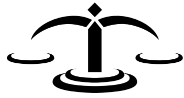
JUNE 2008, VOL. 2, NO. 1



ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

DIVERSITY MATTERS

A joint newsletter of the ISBA's Standing Committees on Minority and Women Participation and Women and the Law

Diversity in the Legal Profession: ISBA's commitment continues

ISBA President
Joe Bisceglia

President-Elect
Jack Carey

IN THIS ISSUE

- Diversity in the Legal Profession: ISBA's commitment continues 1
- ISBA Task Force on Diversity—Chair's Report 2
- A square peg in a round world 3
- Diversity: Why checking the "box" is not enough 4
- Chicago Bar Association's Call to Action: Progress on Women in Leadership in the Legal Profession 5
- The ADA on the edge of 17: That was the law that was 6
- All you need is love. . . And the right legislation: The Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Unions Act (House Bill 1826) 7
- Ten strategies for attorneys facing the challenges of diversity 9
- Why diversity matters. 13
- ISBA Task Force on Diversity Hosts Hire Big 10 Plus—Diversity in the Law Program 14
- ISBA visits SIU School of Law 15

The Illinois State Bar Association has a long-standing and unwavering commitment to diversity in the legal profession and in the Association. Current ISBA President Joe Bisceglia built on the outstanding work of the Standing Committees when he established a Task Force on Diversity. The Task Force, which drew from the resources of the two Standing Committees, has worked diligently but has not fully completed its task. Incoming President Jack Carey has indicated that he will support the ongoing work of the Task Force into the next fiscal year.

The Task Force, chaired by Lynn Grayson of Chicago, has devoted substantial attention to developing ways to encourage more minorities to travel the educational pipeline into the legal profession. The Task Force has also spent time examining how the ISBA can ensure participation and leadership for minorities.

"There is so much to be accomplished, and it was ambitious to expect the Task Force to properly complete all of its work in one year," said Joe Bisceglia. "I am proud of the work started by the Task Force and the direction it has taken."

"The Standing Committees and the Task Force are essential to the ISBA, making important inroads to broader diversity in the Illinois legal profession," said Jack Carey. "I informed President Bisceglia at the outset of his term of my whole-hearted endorsement of this effort. I am looking forward to lending further support.

ISBA Task Force on Diversity—Chair's Report

By E. Lynn Grayson

This year's Task Force on Diversity resulted in large part from the pipeline project initiated by ISBA President Irene Bahr during her term. Current ISBA President Joe Bisceglia established the Task Force to continue the pipeline initiatives and to focus on efforts to further diversity within the ISBA and the Illinois legal profession overall. To that end, President Bisceglia pulled together an amazing group of attorneys that shared his vision of a more diversified legal profession and tasked them to evaluate how best to progress diversity outreach within the Illinois bar. President Bisceglia, in particular, encouraged the Task Force to work on efforts to expand opportunities to get lawyers into Illinois classrooms in order to spend time with students.

To accomplish its mission, the Task Force has been organized into three subcommittees: 1) Diversity Pipeline Project; 2) Illinois Legal Community; and 3) ISBA. Co-chairs have been named to lead the work of each subcommittee as follows:

1. Diversity Pipeline Project: Alice Noble-Allgire, Andy Fox, Tracy Prosser and Venu Gupta.
2. Illinois Legal Community: Sonni Williams and Gwen Rowan
3. ISBA: Patrice Ball-Reed and Deborah Cole

In large part, the work of the Task Force has been conducted by these subcommittees, each with its own mission.

Diversity Pipeline Project

In its report dated March 9, 2007, the Diversity Pipeline Project, initiated by the Standing Committee on Minority and Women Participation, made several recommendations:

1. Appoint a special Diversity Task Force following the lead of the State Bar of California.;
2. Serve as a clearinghouse and coordinator of information;
3. Establish partnerships to implement pipeline programs;
4. Advocate for funding/programs to be carried out by others;
5. Evaluate a means to assess the effectiveness of current and future pipeline programs; and,
6. Identify funding resources needed to support pipeline initiatives.

E. Lynn Grayson

With these recommendations in mind, the mission of the Diversity Pipeline Project subcommittee is to "support improved educational opportunities for diversity students and encourage all efforts for diversity students to enter the legal profession."

Illinois Legal Profession

This subcommittee's mission was to "promote greater diversity within the Illinois legal community including support of the Commission on Professionalism of the Illinois Supreme Court ("Commission") and overall raise awareness of the critical importance of diversity to the legal profession." The key task this subcommittee accomplished was the completion of a statewide survey on diversity within the Illinois legal profession. The survey addressed qualitative as well as quantitative information.

ISBA

This subcommittee's work was focused on the ISBA as an organization with its overall mission to "increase the participation, leadership and membership ranks of diversity attorneys within the ISBA." The key task of this subcommittee was to develop a report card on the status of diversity attorneys within the ISBA membership, leadership and programs.

Another critical component of the Task Force was to support the Commission's work. Working closely with the Commission's Executive Director, Cheryl Niro, the Task Force was pleased to partner with the Commission and honored to support the Commission's conclave on professionalism and diversity held on December 6, 2007 in conjunction with the ISBA mid-year meeting in Chicago.

As the bar year comes to a close, we believe that the Task Force has been successful in achieving its mission as indicated by these accomplishments:

1. Conducted the first statewide diversity survey focused on who we are as lawyers and how we feel about our practice;
2. Created the first ISBA report on the status of diverse attorneys within the ISBA;
3. Finalized a pipeline project recommendation for the establishment of a new educational program mentoring diverse students from 6th grade through law school;
4. Recommended creation of a new ISBA diversity award to recognize contributions of Illinois attorneys;
5. Continued efforts to raise awareness of the importance of diversity through the distribution of the second edition of this special newsletter, Diversity Matters, and the placement of important diversity information on the ISBA Web site; and
6. Promoted increased emphasis on the importance of diversity in the Illinois bar through sponsorship and support of such outreach as the Legal Implications of Effective Representation of Unmarried Couples program, Hire Big 10 Diversity in the Law 2008 and the Chicago Bar Association Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges program.

It has been my sincere pleasure to chair the Task Force and to have the opportunity to work with so many talented attorneys to promote greater diversity within the Illinois bar and the ISBA. We hope our combined efforts this year and moving forward will contribute to positive change within the Illinois legal profession.

A square peg in a round world

A speech before the Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Illinois

Celia M. Howard Fellowship Luncheon

April 19, 2008

By Sonni Choi Williams

When Deb Walker called me and asked me to speak at the Celia M. Howard Fellowship Luncheon on the topic of diversity, I was immersed in diversity issues because I was helping the ISBA's Task Force on Diversity launch a statewide Diversity Survey and I had diversity pouring out of me. I immediately thought I could talk about diversity and the importance of diversity to the ISBA and our local bar association, Peoria County Bar Association, all day long, especially to you.

Then as I learned more about Celia's own life and what she faced being a square peg in a round world and not being able to attend Harvard Law School even after being awarded a scholarship from the school because of her gender, I thought that talking about the stereotypes and barriers that I faced as a female Korean-American growing up in Iowa would not only be in line with Celia's courage, but also highlight the fact that we still have a long road ahead of us even years after Celia.

I was a square peg in a round world. When our family immigrated to the United States from South Korea in 1977, we didn't end up in a diverse city like Los Angeles, New York, or Chicago, we ended in a tiny rural town in the Western part of Iowa. There were about 300 residents who were outnumbered by cows and other farm animals. I think the farm animals were more welcoming than the majority of the residents. There were only a small number of people in the community who accepted us. We were the only minority and we stuck out like a sore thumb. At school, we endured the daily comments on our Korean names; I was called "King Kong" because my Korean name was "Kyong" and for some reason kids thought this sounded like "Kong." We endured comments on our eyes; kids including the youngest ones would pull the skin next to their eyes to mimic our slanted eyes. We endured the comments on the way my parents spoke Korean.

I don't know exactly when I started to think in English. I was eight when we immigrated to United States and soon after my older brother and I started attending school I noticed a gradual change from thinking in Korean, which I assume that I did, to thinking in English. When this happened and I started to learn about God, it suddenly dawned on me that God played a cruel trick on me by putting my white soul into this brown-colored, slanted-eyed, jet-black-haired girl and planting me with an Oriental family. I vividly remember staring endlessly into a mirror thinking that if I stared hard enough through the mirror, my true white form would appear with ivory skin, blond hair and blue eyes. It never happened and the cruel taunting racial words kept coming and the pain became worse.

The only way we knew how to be accepted, at least by teachers and administrators, was to excel in school. My brother, sister and I spent more time in the library than at any school parties and the only way of escaping from my unpopular physical looks was through the pages of worn library books.

I went through the stereotypical Asian's track to education, with a biology major with medical or scientific graduate school in mind. I loved art and showed enough talent for my high school art teacher to notice and try to get me into majoring in art, but that was not what Asian parents would want from their children. I also found out that I had to fit into a stereotypical peg. I was taking a calculus class in college when my TA, a recent Chinese immigrant with heavy accent that garnered snickers, took me aside when one of my quiz grades dropped off dramati-

Diversity Matters

OFFICE
Illinois Bar Center
424 S. 2nd Street
Springfield, IL 62701
Phones: (217) 525-1760 OR 800-252-8908

Web site: www.isba.org

Co-Editors
Sandra Crawford
E. Lynn Grayson
Tracy L. Prosser

Managing Editor/Production
Katie Underwood
kunderwood@isba.org

Standing Committee on Minority & Women Participation
Andrew P. Fox, Chair
Jennifer A. Shaw, Vice Chair
Sonni C. Williams, Secretary
Alice M. Noble-Allgire, Ex-Officio

Lori C. Bryant
Galen T. Caldwell
Wendy D. Calvert
Yolaine M. Dauphin
Gina M. DeCiani
Andrea D. Flynn
Pedro Fregoso Jr.
Ebony R. Huddleston
Barbara L. Huffman
Tara H. Ori
Howard Peters IV
Tracy L. Prosser
Kimberly L. Robinson
Amina A. Saeed

John G. Locallo, Board Liaison
Janet M. Sosin, Staff Liaison

Standing Committee on Women & the Law
Sharon L. Eiseman, Chair
E. Lynn Grayson, Vice Chair
Annemarie E. Kill, Secretary
Claire A. Manning, Ex-Officio

Patrice Ball-Reed
Sandra M. Blake
Phoebe S. Bowers
E. Nicole Carrion
Roberta C. Conwell
Sandra Crawford
Heather M. Fritsch
Amanda C. Jones
Diana M. Law
Lori G. Levin
Jane E. McBride
Stephanie K. Nathanson
Mary F. Petruchius
Amie M. Sobkoviak
Letitia Spunar-Sheats
Celeste M. Walker
Debra B. Walker

Elizabeth L. Jensen, Board Liaison
Janet M. Sosin, Staff Liaison

Disclaimer: This newsletter is for subscribers' personal use only; redistribution is prohibited. Copyright Illinois State Bar Association. Statements or expressions of opinion appearing herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Association or Editors, and likewise the publication of any advertisement is not to be construed as an endorsement of the product or service offered unless it is specifically stated in the ad that there is such approval or endorsement.

Articles are prepared as an educational service to members of ISBA. They should not be relied upon as a substitute for individual legal research.

The articles in this newsletter are not intended to be used and may not be relied on for penalty avoidance.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to the Illinois State Bar Association, 424 S. 2nd St., Springfield, IL 62701-1779.

cally. I would have to confess that this was due to late-night partying. The TA scolded me and told me that she expected better from an Asian student who should be good in math. Her comments angered me into studying harder and getting an "A" in that calculus class, but it also startled me into what Asians were expected to be.

Yes, I did a high school theme paper on Asian-Americans being labeled the "model" minority and being pressured into perfection by not only their parents, but society as well. During college, I realized that I did not love science, biology, or chemistry, but instead loved reading about history and culture. When I had to ask my molecular genetics professor to sign a waiver to quit his class because I was failing, the professor looked at me in disgust and echoed the same comment that he expected more from an Asian student.

As I finished my degree in history, I knew that a history degree would either lead me to a career as a teacher or a professor. I realized that these two choices did not fit me, so I thought of law school. When I did, I realized that I was starting from scratch and had no idea what a law degree entailed.

When I entered law school, again I was a square peg in a round world. I was one of four Asian-American students at Northern Illinois University College of Law when I started in 1995. When I graduated from NIUCOL, I worked for my father-in-law for a few months then was offered a job as an assistant public defender in juvenile/neglect court before getting my dream job of working for the City of Peoria as a city prosecutor.

During the first month as a prosecutor for the City of Peoria, again I was hit with the harsh fact of being a square peg in a round world. At the closing of a bench trial on a noise upon the public way ordinance violation case and as the judge announced his finding that the defendant was guilty, the defendant commented under his breath some derogatory "Chinese"-mimicking words. I was very familiar with those words, those words were the same words that the kids had wickedly mocked at me earlier in my childhood. Suddenly I was hurled back to the hurt little girl crying in her closet and wanting the cruel words to stop. All the hard work and years of studying to become an attorney were shattered and crushed by the cruel, racially motivated slangs uttered by the defendant.

As I was recovering from my shock, I heard the judge ask the defendant to repeat what he had said to me. The defendant did not deny saying the cruel racial epitaphs, but instead said that he was not talking to me directly. The judge then found that the defendant did not deny saying the racially motivated words and that the judge heard the comments and found the defendant's comments directed to the prosecutor as an assault to the court and the judicial system and held the defendant in contempt of court, sentencing the defendant to 30 days in jail, to be served immediately.

My hands were trembling so much that I don't know how I ended up writing up the order, but I felt the wind knocked out of me and then someone breathing life back into me. I realized that although I have been afraid to confront all people who teased me, made the "chink" jokes, talked derogatory "Chinese"-sounding words, and pulled the "oriental eyes" at me, there were people out there who did not accept this behavior as a part of our society and did not accept this behavior as kids being kids.

Being one of only a few Asian-American attorneys practicing in this area, I know that I am a square peg in a round world. Like all of you and Celia M. Howard, we all have come up against the stereotypes, even some racially motivated ones. I was never pegged to be an attorney and Celia was never supposed to be a successful female attorney during her time, let alone a federal district judge, but she touched enough lives to have a luncheon in her honor. Since all of you are successful women who went against the stereotypical barriers against women, you too can make a difference in inspiring the younger generations to continue to break down the barriers.

I am a square peg in a round world, but I have many different ideas to offer, many different ways to look at problems, and offer diversity in a round world. We all have preconceptions based on someone's looks and gender, but we need to look beyond those stereotypes. I implore you to go out and not only be successful in what you do, but inspire and mentor others who are trying to break through the same barriers that Celia, that I, and that you went through. Perhaps then, we could accept all the different shapes of pegs.

Diversity: Why checking the "box" is not enough

*By John R. Richards**

On February 15, 2008, I had the privilege to speak as a panelist at "the Hire Big 10 Diversity in the Law 2008" seminar at the ISBA. A panel of practitioners, professors, and in-house counsel spoke to a group of diverse prospective law students on a range of issues. I talked with the students on practical steps that they could take to enhance their law school applications. While I commented on strategic moves with respect to timing, getting recommendation letters, and establishing a relationship with admissions office counselors, I primarily focused on the significance of diversity with respect to one's application.

I am openly and proudly gay. It was not until 2003 that I was able to say that out loud to myself or others. When I applied to the University of Pennsylvania Law School, I checked the "LGBT" box. Having a "box" for LGBT diversity is a positive development that more law schools besides Penn are rightfully beginning to include in their applications and more clients are

beginning to consider when they evaluate a law firm's diversity.

As both an applicant to Penn and as an admissions reader during law school, it crossed my mind, "what if someone who is not really LBGT, checks the box anyway?" Perhaps he or she is conveniently bisexual or is "in a phase" during the application process and then is conveniently "straight" again after being accepted. This issue tends not to arise with other traditionally recognized diverse groups on law school applications, such as African-American or Hispanic, because one's racial and ethnic backgrounds are often visible to others. Being LGBT, however, is not in the same sense a "visible" minority.

So why do law schools not seriously worry about applicants pretending to be LGBT? The answer to this question is illustrative of the over-arching point that I made to the students at the seminar: it is simply not enough for diverse students to just check the appropriate box. Something more is required. A law school does not benefit from its students' diversity if those students are not willing to share, both in and outside of the classroom, how their diversity has shaped their perspectives. Likewise, law students must illustrate in their applications how being diverse has affected them and how their diversity enhances their abilities to help others.

For instance, when I applied to law school, my statement addressed my struggle with my sexual orientation and how those challenges intensified my desire to engage in public service and study law. I recalled remorsefully the sociology class where I spoke out openly against same-sex marriage and parenting based on my religious and political convictions, knowing at the time I was in complete denial about my own sexual orientation. I elaborated on my journey and how coming to terms with my sexual orientation forced me to identify with other disenfranchised minority groups struggling for equal rights and protection. I emphasized how terrified I was by the fragility of my rights. I addressed how I struggled with the assumptions others made about me and how I searched to find harmony between my social and political background and my sexual orientation. Finally, I shared my recognition of a frightening reality: the stronger and more courageous I was to live an authentic, honest life, the more rejection, harassment and oppression I may experience. My anger and frustration towards homophobia made me more sensitive to other types of biases towards others as well. It heightened my intellectual curiosity about marginalized groups' struggles to obtain and hold on to legal rights. I came to appreciate law as a vehicle by which I could educate others as well as further the protections of the rights of other disenfranchised groups.

Thus, if an applicant "chooses" to be gay, but his or her application does not indicate how he or she has been shaped by his or her experiences and how he or she plans to translate those experiences into dealings with others, the application is likely to be placed in the increasingly larger "denied" pile at law schools. So the problem solves itself.

Whether you are LGBT, Hispanic, African-American or fall into another "box" on a law school application, sharing your story and struggles and how they relate to your identity, views, and desire to go to law school is crucial. The importance of this sharing extends beyond getting into law school, and is connected to one's success in law school and in the practice of law too. Law as a profession grows when its members fully embrace their identities in the workplace, and challenge blatant and covert stereotypes of their co-workers and their clients.

---

* John R. Richards is a member of the Labor & Employment Group in the Chicago office of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius.

Chicago Bar Association's Call to Action: Progress on Women in Leadership in the Legal Profession

*By Jane DiRenzo Pigott**

The Chicago Bar Association's Alliance for Women put out a Call to Action on women in leadership positions in the legal professions in 2004. The Call to Action has five specific goals, all of which are measured as of December 31, 2007:

1. To increase the percentage of women partners by three points from 2004 levels;
2. To have women represented on the power committees in law firms in the same proportion as they are represented in the partnership;
3. To increase the number of women practice group leaders;
4. To ensure that flexible hours policies and their use are an equitable and viable option; and
5. To improve materially any disparity in the rates in which men and women are retained, promoted and laterally recruited.

Ten law firms took a leadership role with the Call to Action efforts by signing onto its goals before the effort was formally announced: Baker & McKenzie LLP; DLA Piper, Rudnick, Gray, Cary LLP; Jenner & Block LLP; Katten, Muchin Rosenman LLP; Kirkland & Ellis LLP; McGuireWoods LLP; McDermott, Will & Emery LLP; Schiff, Hardin LLP; Sidley, Austin, Rowe & Wood LLP; and Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal LLP. There are 50 signatories to the Call to Action, law firms with Chicago offices and Chicago area corporate legal departments. A complete list of signatories can be found at <http://www.chicagobar.org>.

In 2004, at the initiation of the Call to Action, the average percent

of women partners in Chicago law firms was 18.12 percent (National Association for Law Placement). The 2004 Chicago Lawyer's Diversity Survey showed only 10 law firms that were at or above this average for Chicago. The 2007 average percent of women partners in Chicago law firms was 19.31 percent (National Association for Law Placement). According to the 2007 Chicago Lawyer's Diversity Survey, not only has the Chicago average increased, but the number of Chicago firms meeting or exceeding that average has increased to 31. Moreover, among the 32 Chicago law firm offices with more than 100 lawyers in 2007, seven report more than 25 percent of their partners are women. Three of the firms exceed 28 percent women partners: Ungaretti & Harris (28.6 percent), McDermott, Will & Emery (28.5 percent) and Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal (28.4 percent).

The Call to Action signatories are currently in the process of completing a survey regarding its five goals as of December 31, 2007. These results will be compared to the baseline for all signatories as of January 1, 2004. Since the inception of the Call to Action, a team of women professionals from Deloitte, led by Claudia Wolf, has done the data analysis on the five goals on an annual basis, assisting the signatories in monitoring their progress on the Call to Action goals and will provide each signatory with its results. Best performers on each Call to Action goal will be announced. Even with definite results for the Call to Action still to come, one thing is sure—there has been progress on the front of women in leadership in Chicago law firms.

---

* Jane DiRenzo Pigott practiced law for more than two decades before founding R3 Group LLC. She is currently Managing Director of R3 Group, which specializes in leadership and change in connection with diversity. She can be reached at jdpigott@r3group.net. The Call to Action was conceived and announced when Jane and E. Lynn Grayson were Co-Chairs of the Chicago Bar Association's Alliance for Women. Both Lynn and Jane continue to lead the Alliance efforts to monitor and report on the Call to Action goals.

The ADA on the edge of 17: That was the law that was

By Patrick J. Kronenwetter; Wolin Kelter & Rosen, Ltd.

Diversity, to no one's surprise, means different things to different people. In addressing the concept of diversity within the legal profession, the constituencies that most often come to mind are women, racial and ethnic minorities and persons with alternate sexual orientations or gender issues. A quick look at ISBA's list of Standing Committees and Section Councils bears this statement out. But there is another, sometimes overlooked, group of lawyers who should be included in any discussion on diversity—namely, lawyers with disabilities.

It is often said, perhaps oxymoronically, that persons with disabilities are the largest minority within American society, representing as many as one in every six people in the country, depending on who is counting. As is the case with the U.S. population at large, there is no accurate census of how many lawyers are disabled, in one fashion or another. But one thing is certain: any lawyer can become disabled at some point in her/his life, notwithstanding the fact that circumstance of birth might prevent her/him from ever knowing what it is like to be a member of some of the other minority groups mentioned above.

Disability, then, is a topic which deserves our consideration in any forum on diversity, for both personal and professional reasons. In the last two decades, perhaps no single event has done more to place this topic in the forefront of pubic consciousness than the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act, more familiarly known as the ADA. Blessed with a short and palindromic abbreviation, the ADA is one of those federal statutes that everybody knows about, but not everybody knows. Like ERISA, CERCLA and RCRA, the name evokes a list of the Fates or Furies from ancient mythology, recognizable to many, but known well only by liberal arts majors and crossword puzzle enthusiasts.

Enacted in 1990 and first effective in 1992, the ADA stands on the edge of its 17th in-force year as the law of this land in terms of guaranteeing and protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities with respect to employment and also ensuring physical access to places of public accommodation and government services. Many people, however, believe that the ADA is in need of serious repair or replacement, due to erosion of the law's strength as a result of decisions by the federal courts within the last decade. Others argue that the U.S. Supreme Court has only used common sense to rein in a statute that would otherwise have driven employers and the owners of business premises into financial ruin by promoting an "[almost] everybody's a victim" view of civil rights.

In adopting the ADA, Congress defined a "disability" as A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; (B) a record of such impairment; or (C) being regarded as having such an impairment. The list of major life activities that the law recognizes as subject to impairment is both long and wide. Early decisions of the lower federal courts accepted the invitation of Congress to interpret the ADA broadly, occasionally straining to conclude that a claimant actually was disabled. As the cases made their way through the appeal process, a more restrictive interpretation of "disability" became the standard. This interpretation was ultimately recognized in a series of Supreme Court decisions—commonly referred to as the "Sutton Trilogy"—in which the court ruled that the limitations on a person's major life activities must be considered in the context of

the use of mitigating measures, such as eyeglasses, medication or prostheses. Consequently, many persons who use such mitigating measures to deal with their disabilities could no longer find protection under the ADA, because they were no longer "substantially limited."

In a later case, the Supreme Court declared that a person's disability must be determined by a strict standard, thereby substantially narrowing the gate through which claimants have to pass for relief. Furthermore, the court held that to qualify under the ADA, a disability must affect a broad range of a person's activities, not just one or a few limited tasks. Many kinds of repetitive motion injuries, therefore, no longer meet the standard of ADA-protected disabilities.

As a result of these and other decisions, disabilities rights groups have lobbied for a legislative reversal of the Supreme Court's actions. In 2007 a bipartisan group of legislators introduced the ADA Restoration Act, now winding its way through Congressional committee. As its title suggests, the Act proposes to restore, but not expand, the original protections that Congress sought to provide to persons with disabilities. Of the three major Presidential candidates, only Mr. Obama appears to have committed already to sign the legislation, if passed.

Regardless of one's views about the change, it is impossible to deny that the ADA is not the same law today as it was when enacted. At the same time, opportunities for many persons with disabilities have undeniably increased, even in the face of a more restrictive interpretation of the law. The twin prospects of a new President and a further declining economy will undoubtedly affect the course of efforts to restore the ADA to its original condition. Teenage years are seldom easy, even in the life of a civil rights statute.

All you need is love. . . And the right legislation: The Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Unions Act (House Bill 1826)

By Annemarie E. Kill, Avery Camerlingo Kill, LLC

The Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Unions Act (HB 1826) was originally introduced in the Illinois House on February 23, 2007. HB 1826 confers substantive rights and responsibilities on partners who are joined in a civil union, which generally parallel the rights and responsibilities of married persons. Though it was subsequently amended to a more streamlined version of the original bill, it has been steadily gathering support from House representatives. Last summer, the ISBA Assembly voted to formally support HB 1826. As of this writing, the deadline for action has been extended to allow time to obtain sufficient support to ensure the bill is passed.

If the bill passes, Illinois would join Connecticut, Vermont, California, and New Jersey as states which have recognized some form of civil union between partners in either a same sex or opposite sex relationship. Another state, Massachusetts, has specifically legalized gay marriage. Though Chicago and some surrounding suburbs have "domestic-partner" registries, inclusion on the registries does not generally provide substantive rights.

HB 1826 recognizes and supports the diversity of relationships in the state of Illinois. The bill addresses the myriad of problems faced by those in committed relationships who are barred from marrying, or simply choose not to. Now, absent such legislative protection, unmarried couples in committed relationships are often left to provide for a partner by constructing a mosaic of protections. They may use reciprocal powers of attorney for property, powers of attorney for health care, trust agreements, and wills. They must exercise great care in the manner in which they hold property, and may also have contractual agreements which specifically govern each partner's rights and responsibilities. Those couples with children must consider formal adoptions, guardianships and parenting agreements. Unlike married persons, there are no rights which automatically flow to them simply by virtue of their status as a partner in a committed relationship.

Summary of HB 1826

1. Purpose of HB 1826

The stated purpose of HB1826 is to provide "committed, adult, same-sex and different-sex couples the opportunity to obtain the same obligations, responsibilities, protections, and benefits afforded or recognized by the law of Illinois to spouses." HB 1826, as originally introduced, highlighted the reasons the bill was introduced. First, it recognized that "marriage" is generally "the exclusive source of numerous protections and responsibilities under the laws of Illinois for parties to a marriage and their children" and therefore same-sex couples are denied these rights since they may not legally marry. Second, it recognized that many same sex couples have formed "lasting, committed, caring and faithful relationships" which involve living together, serving their communities, and rearing children, without the protections and responsibilities associated with marriage. Third, HB 1826 states that the passage of the bill would support

Illinois' "long tradition of respect for individual rights and responsibilities… and equal protection of the laws."

2. Protections Afforded to Those in a Civil Union

HB 1826 generally provides that partners who choose to obtain a civil union would be treated as spouses for purposes of state substantive laws. The original proponent of HB 1826 included a non-exclusive list of the legal protections which would be offered to partners in civil unions These included protections afforded to spouses under probate law, trust law, property law, adoption law, and family law, including domestic violence. Further, the Act would allow non-married partners to bring lawsuits otherwise dependent on spousal status (including wrongful death, emotional distress, and loss of consortium claims). Under the Illinois Human Rights Act, partners in civil unions would also be protected against discrimination based on marital status. The Act would provide partners with spousal status as to health insurance, worker's compensation, public assistance, and health care decision-making. A partner would also be afforded the privilege for marital communications contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure. Though the amendments do not delineate these specific protections, the general language of the amended HB 1826 would presumably include the rights under all of these laws.

3. Formation of a Civil Union

Formation of a civil union would be similar to the formation of a marriage. HB 1826 provides that two persons may form a civil union pursuant to the same requirements found in the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act ("IMDMA"), 750 ILCS 5/501 et. seq. However, though the IMDMA provides that persons under the age of 18 may marry under certain circumstances, a party must be eighteen to form a civil union. Similar to persons who seek to marry, partners seeking a civil union must obtain a license and participate in a ceremony officiated by a judge, clerk, or a religious officiant. A certificate of the civil union must then be filed with the appropriate county clerk of court. The Act also provides that a religious body "is free to choose whether or not to solemnize or not to officiate civil unions."

4. Dissolution of a Civil Union

Significantly, HB 1826 provides that a civil union may only be dissolved pursuant to the IMDMA. The IMDMA provides the statutory authority for the dissolution of marriage, including the determination of issues such as spousal support, property division, child support, and child custody. Thus, like a married couple, partners in a civil union must be "divorced."

HB 1826 Responds to a Judicial Call for Action

Without the benefit of any state recognition, when a committed relationship ends, there can be unjust results under the law. When forced to resort to the courts, unmarried couples who have lived together and joined finances have attempted to advance theories of implied contract, constructive trust and unjust enrichment in order to recover a share of property accumulated during the relationship. Courts have not been sympathetic to such arguments. Rather, courts have invited, and perhaps encouraged, the legislature to address such situations. For instance, in *Hewitt v. Hewitt*, 77 Ill.2d 49 (1979), a woman argued that she was "living as" a married couple with a man, and was therefore entitled to an equal share of property which was accumulated by him during the relationship. However, they never were married. The Illinois Supreme Court explained that since common law marriage was abolished in Illinois, the myriad of theories she advanced could not overcome the fact that she was attempting to gain recognition for a common law marriage. The Court relied on an 1882 case holding that "an agreement in consideration of future illicit cohabitation" was void and held that:

> The real thrust of plaintiff's argument here is that we should abandon the rule of illegality because of certain changes in societal norms and attitudes. It is urged that social mores have changed radically in recent years, rendering this principle of law archaic. It is said that because there are so many unmarried cohabitants today the courts must confer a legal status on such relationships.... Even if we were to assume some modification of the rule of illegality is appropriate, we return to the fundamental question earlier alluded to:
> If resolution of this issue rests ultimately on grounds of public policy, by what body should that policy be determined?. . . The issue, realistically, is whether it is appropriate for this court to grant a legal status to a private arrangement substituting for the institution of marriage sanctioned by the State. The question whether change is needed in the law governing the rights of parties in this delicate area of marriage-like relationships involves evaluations of sociological data and alternatives we believe best suited to the superior investigative and fact-finding facilities of the legislative branch in the exercise of its traditional authority to declare public policy in the domestic relations field. Id. at 60.

More recently, in *Costa v. Oliven*, 365 Ill.App.3d 244 (2nd Dist. 2006), appeal denied, 2006 Ill. LEXIS 1494 (2007), an unmarried man who lived with a partner for 24 years and cared for the parties' child sought a constructive trust over all of his partner's property. The trial court dismissed the complaint, which was affirmed by the appellate court. The plaintiff attempted to overcome the effect of *Hewitt* by arguing that there had been "subsequent legislative activity and changes in social and judicial attitudes" since the time of the *Hewitt* decision. The appellate court rejected the argument and relied on a directive from *Hewitt:* "These questions are appropriately within the province of the legislature, and . . . if there is to be a change in the law of this State on this matter, it is for the legislature and not the courts to bring about that change." Id. at 248.

Upon the end of a relationship, same-sex couples face additional hurdles, particularly when children are involved. While the law generally provides a means for biological parents to exercise a panoply of rights with regard to the raising of their children, same-sex couples raising children do not necessarily have the same protections. In the case of *In re Visitation with C.B.L.*, 309 Ill. App. 3d 888 (1st Dist. 1999), a lesbian couple who decided to have a child by artificial insemination ended their relationship. The partner who did not carry the child was denied all visitation with the child, despite the fact that

she had participated in the preparation for the child's birth and in raising the child. The court found she lacked standing, but noted that "this court is not unmindful of the fact that our evolving social structures have created non-traditional relationships. This court, however, has no authority to ignore the manifest intent of our General Assembly." Id. at 894. In another case, *In re Marriage of Simmons*, 355 Ill. App. 3d 942 (1st Dist. 2005), appeal denied, 216 Ill. 2d 734 (2005), a person who was born a female who suffered from "gender identity disorder" began a course of hormone treatments which resulted in her achieving the physical appearance of a man. In 1985, he legally married a woman. The couple decided that the wife would undergo artificial insemination. She gave birth to a child, and the husband was listed as the father on the child's birth certificate. The parties lived together as husband and wife until the child was six years old, when the husband filed for divorce. The court found that the husband lacked standing to seek custody since "same sex marriages" were not legal and the marriage was void ab initio. The court also found that he lacked any parental rights to the child.

HB 1826 is perhaps the first response to the invitation pointedly made by the *Hewitt* court and reinforced in subsequent court decisions. It may be that changes in social mores and current sociological findings have rendered some laws archaic. As discussed in *Hewitt*, our state legislature, as in other states, has been compelled to address the "delicate area of marriage-like relationships." So often, laws provide a set of rules to follow when we have disputes with others. When we experience a car accident, a leaky roof, or a failed marriage, we look to the law to provide the tools to resolve our dispute in a fair and dignified manner. The current laws fail to provide a suitable framework to govern the most significant of relationships for many members of our society. Perhaps we are well-served to remember the words of William O. Douglas, the longest-serving U.S. Supreme Court Justice: "The search for static security—in the law and elsewhere—is misguided. The fact is security can only be achieved through constant change, adapting old ideas that have outlived their usefulness to current facts."

As of this writing, HB1826 remains pending. Those who would like further information on the bill may visit <www.civilunionsillinois.org>. The Web site includes a discussion of the bill, as well as a template which may be used to urge your local legislator to support the bill.

Ten strategies for attorneys facing the challenges of diversity

By Alice M. Noble-Allgire

While there is an increasing desire for diversity in the legal profession, diversity brings with it some special challenges for attorneys who transcend the traditional attorney mold. Elizabeth Gastelum reported on some of those challenges in the last edition of *The Challenge* in an article about a panel discussion—"The Challenges of Being the Only ____ in a Law Firm (or Other Legal Setting"—held at the Southern Illinois University School of Law in October 2007.

But the news is not all bad. Attorneys who participated in the SIU program recommended a variety of strategies for coping with those challenges—one of which is to recognize that, sometimes, being "different" can be advantageous.

Interestingly, although the panelists discussed the challenges from a wide variety of perspectives—as a person of color, of their gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability—they shared some universal strategies for addressing those challenges. This article focuses on 10 strategies that emerged as common themes throughout the program.

1. Recognize the value of diversity.

Staci Yandle, a personal injury attorney in Belleville, underscored one of the primary motivations for diversity in the profession: the desirability of providing clients the opportunity for representation by an attorney who can relate to the client's situation.

"Many of the plaintiffs who need representation look like me," said Yandle, who is African-American. "And there are many things, differences in our life experience in terms of understanding and perception and in telling your client's story to a jury, that if you don't totally understand it, that comes with difficulty. So what I'm saying to you is that our community does not have sufficient numbers of attorneys like us to represent us."

Bill Dorothy, who is a senior lecturer at the Washington University School of Law, said the good news is that law firms are beginning to embrace the true meaning of diversity. Previously, he said, many law firms "said they wanted diversity, but what they really wanted were people who looked and acted like old white guys. So if you could pass as an old white guy, then they liked you. . . . And now I think they actually do admire diversity. They understand that a woman may have a different perspective on an issue and her perspective may be right."

George Norwood, who is an Assistant United States Attorney in Benton, talked about the value of including something on a resume that indicated the diversity a lawyer could bring to an employer. He said that the interest in diversity will help open doors for lawyers of color, but it is up to the lawyers themselves to capitalize on the opportunity.

"If a firm wants to give me an interview because I am smart, and part of the reason is I'm black, I don't care," he said. "I just want to get in the door. . . . Once you get in the door, then it's up to you to prove yourself."

Some panelists cautioned, however, that diversity is not always fully embraced. Brandy Johnson, who practices in the area of worker's compensation and medical malpractice in St. Louis, decided not to reference her disability—a neck injury that left her partially paralyzed—on her resume.

"I had the shock value of showing up in a wheelchair and that played against me at times," she said, adding that while her resume was good and her work was good, "I wasn't as desirable because of my disability. In my eyes, I really think that was part of the reason I had trouble getting a job."

Dorothy was similarly circumspect about including a reference to sexual orientation on a resume such as membership in a gay/lesbian student group. He suggested that the information would not affect job prospects with some of the largest employers, but students might be more cautious with small and medium-sized firms.

2. Work harder, be better prepared

Several panelists observed that attorneys who are different—particularly attorneys of color—bear a heavy burden of overcoming prejudicial stereotypes. "One African-American, or one Hispanic attorney makes a misstep in court or we're not prepared, and you'll hear, 'There you go again, those Hispanics,'" said Andy Fox, who currently practices law in the Chicago area.

Yandle said those stereotypes often mean that her talents and skill are underestimated. "It became apparent to me that the expectations of me were low, even from my own colleagues in the firm," she said. Her strategy for dealing with that challenge "was the way that my parents raised me to deal with it all my life. . . . You have to work harder, you have to be better, you have to do more."

3. Recognize the advantages of stereotypes

Notwithstanding the detriments, Yandle and several other panelists suggested that there is a power in being underestimated. "They set the bar so low with their attitudes that . . . if they feel they can understand what I am saying, and I'm serious, and that I sound like I may know what I'm talking about, that works to my advantage," said Yandle.

Johnson said she is similarly underestimated sometimes because of her disability, but it also works to her advantage. "I'm treated a bit differently than other female attorneys," she said. "I don't necessarily run into some of the aggression that you sometimes see with female attorneys. Even with the judges, I find that you see the same judges over and over again and a lot of them have said, "'I admire what you do,' and I think that gives me a little bit of an advantage."

Johnson said her disability gives her a particular advantage in her medical malpractice and worker's compensation practice. "It's hard to look at me and say your back strain is worth $10,000," she said. "Most of them have a little chagrin if they try to tell me they can never work again because they broke their foot."

4. Find a good mentor

Almost all of the panelists spoke of the virtues of finding good mentors and role models. "One of the things that I found very helpful was to identify some partners who can help you out and teach you and help pave your way," said Tracy Prosser, who formerly worked in a large firm in Chicago but is now a career law clerk for U.S. District Judge J. Phil Gilbert in Benton.

Prosser recommended that women attorneys seek employment in a law firm or department where there are a number of women partners. That way, they have a better chance of finding a partner with a style and personality similar to their own who can serve as a role model.

But not all mentors have to be someone who is of the same race, gender, religion, etc. Prosser said that one of the male partners at her firm took a lot of interest in her work and career advancement. Conversely, Fox observed that a colleague who shared his Hispanic background was not supportive.

5. Take the initiative and be creative

Prosser observed that it is sometimes difficult for a woman or minority to develop relationships with partners or with clients. She said that many of the established partners and established clients are men, who like to engage in activities, like golf, in which women generally don't participate. She noted that it is also sometimes awkward—because of the potential for office gossip or because of jealous spouses—for a male to invite a female colleague to a business lunch "and that's where you really develop your relationships as colleagues."

Prosser's advice was to "be creative." Come up with an alternative to the traditional rainmaking activities like golf, go out in small groups rather than one on one, and "you be the one to ask. If you sit back and wait for the guys to ask you out to lunch, you're going to be waiting a long time and eating alone a lot," she said.

6. Remember the law firm's profit motive

Leonard Gross, a law professor at the SIU School of Law, reminded the audience that law firms "are all about making money—that's what they're in business for." As a result, firms tend to focus on the bottom line and not about attorneys' individual needs or concerns.

"My experience was if you can do the work, do it well, you're treated fine," he said. "Taking off Jewish holidays was not an issue. You could do that, and I did, but you had to make sure your work was covered, just like if you were ever going to call in sick, you had to make sure your work was covered or that you were going to make it up yourself."

Norwood explained how he once resolved a sensitive racial issue by helping superiors see the potential impact on profitability. He said that he saw a Confederate flag prominently displayed in a secretary's work space. "I thought, 'Oh my, I can't look at this,'" he said. "'But I want a job and I don't want to be a rabble rouser, so how am I going to do this?' I thought about it over the weekend and on Monday morning, I came in and said, 'I see this here and I don't care about it. But if I were a client, walking through this office, and I saw that there, I would take my business elsewhere.' It was down by the end of the day."

The firm's profit motive also creates opportunities for attorneys of diverse backgrounds to bring in business. Prosser said that when she worked in

a large firm, she wished that she had taken advantage of the opportunity to cultivate clients by reaching out to women who worked as in-house counsel or in decision-making positions for clients that the firm served.

Dorothy and Fox similarly discussed the advantages of making connections with potential clients who share a common background. "If you have relationships in your communities, in your cultural base, in your language base and your experience, that's going to bring money in," said Fox.

7. Anticipate and educate

Those who are in the mainstream often do not recognize the ways in which they are "privileged" and, therefore, may not recognize the different needs, values, and priorities of attorneys of diverse backgrounds. As a result, attorneys who do not fit the traditional mold, frequently must anticipate potential obstacles and gently educate their colleagues, clients, and judges.

This need to anticipate and educate is particularly true of attorneys with disabilities, said Howard Rosenblum, a senior attorney with Equip for Equality in Chicago, who is one of only a few deaf attorneys in practice. Rosenblum said disabled attorneys first have to educate prospective employers about their duty to make reasonable accommodations for an employee's disability. "I have to let them know that they have an obligation for communication access, and that's not always an effective tool to use when you're trying to get hired," he said.

He also has had to educate judges about the need to provide interpreters and the procedures for swearing in an interpreter. He said that judges are often confused about "who is the attorney here?" when a sign language interpreter speaks for him in court.

Johnson said that she tries to anticipate accessibility issues when she is appearing at a new courthouse or the offices of opposing counsel, but she doesn't always have the foresight or time to make the inquiry.

She said that most attorneys have been helpful when she has asked them to retrieve files that are out of her reach from her wheelchair. "But having to ask (for help) is the part that is a little frustrating at times," she said.

8. Say it with a smile

Although it is easy to lose patience with people who are acting on negative stereotypes or other unenlightened assumptions, panelists urged restraint in addressing the issue. Prosser described instances in which female lawyers were assumed to be secretaries or court reporters. Disabled and minority attorneys are similarly mistaken as clients or support personnel.

"It's really frustrating," Prosser said. "But you have to remember that these are your colleagues and if you want to succeed, you have to be pleasant."

Johnson similarly emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive professional reputation. "Never underestimate the way your carry yourself now and how it may affect you later," she said. "How you have held yourself out and treated other attorneys may help you down the road. If you have worked hard, you appear competent and prepared, and you're honest and you treat the other attorneys well, that's remembered."

9. Be comfortable with your own identity

The panelists who participated in the discussion rarely lose sight of the fact that they are the only person of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability in their law office or courtroom.

"I'm always conscious of it," said Yandle. "But I didn't want to be self-conscious about. So I learned early on that by being prepared and being competent, and just being in a state in which I'm the most comfortable in my own skin, that tends to neutralize it."

10. Follow your passion; look outside the traditional career paths

Although lawyers tend to put great emphasis on large firms and large salaries, panelists advised looking beyond those motivations. "Your law degree is the most versatile degree ever," said Dorothy. "So don't just look at the traditional paths to find employment. Look for the nontraditional paths, and you'll probably find a more rewarding career."

Yandle agreed: "Is money important? Yes, but that's not going to keep you getting up in the morning and going into a large firm, medium firm, or small firm; it's not going to keep you passionate. Law practice is stressful, I don't care in what capacity you do it, you've got to make sure that you're doing something that you like; don't just be motivated by the money."

Target your message!

- Reach the exact practice area you need with no wasted circulation
- Ads cost less
- ISBA newsletter readers ranked their newsletters 2nd highest of all Illinois legal publications in terms of usefulness. (Illinois Bar Journal was ranked 1st)
- 72% of newsletter subscribers either save or route each issue, so your ad will have staying power.

For more information contact:
Nancy Vonnahmen
Advertising Sales Coordinator
Illinois State Bar Association
800-252-8908 or 217-747-1437

ILLINOIS STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION

Introducing the ISBA's Newest Member Benefit

The ISBA Member Mark℠ *and* Member Firm Mark℠

The ISBA Member Mark℠ and Member Firm Mark℠ can be used by ISBA active members and firms to denote their membership in the association and show their committment to the profession. The Marks may appear on:

- Business cards
- Letterhead
- Envelopes
- Web page
- Print advertising in newspapers and magazines
- E-mail signatures
- Direct mail solicitations
- Signage at a member's office or building.

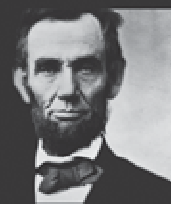
For more information and to get started, please visit
www.isba.org/membermark

Not a member? Join Today! (800)252-8908 or www.isba.org

ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Our state has a history of some pretty good lawyers.
We're out to keep it that way.

Learn more at **www.isba.org** and **www.isbaLawyers.com**.



Why diversity matters. . .

The members of the Standing Committee on Women and the Law and the Standing Committee on Minority and Women Participation share their views on why diversity matters to them.

"Diversity matters because being a diverse profession allows attorneys to reflect the cultures, values, and diversity of our clients, and to bring different cultural, racial, ethnic, religious and gender perspectives to bear in order to more effectively solve problems for our clients and the community."

"There is strength in diversity, and I want to be as strong as I can be. . . ."

"We, as lawyers, have been given great power and responsibility in preserving the health of our democracy. Our various colors, national origins, genders, religions and sexual preferences are irrelevant to our worthiness to shoulder those burdens, yet allow us as a profession to understand and ably represent every combination of those constituencies. Hearing every voice makes us stronger as a nation."

"Lawyers strive to ensure that our clients receive equal justice under the law. In the absence of meaningful diversity in all aspects of the legal system, namely diversity that reflects the communities where we live and work, it is more difficult, and sometimes impossible, to achieve equal justice for everyone. A truly diversified bar is critical in making sure that all the citizens of Illinois receive the rights and protections to which they are entitled. The ISBA can and should be a leader in promoting and advancing diversity within the Illinois legal community as a whole and within the ISBA as an organization."

"The interpretation of the law is influenced by a person's background and life experiences. Because we are a diverse nation, we need lawyers with diverse backgrounds to interpret and draft the law within our Constitutional framework. The legal profession, therefore, should be inclusive of all peoples and many ideas.

When a client has a legal issue to solve, the client must feel confident that his or her voice will be heard, no matter his background, gender, color or faith. If the client can see diversity in the legal profession, the client will feel more confident that he has received a fair resolution of his legal issue."

"Diversity matters because diversity in the legal profession promotes the public's perception of an equal and fair judicial system."

"Diversity is critical to the legitimacy of our judicial system and the rule of law. If our justice system does not reflect the diversity of our community, it will lose credibility and respect among those who feel their views and circumstances are not being fairly represented within the system. Accordingly, we must have diversity not only on the bench, where we have placed great authority for decision-making, but also among lawyers, who have been granted a special privilege to represent the interests of those with business before the courts and a corresponding responsibility to understand the clients' unique needs and circumstances.

For those who are less altruistic, diversity is important to a law firm's bottom line. The American population is becoming increasingly diverse and our legal business is transcending our national borders. Law firms that appreciate and embrace diversity—in their personnel and within the law firm environment as a whole—will be best positioned to attract this diverse clientele and thrive."

"Diversity matters because in order to embrace everyone we must recognize each person's uniqueness."

"Daily, I am dazzled by the different cultures, characters, and skin colors that I encounter. I am enriched and often surprised by what I learn about other individuals, and ever-hopeful that they feel the same about me because of how I value myself. Understanding and accepting differences among individuals and cultures helps me feel less insular, more alive, and more awed by the wonder of life. If only…if only…if only…, then perhaps we wouldn't find it necessary to judge, hurt and kill one another."

"Actions speak louder than words. I didn't realize the true power of our efforts to diversify the legal profession until I found myself at the Daley Center on the fourth floor with two teams of high school students as they competed in the Citywide Mock Trial Program sponsored by Sidley and Austin LLP and Chief Judge Timothy Evans. Our team from Benito Juarez High School made up of predominately Hispanic high school students was split into two separate courtrooms. We faced two teams, one for the plaintiff and one for the defense. To see these timid, unsure teenagers blossom into witnesses and attorneys in the program gave me real tangible hope that some day the face(s) of the legal profession will change. And to watch the competition among the various teams, made up of a truly diverse group of students from all over the city gave me hope that if we focus our efforts throughout the educational continuum, we will see real tangible benefits in the legal profession and society as a whole. All the students who participated were absolutely fantastic. The direct, the cross, the objections, the rebuttal and of course, the mesmerizing closing arguments had all the students chattering in the halls when it was done as if they just presented in front of the United States Supreme Court. Hope is on the horizon so if you get a chance, sign up to volunteer somewhere, somehow."

"Diversity allows individuals from different backgrounds to learn from one another, grow and work together."

"Diversity matters because it leads to the creation of better problem solving models. Without diversity creativity can be stunted. Without diversity it becomes a struggle to brainstorm new and innovative ideas and problem solve because everyone has the same mind set, the same worldview. With the same or similar mindsets people are less capable of bringing divergent perspectives, experiences, knowledge or histories to the table. For me diversity matters most especially for those of us involved in conflict resolution as it allow us to tap into the vast creativity which only diverse experiences and perspectives can bring."

"Diversity in the legal profession not only benefits clients who have diverse backgrounds and needs but also lawyers and Judges. Connecting with other lawyers and Judges with diverse backgrounds like ethnicity, gender, religion, etc. educates other lawyers and Judges as to differences in perspective on the law and life in general. A broadened understanding of the role of diversity and its impact on life and the profession enables us to better serve our clients and also have a more well-rounded experience as lawyers and as individuals."

ISBA Task Force on Diversity Hosts Hire Big 10 Plus—Diversity in the Law Program

On February 15, 2008, the ISBA Task Force on Diversity hosted a group of diversity college students as part of the Hire Big 10—Diversity in the Law 2008 Program. The diverse students joined us from Big 10 universities, along with University of Chicago, DePaul and Notre Dame. The Task Force conducted a panel featuring the following speakers: John Richards, Morgan Lewis & Bockius, Elizabeth Turley, Chicago-Kent College of Law, Rebecca Raftery, BP America, Patrick Kronenwetter, Wolin Kelter & Rosen, Patrice Ball-Reed, Office of the Illinois Attorney General, Karina Ayala, Chicago Bar Association and E. Lynn Grayson, Jenner & Block. The panelists discussed what it was like to be a lawyer, opportunities in the legal sector and recommendations for getting into law school. The Hire Big 10 visiting students enjoyed a day long experience in Chicago learning more about the law.

ISBA visits SIU School of Law

On April 11-12, 2008, the ISBA Standing Committees on Women and the Law and Women and Minority Participation visited SIU School of Law in Carbondale. Once there, the committees hosted a panel discussion with law students on success strategies in the legal profession. The ISBA also hosted, in cooperation with SIU School of Law, an evening reception for Illinois lawyers in the region as well as faculty and law students from SIU. The next day, the committees met together and held a strategic planning session followed by their own business meetings.

Photo 1 is a group shot of the two committees' members that attended the Friday and Saturday events; Photo 6 depicts members in attendance from the ISBA Task Force on Diversity including, seated from left to right, Andy Fox, Sonni Choi Williams and Tracy Prosser; standing, left to right, Lynn Grayson and Alice Noble-Allgire.

Photo 1

Photo 6

Who me?
A law school professor?

Southern Illinois University School of Law invites you to consider a career as a law professor.

Thursday, June 26, 2008
6:00 - 7:15 p.m.

Hyatt Regency Riverfront
315 Chestnut Street
Director's Row 45
Saint Louis, MO 63102

RSVP suggested by June 23, 2008 to *lawcal@siu.edu* or by calling 618.453.8736.
Walk-ins also welcome.

Join us to learn:

- Why a career as a law professor is so rewarding
- How the law school hiring process differs from other job searches
- Why the Southern Illinois University School of Law might be a good fit for you

SIU School of Law is committed to diversity in its law faculty and student body and, therefore, encourages participation in this program by persons from underrepresented communities.

www.law.siu.edu

Diversity Matters
Illinois Bar Center
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1779

June 2008
Vol. 2 No. 1

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Springfield, Ill.
Permit No. 820