. Mr. Weiss recommended that the Committee delegate to the co-chairs the authority to decide. The Committee members agreed. The Committee members discussed budget issues concerning the proposal, and Mr. Lee reported that within limits, there is money in the budget if this is determined to be a priority.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Mr. Lee and Judge Wicker will assess the proposals.
2. Committee members should send comments and thoughts to Mr. Lee or judge Wicker.

D. Diversity Survey. Ms. Legier reported on the survey examples she was able to locate through the ABA. Mr. Weiss said that some information should be available because law schools send this information to the ABA. Mr. Campos and Mr. Lee discussed a survey conducted earlier by the LSBA Task Force on Diversity. The Task Force did an electronic census; however it was not extensive

and was voluntary. The Committee discussed the information gathered through the survey and options for obtaining more accurate information.

ACTION ITEM:

Ms. Legier will ask Loretta Larsen what information was gathered from the prior survey in connection with the Task Force.

- E. **Sponsorship Request.** Ms. Legier relayed information concerning a request for sponsorship submitted by the International Law Students Association. The Committee decided not to sponsor the International Law Students Association's Spring Conference.

IV. DIVERSITY OUTREACH

- A. **Diversity Road Shows.** Ms. Boyle gave a report regarding her outreach tour to different parts of the state. Mr. Lee said there has not been this kind of outreach effort since Judge Jay Zainey was LSBA president. It will be productive at the end of this tour.
- B. **Diversity Commitment Statement.** Mr. Lee reported that he has received no new revisions. A motion passed to present the commitment statement to the Board of Governors.
- C. **Diversity Seal of Approval.** The issue was tabled.
- D. **Outreach to Law Schools.** Ms. Legier reported on the status of the inaugural Minority Internship Fair planning. The Fair, which is scheduled for March 7, 2009 at the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center, would provide a vehicle for law students in the bottom 40% of the class to interview for non-paying or modestly paying internships with legal employers. Ms. Legier also reported on the Power Ties program sponsored by the Young Leadership Council, and asked for volunteers to visit high schools participating in the program.

ACTION ITEMS:

- 1. Judge Wicker will send a letter to judges asking them to send law clerks to represent them at the fair.
- 2. Ms. Legier will forward information about Power Ties to the Committee members.

- E. **Outreach to the Judiciary. Training.** Judge Wicker reported on the Summer School for Judges, including the new changes to encourage a greater attorney attendance.

ACTION ITEM:

- 1. Judge Wicker will approach Justice Kimball about the letter to encourage judges to hire diverse law clerks and interns.

Justice Ortique Portrait Unveiling. Ms. Legier provided an update on the hanging of the Justice Revius Ortique portrait. The reception is being planned for October

around the Red Mass in New Orleans. She is awaiting confirmation from the Ortique family and Photographer Jim Thorns.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Ms. Legier will contact John Connery to explain what the Committee is doing so the judges do not schedule a meeting during the time of the reception.
2. Ms. Legier will notify the National Bar Association president. She also will ask the Ortique family about people on the national level who should also be invited.

Outreach to North Louisiana. Kelly reported on the status of the new admittees reception.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



WAYNE J. LEE



HON. FREDRICKA HOMBERG WICKER