



THE CHALLENGE

The newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Standing Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities and the Law

Chair's column

By Jameika Mangum

I look forward to working with you during my year as Chair of the Illinois State Bar Association's Standing Committee on Racial and Ethnic Minorities and the Law. We have had a great start to the year. Our Standing Committee's meeting at the ISBA's Annual Meeting in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin was a success. Our committee also co-sponsored the 18th Annual Networking Breakfast, along with the Standing Committee on Women and the Law and Southern Illinois University School of Law, bringing together dozens of female attorneys for some time to get to know each other, laugh, and possibly create new friendships.

ISBA President, Paula H. Holderman, graciously stopped by our committee meeting. I applaud her selection of women and diversity in the legal profession as a focus area of her presidency. I

note the ISBA currently has a program that introduces high school students to the legal profession, a running start for Paula to build on. Such programs are vital for minorities to enter the legal profession and were missing in my life. Growing up I did not know any attorneys. My limited exposure to the legal profession came from television. I watched NBC's "The Cosby Show," and admired Clair Huxtable who was a lawyer, a mother, and a wife. Clair made partner in a law firm during the show. I wanted to be Clair Huxtable and was fortunate in achieving that goal.

How often do you think about diversity? According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary (Online), diversity has multiple definitions, one of which is: "an instance of being composed of

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One of one

By Arthur Mingo

Hello, my name is Arthur Mingo and I am the only African-American in the class of 2014 at Southern Illinois University, School of Law. This fact may seem shocking to you because I was admitted to the law school more than a year after our country elected its first African-American president. Despite what some would see as an anomaly, however, I see normality. According to LSAC, the organization that administers the LSAT nationally, Caucasians account for 66 percent of LSAT applicants and African-Americans a miserly 12 percent, which may explain, in part, the low number of African-Americans in law schools. Nevertheless, it was still shocking to be the only African-American in

a class of 118 law students. I have been one of a few African-Americans in different settings, but I have never been the *entire* population before. I am writing this article to share some of the challenges, interesting situations and the lonely moments which are the by-product of being one of one.

During a class discussion in my first year, the conversation turned to public policy, and we talked about *urban culture* and *inner city people*. It took a great deal of restraint not to get angry during those discussions. Although some people assign literal definitions to the terms *urban culture* and *inner city people* where *urban culture*

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Chair's column

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differing elements or qualities." Diversity allows people to bring differing elements or qualities to organizations and workplaces. Diversity means diverse views, opinions, and culture. Exposure to a different opinion can change the way people think.

Our Standing Committee is currently working on a continuing legal education program about diversity in law firms. Maya Angelou once stated, "*We allow our ignorance to prevail upon us and make us think that we can survive alone, alone in patches, alone in*

groups, alone in races, and even alone in genders." We cannot survive alone; we need diversity in the legal profession.

Best regards,
Jameika Mangum ■

One of one

Continued from page 1

is the culture of a city and *inner city people* are people who live in the inner most part of the city, in my experience these phrases are code words for African-Americans or minorities. The next time you go to a bookstore, ask to look at the urban section and notice how the cover art consists mainly of African-Americans. After probing certain classmates about their conceptions that *urban culture* and *inner city people* never produced anything of value, they admitted not knowing anyone from the *inner city* and not knowing anything substantive about *urban culture* apart from what they saw on television. During one of these discussions I inquired as to the racial demographic of *inner city people* so we might have a more open and honest discussion. My classmates refused to answer. The purpose of my question was to challenge my classmate to see past easy stereotypes. Afterward, a fellow classmate was willing to discuss the high drug and crime rate in her own predominantly Caucasian hometown. Despite being genuinely disturbed by the fact that some of my classmates, had such narrow views of race and crime, I was pleased to see other students engaging in an open discussion about these topics.

One of the most interesting experiences I had occurred while giving a tour of the law school to a prospective African-American student. Neither the prospective student nor his family had seen an African-American student at the school. (I knew they had not because the other four African-American law students were in class). When his moth-

er made the connection that I was a law student, her face lit up like that of a child on Christmas day and she immediately hugged me. His father shook my hand for what to me seemed like a minute while smiling from ear to ear as if I were the bee's knees. During the tour, as we walked through the law school, my fellow first year students congratulated me for trying to bring in more African-American students. The most interesting part of the tour, however, was the end, when I tried to make one final pitch for the law school. I extolled the virtues of the school but at the end of the pitch I tried as best as I could to address what I thought was the "elephant" in the room, the monochromatic nature of the school. I told the prospective student that our school is like a family and the make-up of the class does not hinder a student's ability to learn the law. My last admonishment to the prospective student was that diversity takes many forms and he should not to let one deficiency affect his choice.

When I am by myself at school, I grapple with the concept of the white guy compliment. The white guy compliment (WGC) has many faces but essentially it is: "You are the whitest black guy I know;" "You are not like other black people"; or "You are more white than me." I know the WGC is meant to have positive connotations; however, it is a compliment I chafe at. It rubs me the wrong way because I do not like the implication that to be a "good" black guy is to be a white guy. Regardless of my trepidation toward the compliment I understand what my classmates mean. They mean I do not fit the

negative stereotypes about African-Americans. Unfortunately, being one of one in my class meant any WGC had to be directed toward me and because I heard the WGC so often, I was unable to suppress the inherent turmoil the compliment brings me. I have never been one to dwell long on emotional conflicts but the deluge of WGC caused me angst as I struggled with a number of questions. I wondered how to stay true to who I am as an individual and how to portray African-Americans in a more positive light; is it my burden to change the opinion of others concerning African-Americans and if it is my burden, to what lengths am I charged to go to defend African-Americans. These questions and others plagued me and to this day continue to plague me. I have not arrived at any answers and I do not think I will in the near future but I know this internal, and now external, conversation I am having about my place in society is making me a better person and hopefully will help others grappling with the same issues.

Even with these experiences I would still make SIU my choice for law school. I selected SIU because I have, for the majority of my life, lived in Cook County. Although I love my home town of Calumet City, I understand life in the shadow of Chicago is not the entire story of Illinois. I have been slowly making my way downstate by going to the University of Illinois Springfield and learning about Central Illinois. Southern Illinois University has given me the chance to learn about a people and culture I otherwise would never have known. While at SIU, I have be-

come friends with students from Columbia and Korea, learned about life in Alaska, and been utterly beguiled by Southern Illinois. Southern Illinois has shown me the beauty of the outdoors in Little Grand Canyon, the unyielding determination of General John A. Logan and his ultimatum during the Civil War, and the humanity of people who during times of distress pull together to help their neighbors.

I am the only African-American in my class and it is a fact I cannot change. I accepted that fact after meeting my entire class for the first time. We, as a country, benefit from a diverse legal system with attorneys able to relate to clients from all walks of life. Diversity for the sake of rankings and status is pointless, but diversity that endeavors to share the best of our humanity benefits us all. ■



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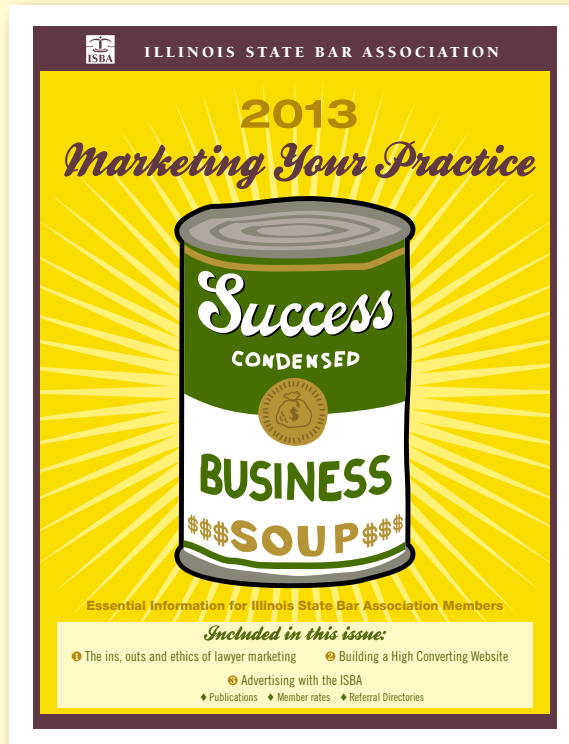


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Ramadan

By Amina Saeed, President, Muslim Bar Association of Chicago

June 28, 2014, will mark the beginning of Ramadan, a month-long holiday observed by Muslims. Legal professionals often interact with Muslims as employees, clients, or courtroom visitors and may not be aware of what Ramadan entails.

Ramadan is a time for spiritual renewal, a time for reflection about deeds done during the past year and an opportunity to break bad habits. Muslims are encouraged to spend as much time in worship as possible without sacrificing their daily responsibilities. The pangs of hunger felt during fasting are intended to remind the fasting person of the struggles and challenges of the poor and needy. For some, fasting also offers the opportunity to undergo an annual physical detoxification program to rejuvenate the mind and body. Special nightly prayers are intended to rejuvenate the spirit.

Ramadan is also a time to take a break from the hectic nature of the daily routine. Muslims spend more time with loved ones and give back to the community through service and charitable giving. They make special efforts to gather together for Iftaar (the time for breaking fast) with family and friends. Many will donate more of their time and money to charitable causes in Ramadan.

Illinois' Muslims have added another component to Ramadan. In 2009, the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago launched a campaign called Green Ramadan, to raise awareness about the environment. In 2011, the Illinois House of Representatives passed the Green Ramadan resolution, which designates the month of Ramadan as "a Green Month in the State of Illinois in order to promote awareness among faith communities about environmental issues, the reduction of carbon production, and the reduction of wasted water."

The following answers to frequently asked questions are intended to help legal professionals better prepare for meetings with Muslim clients and employees during Ramadan:

- Fasting in Ramadan is from pre-dawn to sunset every day of the month. Children, the elderly, those who are sick or traveling, and women who are pregnant, nursing or have their menstrual period are not required to fast. It is possible, therefore,

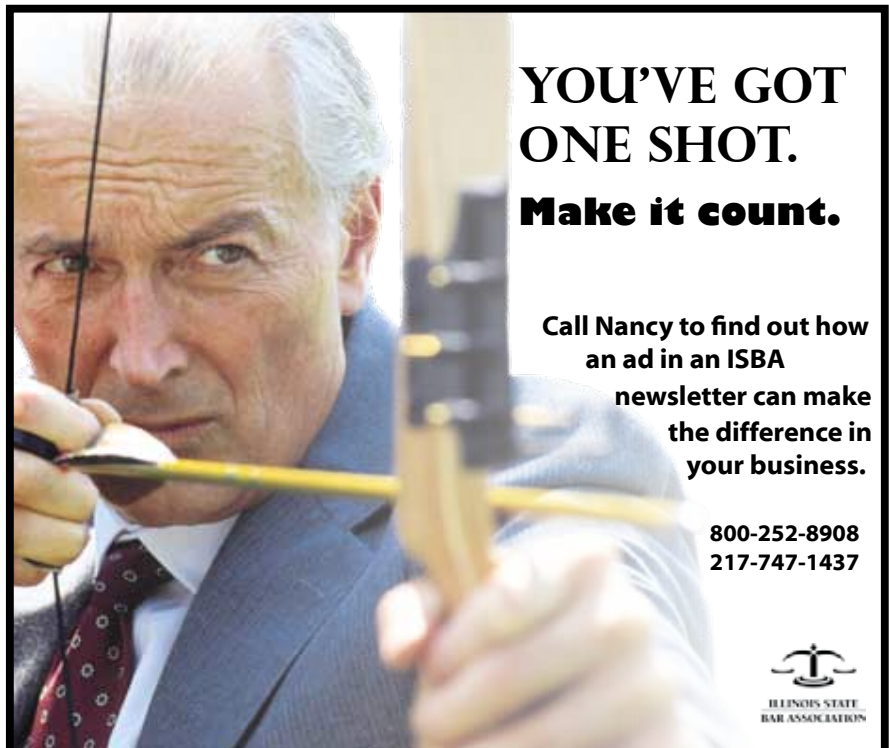
that you may see a Muslim person eating and drinking in Ramadan.

- All forms of food and drink are prohibited while fasting. Nothing may be consumed.
- Muslims may seek time off work during the last 10 days of Ramadan, considered the most intense period of worship by many.
- Ramadan is the ninth of twelve months in the lunar Islamic calendar. In a lunar calendar, each month begins with the sighting of the new crescent moon. In marked contrast to the solar calendar's 365 days, a lunar year is 354 days long. Consequently, each date on the lunar calendar falls about 10 to 11 days earlier, relative to the solar calendar, with each succeeding year. For instance, in the year 2004, Ramadan began around October 16, while in 2014, it is expected to begin on June 28, a change of more than 3 months in just a decade. Thus, Ramadan falls in different seasons in different years.
- Advances in technology allow astronomers to accurately predict the birth of the new moon, even if it is not visible in the night sky. Some Muslims accept this method (referred to as the calculation method) for identifying the beginning

and ending of religious holidays. The more conventional approach, however, mandates that the new moon be observed without artificial aids by at least two witnesses. The latter method means that a religious observance cannot begin until the moon has been sighted in the night sky. Two Muslim employees can legitimately request a different day off from each other depending on the method adopted to identify the beginning of the holiday.

- Ramadan ends with the Eid-ul-Fitr holiday. This is the most festive religious holiday of the year for Muslims. It typically begins with a morning congregational worship service, followed by a day full of family gatherings, exchange of Eid gifts, and, of course, lots of special holiday foods. Many Muslim legal professionals take the day off to observe the holiday. Be sure to bring your appetite if you are invited to an Eid party!
- Evening meetings and gatherings may be difficult for Muslims to manage in Ramadan. Fasting has no impact on meetings held during the daytime.

Happy Ramadan 2014! ■



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November

Tuesday, 11/5/13 – Webinar—Intro to Legal Research on Fastcase. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. CST.

Tuesday, 11/5/13- Live Webcast, ISBA Studio—Children and Trauma; A Guide for Attorneys. Presented by the ISBA Child Law Section. 11-12.

Tuesday, 11/5/13- Live Webcast, ISBA Studio—2013 Immigration Law Update—Changes which Affect Your Practice & Clients. Presented by the ISBA International & Immigration Law Section, ISBA Young Lawyers Division and the ISBA General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section. 1:00-2:00.

Thursday, 11/7/13 – Webinar—Advanced Tips for Enhanced Legal Research on Fastcase. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. CST.

Friday, 11/8/13- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Successfully Navigating Civil Litigation Evidence and Theory Involving Topics of Expert Testimony. Presented by the ISBA Civil Practice & Procedure Section. 8:50-4:00.

Thursday, 11/14/13- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—SETTLE IT!- Resolving Financial Family Law Conundrums. Presented by the ISBA Family Law Section and the ISBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee. 8-5.

Thursday, 11/14/13- Springfield, INB Conference Center—Drug Case Issues and Specialty Courts. Presented by the ISBA Criminal Justice Section. 9-4.

Friday, 11/15/13- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Collection Issues You Don't Know About...But Should. Presented by the ISBA Commercial Banking, Collections and Bankruptcy Section. 9-4:30.

Wednesday, 11/20/13 – Webinar—Introduction to Boolean (Keyword) Search. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. CST.

Friday, 11/22/13- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Drug Case Issues and Specialty Courts. Presented by the ISBA Criminal Justice Section. 9-4.

December

Thursday, 12/5/13- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Civility in the Courtroom. Presented by the ISBA Bench and Bar Section. 1-5.

Thursday, 12/12/13- Chicago, Sheraton Hotel (Midyear)—Speaking to Win: Building Effective Communication Skills. Master Series presented by the ISBA. 8:30-11:45.

Thursday, 12/12/13- Chicago, Sheraton Hotel (Midyear)—Legal Writing in the Smartphone Age. Master Series presented by the ISBA. 1:00-4:15.

January

Tuesday, 1/7/14- Webinar—Introduction to Fastcase Legal Research. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 4:00 Eastern.

Thursday, 1/9/14- Webinar—Advanced Tips to Fastcase Legal Research. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 4:00 Eastern.

Wednesday, 1/15/14- Webinar—Boolean (Keyword) Searches on Fastcase. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 4:00 Eastern.

February

Wednesday 2/5/14- Webinar—Introduction to Fastcase Legal Research. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 12:00 Eastern.

Friday, 2/7/14- Webinar—Advanced Tips to Fastcase Legal Research. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 12:00 Eastern.

Friday, 2/7/14- Bloomington-Normal, Marriott Hotel and Conference Center—Hot Topics in Agricultural Law- 2014. Presented by the ISBA Agricultural Law Section.

All Day.

Wednesday, 2/12/14- Webinar—Boolean (Keyword) Searches on Fastcase. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 12:00 Eastern.

Wednesday, 2/12/14- Chicago, ISBA Regional Office—Tort Law Back to Basics. Presented by the ISBA Tort Law Section. All Day.

Thursday, 2/27/14- East Peoria, Holiday Inn and Suites—SETTLE IT!- Resolving Financial Family Law Conundrums. Presented by the ISBA Family Law Section and the ISBA Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee. 8:00-5:00.

March

Tuesday, 3/4/14- Webinar—Introduction to Fastcase Legal Research. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 2:00 Eastern.

Thursday, 3/6/14- Webinar—Advanced Tips to Fastcase Legal Research. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 2:00 Eastern.

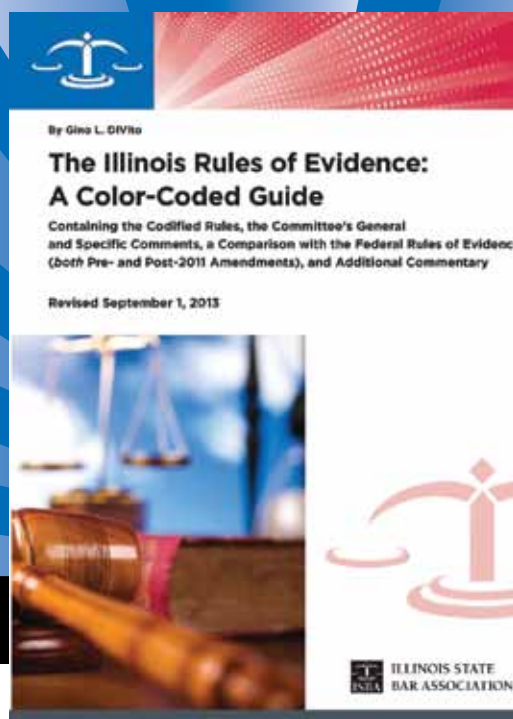
Thursday, 3/6- Friday, 3/7/14- Chicago, ITT Chicago-Kent School of Law—13th Annual Environmental Law Conference. Presented by the ISBA Environmental Law Section. 8:30-4:45 with reception from 4:45-6; 8:30-1:30.

Tuesday, 3/11/14- Webinar—Boolean (Keyword) Searches on Fastcase. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association – Complimentary to ISBA Members Only. 2:00 Eastern.

Tuesday, 3/25/14- Chicago, ISBA Chicago Regional Office—Master Series: The Cybersleuth's Guide to the Internet: Super Search Engine Strategies and Investigative Research. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association. All day.

Friday, 3/28/14- Chicago, ISBA Chicago Regional Office—Master Series: The Uniform Commercial Code Made Easy: A Groundbreaking Approach to Incorporating the UCC into Your Practice. Presented by the Illinois State Bar Association. All day. ■

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