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June 2011

## ALLIANCE OF BLACK WOMEN ATTORNEYS NEWSLETTER

### Message From the President

Greetings Alliance Members,

It has been my pleasure to serve the Alliance of Black Women Attorneys (the "Alliance") as President during the 2010-2011 term. My term has ended another good year for the Alliance, which could not have been accomplished without the assistance of the 2010-2011 Executive Board.

I would especially like to thank Kay N. Harding, Monifa B. Coaxum, Tamiya Wilkes, Marja Plater and Taren Stanton for being an outstanding Executive Board. Their unwavering commitment to the organization and their diligence in planning programs for the membership were greatly appreciated. In an effort to continue to enhance the Alliance's visibility within the legal community, as well as provide members with an opportunity to network with other legal organizations, throughout the year we worked to increase our partnership with various legal organizations to provide our membership with various programs. I additionally would like to thank Ms. Coaxum for also serving as our judicial committee chair and ensuring that our judicial interviews ran smoothly.

The 2011-2012 term will begin July 1, 2011. Ms. Harding and her executive board have already started planning various events and programs for the membership. I would again encourage each of our members to pay your dues and continue to come out and support the Alliance's events. The first official event of the new year will be the annual new admittees reception on Thursday, July 28, 2011 at the Clarence Mitchell Courthouse. We are honoring new admittees to the Maryland State Bar. The event is being co-sponsored by the Monumental City Bar Association ("Monumental"). We need your support. Our organization is only as strong and effective as our membership.

We have been given the task to continue the vision of our founders and support the interests of our community. I look forward to seeing you at Alliance sponsored events. In addition, I look forward to seeing many of you at the National Bar Association's 86th Annual Convention, which will be held in Baltimore July 31-August 4, 2011.

Our history requires it, Our legacy demands it.

Savonne L. Ferguson, Esquire

#### **2010-2011 EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Savonne L. Ferguson  
President

Kay N. Harding  
President Elect

Monifa B. Coaxum  
Treasurer

Tamiya Wilkes  
Corresponding Secretary

Marja Plater  
Recording Secretary

Taren Stanton  
Member At Large

## Baltimore Scholars Brunch

In January, the Alliance’s Executive Board hosted a brunch for eight students participating in the University of Baltimore School of Law’s Baltimore Scholars Program. The Baltimore Scholars Program is a unique collaboration between the University of Baltimore School of Law and Maryland’s four historically black colleges and universities (“HBCUs”). The purpose of the program is to increase diversity in the legal profession, allowing college students to explore and develop their interest in studying the law while improving their analytical and writing skills. Those selected from the four HBCUs to participate in the program spent a week at the University of Baltimore School of Law attending classes, and meeting with professors and legal practitioners throughout the Baltimore community.

To continue the Alliance’s efforts of encouraging African-Americans to attend law school and pursue various careers within the legal profession, the Alliance’s Executive Board held the brunch at the home of Professor F. Michael Higginbotham to expose the Baltimore Scholars to attorneys that represent the diverse range of career opportunities available within the legal arena. Special thank you to Professor Higginbotham for hosting the event!

## “So You Want to Be a Judge”

*A Panel/Seminar on the Application, Interview and Recommendation Process for Judicial Appointments in the State of Maryland*



In January, the Alliance of Black Women Attorneys and the Monumental City Bar Association presented a judicial panel to provide their members with insights on the judicial application process in the State of Maryland. Panelists included Judge Kendra Y. Ausby, Associate Judge, Circuit Court for Baltimore City; Judge Videtta A. Brown, Associate Judge, Circuit Court for Baltimore City; Dana P. Moore, Esq. and Kenneth W. Ravenell, Esq., Members of Maryland’s Trial Court Judicial Nominating Commission (14th Commission District – Baltimore City); Nicole Barmore, Esq., Chair of Monumental’s Judicial Selections Committee; and Monifa B. Coaxum, Esq., Chair of the Alliance’s Judicial Committee.

Thank you to all the panelists for providing our interested members with very insightful and useful information with respect to the judicial nomination process.

## The Alliance Celebrates Black History Month Through Community Service

In February, for Black History Month, the Alliance partnered again with the Young Women in Action Girls Mentoring Program (YWIA) through Ms. Denise Parker. YWIA is a multifaceted approach to mentor girls, in select Baltimore City middle schools and high schools, who are at-risk for skipping school, dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, suspensions, expulsions, and getting in trouble with the law.

In celebration of black history month the Alliance held a panel discussion with a select group of young women that are involved in YWIA. The major focus of the discussion was geared towards college preparation, but we also touched upon our experiences in the legal profession, general life skills, and encouraging positive self-esteem. The young women were enthusiastic and participated in a spirited discussion. It was a very enriching and fulfilling experience for both our members and the young women who participated.

We would like to thank all of our members for taking the time to come and share their knowledge and experiences with these young women. Also, the Alliance would like to thank Ms. Denise Parker of YWIA for collaborating with us to make this event a success. The Alliance remains dedicated to actively participating in our community, and we look forward to working with the Young Women in Action Girls Mentoring Program for future community outreach events.

## Happy Hour at Victoria Gastro Pub was a Success!!!

The Alliance, Monumental and Black Women's Bar Association of Suburban Maryland held a happy hour at Victoria Gastro Pub in March to once again bring members and other legal professionals in the area together. We extended invitations to several professional organizations, and invited students from the University of Maryland School of Law and the University of Baltimore School of Law. This was a fun filled evening that provided a great opportunity for several legal professionals to gather to enjoy good food, beverages and networking. The happy hour was a great success! We would like to thank everyone that came out to support this event, and we look forward to seeing you again at future happy hour events.



## **“How to Become A Judge” Panel Discussion**

In February, the Alliance along with Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Maryland, Hispanic Bar Association of Maryland, Maryland Lawyer Chapter of the American Constitution Society, and the Monumental City Bar Association hosted another judicial panel. The event was well attended and provided the attendees with valuable information on various paths one could take if pursuing a judgeship on a state or federal level. Panelists included Judge Andre M. Davis, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit; Judge Brian G. Kim, Associate Judge, Montgomery County District Court, District 6; Judge Kendra Y. Ausby, Associate Judge, Circuit Court for Baltimore City, 8th Judicial Circuit. The panel was moderated by Renee Hutchins, Associate Professor of Law, The University of Maryland School of Law. Thank you too all the participants on the panel.

## **Panel Discussion: Practical Considerations for Starting Your Own Practice**

In March, the Alliance co-sponsored with MSBA Young Lawyers Section Education Committee, and J. Wyndal Gordon, Attorney at Law, a panel discussion to provide members with practical advice about starting and maintaining a law practice. Panelists include John J. Murphy, Esq., Chun T. Wright, Esq., Paul Mark Sandler, Esq., William R. Buie, Esq. and J. Wyndal Gordon, Esq.; Moderated by Hughie Hunt, Esq. A wealth of knowledge was provided by these seasoned practitioners. Members of the panel provided helpful tips on managing client communications and setting appropriate boundaries. The panel also discussed helpful marketing strategies and important ethical considerations as a solo practitioner. Thank you to all the panel participants.

## **Successful Lawyers Sharing Marketing Tips on Building the Bottom Line: "Building a Law Practice in Real Estate or Trust & Estates Law" Seminar**

In April, the Alliance co-sponsored with the American Bar Association, GAYLAW, GWAC, Hispanic Bar Association of DC, J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association, Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association, South Asian Bar Association and Washington Bar Association a panel discussion to provide members with useful tips for building a law practice in real estate or trust & estates law. The event was held at the offices of Holland & Knight LLP in Washington, DC. Speakers for the event included Dennis Horn, Holland & Knight LLP (Real Estate); Arenettia S. Wright, Wright Law Group, P.C. (T&E); Leigh-Alexandra Basha, Holland & Knight LLP (International T&E); and Alliance member Patricia M. Rosier, Rosier & Associates (Real Estate). Thank you to all the panelists and Alliance members who attended the event.

## The Ins and Outs of State E-Filing

In April, the Alliance along with Monumental and The Bar Association of Baltimore City presented a seminar on state e-filing. The speaker for the event was the Honorable Ben C. Clyburn, Chief Judge, District Court of Maryland. Judge Clyburn informed participants that Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) will allow attorneys to file, receive, and review all court documents electronically. Additionally, members learned that the Maryland Judiciary hopes to initiate its electronic filing “pilot program” in Anne Arundel County by 2012, with statewide implementation by 2015. Members of the bar were encouraged to provide feedback for the proposed e-filing models. To learn more about MDEC visit [www.mdcourts.gov/mdec](http://www.mdcourts.gov/mdec). Special thank you Judge Clyburn for providing our members with an informative session on state e-filing.

## Alliance Community Service



In June, members of the Alliance volunteered at My Sister's Place Women's Center (MSPWC). In addition to serving as the new home of three existing Catholic Charities programs, MSPWC also provides three meals each day to women and children in need. The program generally serves between 75 and 125 women and children daily. On Sunday, June 5, 2011, the Alliance assisted in the lunch meal service for women and children at the shelter. While working with the staff to prepare and serve lunch, we also had an opportunity to learn about the extensive services that MSPWC provides for those in need; including, housing assistance, education and life skills training, and personal services. It was a truly rewarding experience and a time of fellowship among our members as well as the community. We look forward to working with MSPWC for future community service events.

## Alliance About Town

In April, members of the Alliance attended the University of Baltimore School of Law Black Law Student Association's 32nd annual awards banquet, which was held at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum. Members networked with various attorneys and judges and enjoyed the keynote address by Honorable Pamila J. Brown.

<http://www.msba.org/links/md/specialty/abwa/index.htm>

## Events on the Horizon

The 2011 National Bar Association's annual conference will be held in Baltimore. A host committee comprised of area attorneys has been working with the National Bar Association's conference planning committee to plan various events for the convention. The 2011 annual conference will be held from July 31 – August 4, 2011. Please go to [www.nationalbar.org](http://www.nationalbar.org) to register and for more information regarding the upcoming conference.

### MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

The Alliance of Black Women Attorneys relies on dues to offer quality programs and events. The dues year is from July 1st through June 30th. Please remember to pay your membership dues.

#### Dues Categories:

Graduated more than 5 years - \$50

Graduated 3-5 years - \$40

Graduated less than 3 years - \$30

Law Student Associate Membership - \$10

**Please visit the Alliance of Black Women Attorneys' website to pay dues on-line or for the application/dues form:**

[http://www.msba.org/links/md/specialty/abwa/ABWA\\_APPLICATION.pdf](http://www.msba.org/links/md/specialty/abwa/ABWA_APPLICATION.pdf)



### Mailing Address for the Alliance

P.O. Box 23784  
Baltimore, MD 21203

### A Few Upcoming Alliance Events

- **July 12, 2011** - The Alliance will be hosting a swearing in ceremony for our newly elected executive board members.

The 2011-2012 Executive Board consists of:

Kay N. Harding – President

Alicia Wilson – President Elect

- Johnine Clark – Treasurer

Piper McKeithen – Recording Secretary

Teri Holt-Charles – Corresponding Secretary

Taren Stanton – Member At Large

Marja Plater – Member At Large



**July 28, 2011**, the Alliance and Monumental City Bar Association will host a reception for December 2010 and June 2011 New Admittees.