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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 this 2009-2010 term. It was my goal when I took this office to increase the Alliance's visibility and increase our membership by facilitating workshops, hosting social networking gatherings and other events that would bring back some of our older members and recruit new members. When I accepted this torch to carry on the rich legacy of our organization, I did so with the knowledge that during my year, our organization would experience a great milestone. One of the biggest tasks that my Executive Board would have to endure would be to plan an event to commemorate the vision that our founders had 30 years ago.

Thankfully our founders, Georgia Goslee, Esq. and Jeanne D. Hitchcock, Esq., were able to see that the interests of African American women attorneys required an organization that would recognize their relevance to the legal community and in turn be a staunch supporter of their interests. They had the foresight to create an organization, the first of its kind in Maryland, that would primarily focus on the interests and the development of African American women attorneys. Over the years, that vision broadened to include encouraging African American women to seek judicial appointments. Thirty years have passed and now the State of Maryland presently has well over thirty African American women judges on the Circuit, District, and Orphans Courts.

On September 18, 2009, the Alliance celebrated this milestone at the historic Oakland Manor in Columbia, Maryland. The theme of the event was "Celebrating 30 Years of Excellence". Our organization honored all of the African American female judges throughout the State of Maryland. Chief Justice Peggy Quince, of the Florida Supreme Court, was our keynote speaker, Judge Lynne Battaglia honored the judges with a slide show of personal biographies of the African American female judges, and Chief Judge Robert M. Bell greeted the judges with kind words of support and encouragement. It was a great event and it was an honor for myself and the Executive Board to assist in bringing together an event that showcased the fruits of the labor of our founding members.

In this issue of the newsletter, you will read about the Alliance's other events during the first half of the 2009-2010 term, such as, the New Admittees Reception, the Panel Discussion on Alternative Careers, the Happy Hour at B and O American Brasserie Restaurant, our participation in the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, and our Annual Tea hosted by Judge Marcella Holland. Our Judicial Committee, chaired by Stephanie D. Kinder, Esq., also conducted judicial interviews for candidates interested in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City and Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County judgeships. In addition, the Alliance showed its continued generosity by awarding a book scholarship to Alexandra King, a law student at the University of Baltimore School of Law.

Five more months remain in this term and the Executive Board has quite a few events planned. I would encourage each of our members to come out to at least one event. Our organization is only as effective as our membership. We need you and your support. In order to provide you, "our members", with the type of career panels, CLEs, social gatherings and the like that you need, we need our members to participate. We are a small organization, but believe it or not, we are powerful. Our activity in the community is appreciated, our lack of participation is felt. It is our duty to continue the vision of our founders and support the interests of our community.

Our history requires it, Our legacy demands it.

Monifa N. Bailey, Esquire

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New Admittees Reception

On July 23, 2009 the Alliance hosted the New Admittees Reception at the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse for those individuals that were admitted to the Maryland State Bar in December 2008 and June 2009. Several judges from the Circuit Court for Baltimore City were in attendance, along with other members of the Baltimore legal community. Chief Judge Bell of the Maryland Court of Appeals provided opening remarks and welcomed the new admittees to the Bar.

“The Alliance looks forward to hosting the New Admittees Reception again in 2010!!”

Our guest speaker for the evening, Karren Pope-Onwukwe (a prominent elder law attorney, bar leader and community activist) spoke to the new admittees about the importance of finding and maintaining a balance between life, family and the law. Thereafter, the new admittees were given the opportunity to network and mingle with our guest speakers and other attorneys that attended the event.

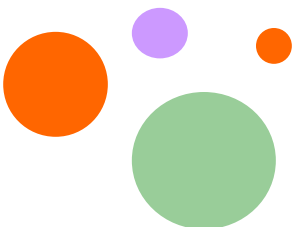
The Alliance truly appreciates Chief Judge Bell and Ms. Pope-Onwukwe for taking time out of their busy schedules to provide the new admittees with such candid and encouraging words of advice.

Alliance Community Service

The Alliance partnered with the University of Baltimore School of Law’s Black Law Student Association (“UB-BLSA team”) to raise money and participate in the American Heart Association’s Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk.

On the chilly fall morning of October 25, 2009, members of the Alliance gathered on the fields of the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg YMCA with hundreds of others to honor breast cancer survivors, remember those that have been lost to cancer, and raise awareness to help end this disease. At approximately 9:00 a.m. walkers flooded 33rd Street and Windmere Avenue to embark on a three mile walk, which included a stroll around Lake Montebello. Fun was had by all for such a worthwhile cause. After the walk, the Alliance members had brunch at Miss Shirley’s Café Inner Harbor. It was a very successful community service endeavor, as the UB-BLSA team raised \$1,172 for the event.

We would like to thank the University of Baltimore School of Law’s Black Law Student Association for allowing us to partner with them on this event and we hope to collaborate with them on other community service initiatives.



Alternative Careers Panel Discussion

On October 6, 2009, the Alliance held its general body meeting and panel discussion on alternative careers. The meeting was held at the law firm of Semmes, Bowen & Semmes. The decision to host a panel discussion on alternative careers was sparked by the rise in unemployment among attorneys, caused by the current economic downturn. The ABWA wanted to make our members aware of the endless opportunities to have successful careers outside of the traditional law firm environment.

We were lucky to have as panelists, Dana Morris, Assistant Dean of Career Development at the University of Maryland School of Law; Delora Sanchez, Esquire, Assistant Director of State Affairs for Johns Hopkins Institutions; and Anna Bradley McBeth, Esquire, Founder & CEO of Legal Outsourcing Solutions, LLC. Thanks to this dynamic group of women, the panel discussion was a huge success.

As part of the discussion, the panelists spoke about the path to choosing an alternative career and about how they were successfully using their legal training outside of the traditional law firm environment. During the discussion, our members were very candid about their experiences in law firms and the factors that led to dissatisfaction for some and success for others. Much of the discussion centered on the perceived unhappiness about working at large firms. The panelists discussed the importance of actively working towards finding a niche and developing it into a fulfilling career.

The consensus among the panelists was that there are innumerable alternatives in choosing a career after law school but the most important factor in making that choice is to find your passion.

Happy Hour at the B & O American Brasserie Restaurant was a Success!!!

The Alliance held a happy hour at the B & O American Brasserie Restaurant on November 4, 2009 to bring members and other legal professionals in the area together. We extended invitations to several professional organizations, including: Monumental City Bar Association, Bar Association of Baltimore City, MSBA – Young Lawyers Division, the State’s Attorney Office, and the Office of the Public Defender. We also 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. Also, during the happy hour, we were given a tour of the beautiful Hotel Monaco that is adjacent to the B & O American Brasserie Restaurant, where we learned about the history of the newly renovated building, and had the opportunity to view a few of the luxurious suites in the hotel. 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. We would also like to extend a special thank you to Kendra Y. Ausby, Esq. for helping the Alliance plan the event and to Toby Hughes, general manager of B & O American Brasserie Restaurant, for partnering with us to host such a successful event.

The Alliance About Town

On Thursday, November 5, 2009 members of the Alliance attended the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association's Scholarship Awards and Anniversary Banquet held at Martin's Crosswinds in Greenbelt, Maryland. Members networked with attorneys from the various Maryland counties and enjoyed the keynote address by Billy R. Martin, Esq.

On Friday, November 6, 2009 the Alliance enjoyed a night out at the movies. Members of the Alliance enjoyed pre-movie cocktails and appetizers at The Tapas Teatro, and then joined each other for the showing of Chris Rock's documentary GOOD HAIR at The Charles Theatre.

Annual Holiday Tea

On Sunday December 6, 2009, the Alliance held its 14th Annual Holiday Tea. The event was hosted by and held in the home of the Honorable Marcella A. Holland, Chief Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City.

The event was a great success, with a large number of law students, attorneys and judges in attendance. The attendees enjoyed fellowship with each other, while sipping tea and sharing the delectable appetizers and desserts they prepared for each other at this pot luck affair. It was an enjoyable afternoon for all.

In addition, Alliance members contributed new toys to be donated to the Baltimore City Court Appointed Special Advocate toy drive. The Alliance extends a very special thanks to Judge Holland for her warm hospitality.



Events on the Horizon

The Alliance is planning a community service initiative by partnering with the Mayor's Young Women in Action Girls Mentoring Program (YWIA). 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. The Alliance's executive board is currently working with YWIA's program director, Denise Parker, to coordinate the Alliance's involvement in the program. This will be a great opportunity for us to give back to our community while making a difference in several young women's lives. Please look out for more detailed information coming soon.

The 2011 National Bar Association's annual conference will be held in Baltimore. A host committee comprised of area attorneys has been formed to work with the National Bar Association's conference planning committee over the course of the next year. If you are interested in participating in the planning of the conference, please contact Savonne L. Ferguson at savonnelfergusonesq@gmail.com or Syeetah Hampton-el at missinfo@aol.com. The 2010 annual conference will be held in New Orleans from August 9-13, 2010. Please go to www.nationalbar.org to register and for more information regarding the upcoming conference.

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

THE ABWA'S NEW MAILING ADDRESS

**P.O. Box 23784
Baltimore, MD 21203**

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 - \$40.00

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

2010 Pro Bono and IOLTA Reporting

All lawyers licensed to practice law in the State of Maryland are required to fulfill two important reporting requirements each year. Both the Pro Bono Report and the IOLTA Report will be **due no later than February 15, 2010**. The forms can be completed online by visiting: <http://www.courts.state.md.us/probono/index.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **The Alliance Hosts Brunch for the University of Baltimore School of Law's 2010 Baltimore Scholars**
- **Seminar: Dos and Don'ts for Practicing Attorneys**
- **The Alliance Celebrates Black History Month through Community Service**
- **The Alliance's 2010 Golf Clinic**

THE ALLIANCE IS NOW ON FACEBOOK