

Focus on Diversity

For more information on items in this section, visit www.lsba.org/diversity.

Registration open for 2015 Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession

Registration is now open for the eighth annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession, set for Friday, March 6, at the New Orleans Marriott, 555 Canal St., New Orleans. The early registration price of \$65 will be in place through Feb. 16.

Highlighting this year's conclave, "Celebrating 50 Years of Civil Rights: Moving the Pendulum Forward," will be keynote speaker Kim M. Keenan, president and CEO of Minority Media & Telecom Council (MMTC), and the "Freedom Riders," a traveling exhibition developed by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in partnership with American Experience and funded through the

National Endowment for the Humanities.

CLE highlights include breakout sessions on substantive legal issues in the areas of LGBT and immigration; a diversity interactive facilitated workshop; and plenary sessions with moderated panel discussions in the areas of criminal law and civil rights/voting rights.

Panel members in the civil rights/voting rights session include A.P. Tureaud, Jr., the first African-American to enroll as an undergraduate student at Louisiana State University; Henry (Hank) James Thomas, one of the original 13 Freedom Riders; and Judge Bernice B. Donald of the U.S. 6th Circuit Court

of Appeals.

Other conclave speakers include: Judge Wendell L. Griffen, Angela A. Allen-Bell, Graham Bateman, Judge Roland L. Belsome, Jr., Kevin V. Boshea, Prof. Kareem U. Crayton, Prof. Gilda R. Daniels, Kathleen C. Gasparian, Ivan Torres Hidalgo Gato, Cathy Harris, Nicholas J. Hite, Prof. Hiroko Kusuda, Melanie C. Lockett, Sen. Edward R. Murray, Sheriff Newell D. Normand, Judge Kern A. Reese, Scott J. Spivey, Emily C. Trostle and Julie Wilensky.

To register online, to download a registration form, or for more information and sponsorship options, go to: www.lsba.org/diversity/diversityconclaveevent.aspx.

Nomination deadlines set for 2015 diversity-related awards

Nomination deadlines are set for three 2015 Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) diversity-related awards. The nomination deadline is Feb. 6 for the Guardian of Diversity Award. The nomination deadline is March 10 for the Human Rights Award and the Trailblazer Award.

To review award guidelines and to access nomination forms, go to: www.lsba.org/diversity/. For more information, email LSBA Member Outreach and Diversity Director Tricia R. Pierre at tricia.pierre@lsba.org.

Mark your calendars!

Check the LSBA's Diversity webpage for more information on the following events:

- ▶ **March 6, 2015 • Diversity Conclave**
Celebrating 50 years of Civil Rights:
Moving the Pendulum Forward
- ▶ **Friday, April 17, 2015**
Disability "Lunch & Learn" CLE

U.S. Attorneys to speak at free Feb. 19 CLE in Baton Rouge; online registration open

Three U.S. Attorneys — J. Walter Green with the Middle District of Louisiana, Stephanie A. Finley with the Western District of Louisiana and Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. with the Eastern District of Louisiana — are the featured speakers at a free diversity-related CLE program scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 19, in Baton Rouge.

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Diversity Committee and the LSBA Young Lawyers Division's Diversity Committee are hosting the CLE, "Inspiring a New

Generation of Civil Rights Leaders," from 3-4 p.m. in the Baton Rouge office of Adams and Reese, L.L.P., Chase North Tower, Ste. 1900, 450 Laurel St., Baton Rouge. A networking reception will follow the CLE.

Adams and Reese, L.L.P., is sponsoring the program. Organizers are applying for 1 hour of CLE credit.

For more information go to: www.lsba.org/CLE. Or email LSBA Member Outreach and Diversity Executive Secretary Eve Goudeau at eve.goudeau@lsba.org.

8TH ANNUAL CONCLAVE ON DIVERSITY IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION
Celebrating 50 Years of Civil Rights
MOVING THE PENDULUM FORWARD
CIVIL RIGHTS
MARCH 6, 2015 ★ NEW ORLEANS MARRIOTT
WWW.LSBA.ORG/DIVERSITY

The banner features a collage of historical and contemporary images related to civil rights, including a man in a suit, a woman in a dress, and a group of people. The text is prominently displayed in a bold, serif font.



Two Legal Incubator Programs Assist in Matching Attorneys with Clients Most Needing Legal Help

Louisiana Civil Justice Center's Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) Program

By Amy E. Duncan

The Louisiana Civil Justice Center,¹ in partnership with the Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA), has created and developed the Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) legal incubator program. The program provides new attorneys with the resources and educational tools they need to build viable and sustainable solo and small law practices that offer affordable legal services to those with unmet legal needs who may not otherwise qualify for free legal aid. The participating attorneys are supported in reaching these goals through resources such as mentoring, CLEs, practice management training, networking and referrals.

Launched in April 2014, this two-year program is currently comprised of four active Fellows — James Graham, Robin Griffin, Nicholas Hite and Betty Maury — as well as eight practitioner network participants. Each of the LIFT Fellows has a solo practice focused on innovative methods for delivering legal services to at-need populations.

Graham's law firm focuses on building medical-legal partnerships with health service providers to address health-harming legal needs that disproportionately affect people living in poverty. Griffin's firm works closely with medical providers and educators to ensure that every child with a mental or physical disability has the resources he/she needs to lead a happy and healthy life. Hite opened Hite Law Group in May 2014 and is focused on serving the unique needs of the LGBTQ community. Maury opened a family law practice and works closely with her clients to provide flat fees and reasonable repayment plans, ensuring that families in Greater New Orleans and surrounding areas can obtain the legal representation and services they need.

"[B]eing a LIFT Fellow has meant

going from zero to sixty in a matter of months. As a Fellow, I've had the support, encouragement and resources to hang my shingle, acquire clients, and become known as a valuable resource within my community," Hite said.

"I've expanded my network and met other like-minded attorneys — all newly-admitted, all going solo from scratch, and all who see the benefit of public interest work. I can ask them for help or offer them help," Maury said.

The LIFT program has impacted the practices of the attorneys, and, through them, the community as a whole. In taking countless pro bono cases, conducting free legal seminars open to the public, and staffing legal information booths at major New Orleans events, the LIFT Fellows and network participants have had a direct impact on improving access to justice. The LIFT program strives to form partnerships with other community organizations and legal services providers to increase the program's impact on the community. For instance, LIFT recently formed a partnership with Southeast Louisiana Legal Services and the New Orleans Family Justice Center, in which three LIFT participants receive reduced-rate office space, resources and extensive training to provide pro bono representation to survivors of domestic violence.

The attorneys also have been actively involved in LSBA events and committees that work to serve the profession and the public. In addition to attending LSBA training and educational seminars, the participants have volunteered to work on subcommittees, including those within the Diversity Committee² and the Access to Justice Self-Represented Litigant Subcommittee.³ Within these groups, the LIFT Fellows assist in finding ways to serve the public and break down barriers

in the legal system for persons of diverse backgrounds as well as those unable to afford legal representation.

Jonathan Rhodes, executive director of the Louisiana Civil Justice Center and projects counsel for the LSBA Access to Justice Department, explained, "The LIFT program is not only about helping young attorneys gain the resources and experience they need to build sustainable solo practices, but mainly to provide access to affordable legal services to those who are most in need of such." Although the program is currently based in New Orleans, Rhodes said the plan is to launch similar legal incubator projects statewide.

For more information on the program, go to www.laciviljustice.org or email Amy E. Duncan at amy.duncan@laciviljustice.org.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Louisiana Civil Justice Center (LCJC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides legal services to low-income, elderly and disaster-affected people in Louisiana. Go to: www.laciviljustice.org.

2. The goal of the Diversity Committee is to identify barriers to the attainment of full and meaningful representation and participation in the legal profession by people of diverse backgrounds. *Diversity Committee*, Louisiana State Bar Association (last visited Dec. 15, 2014), <https://www.lsba.org/Diversity/DiversityCommittee.aspx>.

3. The goal of the Self-Represented Litigant Subcommittee is to foster support for self-represented litigants by working with the judiciary, justice community stakeholders, the pro bono community, clerks of court, statewide technology personnel and other interested parties on implementation of locally appropriate initiatives. *Access to Justice Subcommittees*, Louisiana State Bar Association (last visited Dec. 15, 2014), www.lsba.org/ATJ/ATJSubcommittees.aspx.

Amy E. Duncan is program director/staff attorney for the Louisiana Civil Justice Center. She can be reached by email at amy.duncan@laciviljustice.org.

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Loyola University College of Law Incubator Program

By Davida Finger

Loyola University New Orleans College of Law has launched a new initiative — the Incubator Program for recent Loyola law graduates working in a social justice-oriented, solo practice in the Greater New Orleans area. The program supports self-employed Loyola Law School graduates (zero-three years in practice) while addressing, through a pro bono requirement, the need for increased affordable legal services for low-income and moderate-means people.

Incubator program participants receive free office space in the Stuart H. Smith Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice to independently operate their own law firms. The first year of the two-year pilot program runs from January 2015 through December 2015 and the following participants were selected — Lori Noto Alphonso, class of 2012; Jonah A. Freedman, class of 2014; Anna Lellelid, class of 2013; Nadia G. Madary, class of 2013; and Peter D. Russell, class of 2014.

A key component of Loyola’s incubator program is training new attorneys who are committed to addressing the unmet legal needs of low-income and moderate-means people while building law practices that will continue to serve those populations over time. The program includes a requirement that at least a quarter of participants’ time be spent on cases that fall into the “justice gap,” those who are at or below 200 percent of the poverty line. Participants receive a modest stipend to support the year of pro bono work.

With law faculty experience and a strong alumni base from which to draw mentors and advisors, Loyola Law School is well placed to provide best practices training to new lawyers. In partnership with the Office of Skills and Experiential

Learning, the incubator program will provide regular skills courses to participants to support development of the solo practice/social justice path including instruction in law practice management, ethics and professionalism. Other program features include pro bono case referrals, mentorship, and access to a variety of resources including research and case management tools.

Loyola’s incubator program is part of a growing trend among law schools to offer new opportunities to graduates.¹ The College of Law was one of just seven programs from around the country to receive a grant for the incubator program from the American Bar Association’s Legal Access Job Corp initiative for “innovative ways to address the legal needs of poor or moderate-income individuals.”²

The demand from graduates is great; an increasing number of law graduates are interested in combining social justice and solo practice especially in the context of challenging employment rates. The

incubator program will go a long way toward teaching law graduates while providing a critical service in the local community for low- and middle-income people who cannot otherwise afford attorneys and access to justice.

For more information, go to: www.loyno.edu/lawclinic/incubator-program.

FOOTNOTES

1. See generally, Luz Herrera, “Training Lawyer-Entrepreneurs,” 89 Denver Univ. Law Rev. 887 (2012); see also, Fred Rooney and Justin Steele, “Exporting the Legal Incubator: A Conversation with Fred Rooney,” 9 U. Mass. L. Rev. 108 (2014).

2. American Bar Association, “ABA Announces Catalyst Grant Recipients for Its Legal Access Job Corp,” www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/abanews-archives/2014/07/aba_announces_catalyst.html?sc8cid=14DCA347, July 14, 2014. For a directory of Incubator/Residency Programs, see ABA, www.americanbar.org/groups/delivery_legal_services/initiatives_awards/program_main.html.

Davida Finger is an associate clinical professor and Incubator Program director at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. She can be contacted at (504)861-5596 or by email at dfinger@loyno.edu.

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