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June 11, 2010

Attorneys, Judges, Law Firms, Legal Society Receive 2010 LSBA's President's Awards

NEW ORLEANS—Five Louisiana attorneys, two judges, two law firms and the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. are the recipients of 2010 Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) President's Awards. The awards were presented June 11 by 2009-10 LSBA President Kim M. Boyle during the LSBA's Annual Meeting in Florida.

The 2010 award recipients are attorney **Julie J. Baxter** of Baton Rouge; **Hon. Tiffany Gautier Chase** of New Orleans; attorney **Barry H. Grodsky** of New Orleans; attorney **Chauntis T. Jenkins** of New Orleans; attorney **Wayne J. Lee** of New Orleans; attorney **Marta-Ann Schnabel** of New Orleans; **Hon. Fredericka Homberg Wicker** of Gretna; the law firm of **Jones, Walker, Waechter, Poitevent, Carrère & Denègre, L.L.P.**, with special recognition to **R. Christian Johnsen** in the Washington, D.C., office; the law firm of **Stanley, Reuter, Ross, Thornton & Alford, L.L.C.**, with special recognition to **Richard C. Stanley** in the New Orleans office; and the Louisiana-based **Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.**

Recipients' profiles follow.

• **Julie J. Baxter**

Julie J. Baxter is recognized for her exemplary work as chair of the LSBA's Public Information Committee. She practices law at the *Rhorer Law Firm* in Baton Rouge, handling a variety of trial work and civil litigation, ranging from plaintiffs' personal injury, products liability, legal and medical malpractice claims to defending business contract disputes and ethics complaints. She received her law degree in 2005 from Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, first earning her BA degree in broadcast journalism.

Having grown up in South Africa, she spent more than a decade as a journalist reporting radio and television news in Louisiana — covering the Louisiana Legislature, statewide politics, elections and high-profile Louisiana criminal trials. In 2001, she was awarded the regional Edward R. Murrow Award for Investigative Reporting in Television while at WAFB-TV in Baton Rouge, where she anchored the city's top-rated weekend newscasts and where she still appears as a legal and political analyst.

Baxter has chaired the Public Information Committee for the past two years and serves on the LSBA's Legislation Committee. She taught several semesters as an adjunct media law professor at the LSU Manship School of Mass Communication.

Named a member of the 2009 Louisiana Leadership Class by the Council for a Better Louisiana, she serves as a board member for the Baton Rouge-Capital City Rotary Club (president); The ARC Baton Rouge; Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge; Parkview Baptist School (treasurer); BraveHeart Children in Need; International Hospitality Foundation (serving international students at LSU); and the Baton Rouge Blues Foundation.

• **Hon. Tiffany Gautier Chase**

Hon. Tiffany Gautier Chase is recognized for her exemplary work as co-chair of the LSBA's Summer School for Lawyers. She was elected to Orleans Parish Civil District Court, Division A, in May 2007. She received her BA degree in philosophy from Loyola University and her JD degree from Loyola University School of Law. She began her legal career as a law clerk at the Louisiana Supreme Court. She first served as a staff attorney and then as a research attorney for Hon. Chet D. Traylor. She spent several years as an associate with the law firm of Martzell & Bickford, where she practiced primarily in the areas of asbestos litigation and oil and gas.

In addition to her work with the LSBA Summer School, Judge Chase is a member of the LSBA's Access to Justice Committee and was appointed by the Louisiana Supreme Court to serve on the Court Security Committee. She also is a member of the American Bar Association, the American Judges' Association, the National Conference for Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the New Orleans Bar Association. She is a former member of the *Louisiana Bar Journal* Editorial Board, a former board member of the New Orleans Council on Aging, a former member of Loyola University's Alumni Board and a former board member of the Carrollton Hollygrove Senior Citizens Center. She also has served as a presenter at several continuing legal education programs for both lawyers and judges.

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• **Barry H. Grodsky**

Barry H. Grodsky is recognized for his exemplary work as chair of the LSBA's Committee on the Profession. He is a partner with the Taggart Morton, L.L.C., law firm, practicing in the areas of banking law, bankruptcy and creditor's rights. He received a degree in business administration from The University of Texas and his law degree from Tulane University Law School. Before entering practice, he served internships with U.S. Congressman Billy Tauzin and federal Judge Morey L. Sear and a judicial clerkship for state Judge Steven R. Plotkin. He is a frequent lecturer on bankruptcy law, creditor's rights and professionalism, and taught undergraduate courses at Tulane University for more than 20 years, receiving a Teacher Recognition Award and being named a Faculty Fellow.

He has served on the Committee on the Profession for several years, chairing the committee since 2008. He has actively participated in all four of the law school professionalism orientation programs and in the new mentoring program. He assisted in creating and implementing the law school bar admission and education program; this program received a 2009 American Bar Association E. Smythe Gambrell Award for Professionalism.

Grodsky has served on the LSBA's Continuing Legal Education Committee and participates on the fee arbitration panel. He is currently a member of the Louisiana Supreme Court Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Perception of the Judiciary. He was elected to the LSBA's Board of Governors for a three-year term, beginning in June 2010, and was a recipient of the 2008 LSBA President's Award.

• **Chauntis T. Jenkins**

Chauntis T. Jenkins is recognized for her exemplary work as chair of the LSBA's third annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession. She is a partner in the law firm of Porteous, Hainkel & Johnson, L.L.P. She has developed an extensive litigation practice in insurance law, with an emphasis in insurance defense, coverage disputes, first-party extra contractual claims, and special investigation litigation in state and federal court. She is a frequent speaker at continuing legal education and professional development seminars organized by the American Bar Association throughout the country.

Jenkins is a graduate of Southern University Law Center, where she was a member of the *Law Review*. She received her undergraduate degree from Loyola University in New Orleans. She is a member of the New Orleans Bar Association, the Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc., the Defense Research Institute, the National Bar Association and the Louisiana Association of Black Women Attorneys.

• **Wayne J. Lee**

Wayne J. Lee is recognized for his exemplary work as co-chair of the LSBA's Diversity Committee. He is a member in the firm of Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann, L.L.C., chairing the Management Committee. His practice focuses on insurance and insurance class-action lawsuits. He has experience handling coverage issues, bad faith claims, mold claims, regulatory issues and class-action claims.

He was admitted to the Louisiana Bar in 1974. He received his law degree in 1974 from Tulane University Law School (Order of the Coif and a member of the *Tulane Law Review* board of editors, 1972-74). He received his undergraduate degree from Tulane in 1971.

Lee served as LSBA president in 2003-04. He has held several positions within the LSBA and received two prior President's Awards. He was a member of the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates in 2003-05 and is a former member of the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession.

He chaired the board of the Audubon Nature Institute, Kingsley House and the Greater New Orleans Foundation. He currently serves on the Board of Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund and is a member of the board of directors for Associated Catholic Charities.

In 1994, Lee was selected as a Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers and has been named to *The Best Lawyers in America* (business litigation) and to *Chambers U.S.A. America's Leading Lawyers for Business* (general commercial litigation). He received the Louisiana Bar Foundation's Distinguished Attorney Award in 2006.

• **Marta-Ann Schnabel**

Marta-Ann Schnabel is recognized for her overall service to the LSBA. She is a member of the firm O'Bryon & Schnabel, P.L.C. In her 25-plus years of practice, she has represented clients in business and commercial insurance litigation involving issues such as construction, products liability, professional malpractice and employment matters.

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She served as LSBA president in 2006-07 and as New Orleans Bar Association president in 1995. Her contributions to the LSBA's Access to Justice (ATJ) program span her entire legal career and include efforts at the local, state and national levels. She has served on the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services and as an officer and board member of the New Orleans Legal Aid Bureau for nearly 10 years. She also served as treasurer and a board member of the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation.

From 1996-98, Schnabel served as a member of the Supreme Court Task Force on Legal Services. A longtime member and current chair of the LSBA's ATJ Committee, she formed an ATJ Executive Committee to examine how the LSBA can best facilitate delivery of legal services to the indigent.

She serves as president of the Louisiana Civil Justice Center, a consumer legal assistance hotline formed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Her efforts on behalf of ATJ in 2004 merited her second President's Award.

• **Hon. Fredericka Homberg Wicker**

Hon. Fredericka Homberg Wicker is recognized for her exemplary work as co-chair of the LSBA's Diversity Committee. She is a 1977 graduate of Tulane Law School. After practicing law for 20 years as both a state and federal prosecutor and as a civil litigator, she joined the 24th Judicial District Court (JDC) in 1997. She served as a member of the 24th JDC's management team and administered the I CAN Drug Court and the Domestic Early Intervention Triage Program. She also served as president of the Louisiana District Judges Association.

In February 2006, Judge Wicker joined the Louisiana 5th Circuit Court of Appeal.

In addition to co-chairing the Diversity Committee, she is a member of the LSBA's Continuing Legal Education Committee and is a co-chair of the Summer School for Lawyers and Judges as well as the Criminal Justice Summit. She is a member of the Louisiana Judicial College Board of Governors, coaches the Louise S. McGehee School mock trial team and serves on the board of directors of Family Services of Greater New Orleans. She is currently enrolled in the National Judicial College Masters Program, where she is actively pursuing a Master of Judicial Studies degree.

• **Jones, Walker, Waechter, Poitevent, Carrère & Denègre, L.L.P., and R. Christian Johnsen**

The firm of Jones, Walker, Waechter, Poitevent, Carrère & Denègre, L.L.P., and R. Christian Johnsen, a partner in the Washington, D.C., office, are recognized for assistance with the American Bar Association Day in Washington, D.C.

Jones Walker serves local, regional, national and international business interests with nearly 300 attorneys in Alabama, Arizona, the District of Columbia, Florida, Louisiana and Texas. Jones Walker's attorneys are licensed to practice in multiple states and the District of Columbia, have international experience in several countries, are featured as speakers for professional, trade and business seminars, and serve as instructors for law school courses. The firm's attorneys dedicate time, talent and financial resources to civic, charitable and professional organizations, and provide a broad range of *pro bono* services to individuals and organizations. Johnsen, a partner in the firm's Government Relations Practice Group and a member of its board of directors, received his BS degree in commerce from the University of Virginia in 1982 and his JD degree, *cum laude*, from Tulane University Law School in 1985. He was admitted to practice in Louisiana in 1985 and has worked with Jones Walker since entering practice.

• **Stanley, Reuter, Ross, Thornton & Alford, L.L.C., and Richard C. Stanley**

The firm of Stanley, Reuter, Ross, Thornton & Alford, L.L.C., and member Richard C. Stanley are recognized for their ongoing assistance to the LSBA.

The firm, with offices in New Orleans and Alexandria, has a diverse practice, with attorneys handling cases in commercial litigation, the representation of attorneys and law firms in disciplinary and organizational matters, appellate advocacy, intellectual property litigation, construction law and other areas.

Stanley, a member in the firm's New Orleans office, received his BA degree, *summa cum laude*, from Louisiana State University in 1980 and his JD degree, *cum laude*, from Harvard Law School in 1983. He currently serves as an adjunct professor of law on the faculty of Tulane University Law School.

He is the chair of both the LSBA's Rules of Professional Conduct Committee and the Committee on Codes of Lawyer and Judicial Conduct. He also is a member of the LSBA Ethics 2000 Committee and the Louisiana Supreme Court Committee on Rules Regarding Financial Assistance to Clients.

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- **Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.**

The Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc., and its many chapters statewide are being recognized for years of service to the legal profession.

The Society was founded on May 13, 1957, by Earl J. Amedee, Israel M. Augustine, Louis Berry, Lionel Collins, Robert F. Collins, Nils R. Douglas, Norman C. Francis, Benjamin J. Johnson, Alvin Jones, Vanue B. LaCour, Ernest N. Morial, Justice Revius O. Ortique, Jr., J.T. Powell, James Smith, A.P. Tureaud, Freddie Warren and Lawrence Wheeler to combat the racial injustices and inequalities that existed in the 1950s.

The Society is named in honor of Louis André Martinet, the first African-American graduate of Straight University Law School (now Dillard University) in 1876. A politician, lawyer, educator, activist, journalist, medical doctor and notary, Martinet was a key figure in the civil rights activities surrounding the end of Reconstruction. In 1889, he began publishing the *Daily Crusader*, a newspaper chronicling the struggle for civil rights.

A.P. Tureaud was elected the first president of the statewide organization. The Society's objectives are to encourage interchange of ideas, promote legal scholarship, advance the science of jurisprudence, promote the administration of justice, uphold the order and ethics of the courts and the profession of law, and promote the welfare of the legal profession in Louisiana.

The Louisiana State Bar Association assists its more than 21,000 members in the practice of law. The statewide association, as part of its multi-faceted mission, promotes and maintains access to justice initiatives for the state's residents, assists the Louisiana Supreme Court in its regulation of the practice of law, upholds the honor of the courts and the profession, and supports programs that increase public understanding of and respect for the law.

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