

# Focus on Diversity

For more information on items in this special section, contact Louisiana State Bar Association Director of Member Outreach and Diversity Kelly McNeil Legier, (504)619-0129, (800)421-5722, ext. 129, or email [kelly.legier@lsba.org](mailto:kelly.legier@lsba.org).

## 24th Annual Minority Job Fair: employer registration

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Minority Involvement Section is presenting its 24th annual Minority Job Fair from 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 18, at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Baton Rouge. The deadline is June 22 for employers interested in formal interviews during the fair.

Employers wanting to informally visit with students at an information table or to collect résumés without attending the fair have until Aug. 13 to register.

The fair offers employers the opportunity to compress into a single day statewide interviewing of talented students and recent graduates with diverse backgrounds from area law schools. The event also includes a Diversity Networking Lunch.

To register, call Sonjanita Jordan at (504)619-0115 or log onto: <https://law-lsba-csm.symplicity.com/employers>.

The fair includes sponsorship opportunities at the Platinum (\$1,000), Gold (\$500) and Silver (\$250) level. Sponsors will be acknowledged on the LSBA website and in publications, including the *Louisiana Bar Journal*, *Louisiana Bar Today* and *Bar Briefs*. Signs at the fair will identify sponsors by level.

For information on sponsorship levels, contact Christine A. Richard, [crichard@lsba.org](mailto:crichard@lsba.org), (504)619-0105; or Kelly McNeil Legier, [kelly.legier@lsba.org](mailto:kelly.legier@lsba.org), (504)619-0129. To ensure proper recognition on signage and in publications, sponsors should respond with commitments by July 15.

### SAVE THE DATES!

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

- ▶ Oct. 11 - Disabilities Summit, Baton Rouge
- ▶ Nov. 16 - Superwomen CLE, Baton Rouge
- ▶ March 1, 2013 - Sixth Annual Conclave on Diversity, Baton Rouge

## in the SPOT LIGHT

### Baton Rouge Bar Association

The Baton Rouge Bar Association (BRBA) strives to bring diverse perspectives, experiences, backgrounds, talents and interests to the practice of law and the administration of justice through its leadership, membership and community outreach.

The BRBA is proud of the varied composition of its BRBA board of directors, Young Lawyers Section and committee/section leadership in race, ethnicity, gender, practice area, firm size and faith.

The BRBA has a long history of working with the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society and the Baton Rouge Association of Women Attorneys. By holding annual joint meetings and by cross-sponsoring each others' programs or events, the BRBA has fostered invaluable diverse relationships. By holding seminars such as our Cultural Competence CLE, taught by Southern University Law Center law Professor Angela Allen-Bell, the BRBA hopes to convey the importance of diversity to its membership. In addition, the BRBA has sponsored past Louisiana State Bar Association diversity conclaves.

The BRBA weaves this thread of diversity into its work with the public and younger generations through the Baton Rouge Bar Foundation's pipeline programs, including the Junior Partners Academy (JPA), Teen Court of Greater Baton Rouge and mock trial competitions.

Through the JPA program, BRBA members and law students volunteer to impact Dalton Elementary students by



Members of the Baton Rouge Bar Association's 2012 board of directors are, seated from left, Jeanne C. Comeaux; Gail S. Stephenson, president; Amy C. Lambert; and Preston J. Castille Jr., immediate past president. Standing from left, Robert J. (Bubby) Burns, Jr., secretary; Kyle A. Ferachi; Darrel J. Papillion, treasurer; Michael S. Walsh, president-elect; and Shelton Dennis Blunt.

presenting them with interactive lessons in law. With each monthly classroom presentation given by this diverse group of lawyers and judges, the students realize that people from their inner-city neighborhood can grow up to be respected professionals. The children are encouraged to follow their own professional dreams.

The BRBF Teen Court program, a diversionary program for teens in trouble with the law, provides high school students the opportunity to volunteer on a peer-to-peer level and to see how the criminal justice system works.

In addition, the BRBF organizes the annual Region III High School Mock Trial Competition, allowing our membership to impact students from several parishes in the capacity of attorney coaches, timekeepers or judges.

## Shadowing employers needed for Suit Up Program

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA), in partnership with the Just the Beginning Foundation, is hosting its second annual Suit Up for the Future High School Legal Institute and Internship Program for 15 rising high school juniors and seniors interested in the legal profession. Students will participate in the three-week program from June 11-29 at the Louisiana Bar Center and in participating New Orleans area firms, agencies and courts.

The program will consist of one week of lectures with law school professors, practicing lawyers and law students and several days of shadowing with attorneys and judges in local law firms, agencies and courts. Students also will have the opportunity to meet attorneys and judges during field trips to New Orleans area courts and other legal venues, as well as during lunchtime lectures and panel discussions. The program will culminate in oral arguments by the student participants to federal and/or state judges.

The LSBA is looking for law firms, courts and law departments in the New Orleans metropolitan area that can assist the program by allowing students to visit with them for one to three days (June 20, 21 and/or 22) from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. During part of the Suit Up Program, students will shadow attorneys and judges in their offices and during proceedings, where appropriate, to see firsthand the duties and responsibilities of attorneys and judges. The LSBA is not asking the volunteers to entertain or create busy work for these students; the students will have memoranda and oral arguments to prepare regarding legal issues in a Suit Up mock fact pattern.

Among the responsibilities of attorneys and judges allowing the student shadows:

- ▶ to attend the welcome networking lunch reception;
- ▶ to give the student a tour of your office (including departments, if applicable, and an explanation of the duties of support staff);
- ▶ to explain (and have other attorneys/judges explain, if applicable) to the student what you do on a daily basis, why you went to law school, how you came to practice where you are, advice you have for the student regarding what he/she should or shouldn't do as he/she prepares for college and law school;
- ▶ to take the student to lunch (or have

someone in the office take the student to lunch) for the days that you are allowing the shadowing;

▶ to allow the student to accompany you to a deposition, hearing or proceeding (appropriate for a high school junior or senior);

▶ to provide a desk or empty office for the student to work on the Suit Up problem; and

▶ to be available to answer questions that the student may have about the Suit Up project.

Attorneys and judges are encouraged to attend the oral arguments on June 29 in the United States federal building (500 Poydras St., New Orleans) to support the students. If you are interested in allowing a high school student shadow in your office on June 20, 21 and/or 22, contact Kelly McNeil Legier, (504)619-0129 or email [kelly.legier@lsba.org](mailto:kelly.legier@lsba.org).

## Employers may still contact law students for summer internships

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Minority Involvement Section is still offering employers an opportunity to review résumés of law students interested in free or modestly-paid internships during all or part of the summer. The section is offering this service as part of the "virtual" Minority Legal Internship Fair.

Employers who are interested in receiving résumés should contact LSBA Member Outreach and Diversity Director Kelly McNeil Legier at (504)619-0129 or email [kelly.legier@lsba.org](mailto:kelly.legier@lsba.org).



### "Law Firm Alliances: Are They the Answer to the Corporate Diversity Challenge?"

By Clarence Roby, Jr.

*The article was originally published in the May 2010 issue of For the Defense, a DRI publication. Referenced with permission.*

With mixed results so far, a new partnership trend has developed between majority- and minority-owned firms. It has been said that legal excellence knows no color or gender: it only knows results. However, this saying has not born out in reality in the experiences of many minority lawyers throughout the country.

Today, majority firms continue to grapple with hiring, retention and promotion of minority lawyers. Minority lawyers also grapple with securing jobs, feeling a part of the majority firm and receiving proper, substantive work, recognition for their achievements and compensation commensurate with their performance. As a result, many minority lawyers become disenchanting and leave majority-owned firms to start their own businesses.

Given the difficulties that law firms face in meeting the diversity challenge, a new trend has been developing around the country. Majority-owned firms have been partnering with minority-owned firms on individual

matters. This arrangement has had mixed results. Generally, minority lawyers have felt that the majority firms have benefited the most from these arrangements.

The trend now appears to have started to shift. When law firms have developed exclusive partnerships in which two firms plot their business development efforts together, both minority- and majority-owned firms, in many instances, have benefited. This partnership trend seems to have developed as a result of corporate priorities: corporations have shifted work assignments to minority-owned firms rather than assigning work to traditional, majority-owned firms.

*To read the full article, go to: [http://dritoday.org/articles/2010/05\\_May/FTD-1005-Roby.pdf](http://dritoday.org/articles/2010/05_May/FTD-1005-Roby.pdf).*

*Clarence Roby, Jr. is the proprietary of the Law Firm of Clarence Roby, Jr., a full-service firm that provides legal representation in multiple areas on behalf of individuals and corporations. He represents numerous high-profile figures, including political figures and law enforcement personnel charged in both state and federal court with crimes. Roby has served on the Louisiana Supreme Court's Mandatory CLE Committee and the Juvenile Justice Reform Committee. He also is a member of DRI's Diversity Committee.*