



**Louisiana State Bar Association  
Conclaves on Diversity in the  
Legal Profession**

**American Bar Association 2010  
Partnership Award Program**

Submitted by:  
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# American Bar Association 2010 Partnership Award Program

**Name of Organization:**

Louisiana State Bar Association/  
Member Outreach and Diversity  
Department

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**Project/Program Title:**

Third Annual Conclave on Diversity in  
the Legal Profession

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**Web Site Address for Project/Program:**

[www.lsba.org/diversity](http://www.lsba.org/diversity)

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**Starting Date:**

March 2008

# Louisiana State Bar Association Partners

## Diversity Committee Members:

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Jeremy M. Bolton  
Lisa Brener  
Brian Bromberger  
Danielle N. Brown  
Jesse C. Brown  
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Wayne J. Lee



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**LOUISIANA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION**

**CONCLAVES ON DIVERSITY  
IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION**

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**AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION  
2010 PARTNERSHIP AWARDS PROGRAM  
APPLICATION**

**CONCLAVES ON DIVERSITY IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION:  
THE LSBA ANNUAL AND MINI CONCLAVES**

Louisiana State Bar Association  
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(Number of Association Members) 20,902

**PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Description of the program:

- Program's objective
- History of Program
- Number of times presented
- Targeted audience
- Number of people participating
- Measurable results of efforts to date (include statistics, program evaluation and follow-up)
- Future program plans

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- 1 Evaluation Survey to Access Impact of Conclave Attendance 8.27.09
- 2 Third Annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession Flyer
- 3 Third Annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession Booklet
- 4 Louisiana State Bar Association Statement
- 5 Powerpoint Presentation - Fundamentals of Cross-Cultural Capability
- 6 Program Evaluation
- 7 Louisiana State Bar Association Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession Packet
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## PROGRAM'S OBJECTIVE

Part of the mission of the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Committee on Diversity in the Legal Profession, consistent with the LSBA's diversity statement, is to encourage an understanding of the importance of diversity and to create and implement programming and initiatives to improve diversity within the profession in Louisiana. "The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) recognizes that achieving diversity in the legal profession is an evolutionary process that requires the Association's continued effort and commitment. The LSBA is committed to diversity in its membership, Board of Governors, staff, House of Delegates, committees and all leadership positions."

To significantly advance this diversity goal, the LSBA Committee on Diversity implemented a diversity conclave initiative. Accordingly, the LSBA has hosted an annual conclave on diversity since 2008 and, recently, a series of mini conclaves to create a safe venue for the leaders within the legal profession to assemble and grapple with complex - and sometimes difficult-to-discuss - diversity issues. The purpose of the conclaves is to encourage discussion among judges and attorneys (primarily hiring and managing attorneys and judges who have the power to adjust and implement policy changes within their organizations) about the importance of diversity within the legal profession and how to improve diversity and inclusion within it, especially in Louisiana. The LSBA chose to host a "conclave" rather than a "meeting" because a conclave signifies "an assembly or gathering, especially one that has special authority, power, or influence." See [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com). Given the large assembly of the most influential members of the profession, the weight of the topic, and the report generated from the assemblage, the LSBA's characterization of the gathering as a conclave is more than appropriate.

Because it is difficult for practitioners and judges from the northern and far western parts of the state to travel to the annual conclave held in New Orleans, the LSBA has taken steps to bring the diversity discussion to them via mini diversity conclaves co-hosted throughout the state. The conclave and mini conclaves are providing the LSBA vehicles to effectively disseminate the diversity message and prompt the diversity discussions in interactive and enriching exercises and panel-guided conversations.



## HISTORY OF PROGRAM

### **LSBA DIVERSITY CONCLAVES: BUILDING DIVERSITY DISCUSSION**

For the last three years, the LSBA has held a conclave on Diversity in the legal profession in New Orleans, Louisiana. The program began shortly after the LSBA formally adopted a diversity statement and hired a full-time staff to concentrate on diversity and outreach efforts. The Conclave was viewed as an essential means of getting the leadership within the firms, law departments, courts and bar associations to buy into the importance of diversity, learn the major obstacles to diversity, and grasp possible solutions and best practices quickly so that the entire Louisiana legal profession can move forward with a unified mission to advance diversity.

The first Conclave on Diversity provided a wealth of information. The Louisiana profession was starting the diversity mission from ground zero and therefore needed to be educated on the issues and effective approaches. Because so much information was conveyed, there was little time for the participants to digest it, formulate questions, and participate in the discussion. Consequently, subsequent Conclaves have incorporated more interactive workshops, exercises and breakout sessions in order for participants to work with the information and incorporate it into their values and thinking.

The Conclaves are described below. The available reports and articles are located on the LSBA website ([www.lsba.org/diversity](http://www.lsba.org/diversity)).

### ***“Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges, Making Cents”***

The first conclave, “Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges, Making Cents,” on March 7, 2008, began a discussion among approximately 120 attorneys regarding racial, ethnic, gender, and generational diversity. The highly credentialed speakers from across the nation<sup>1</sup> provoked discussions regarding the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> The “Making the Business Case for Diversity” panelists included Marcus V. Brown (associate general counsel, Entergy, New Orleans), Hinton J. Lucas, Jr. (associate general counsel and chief administrative counsel, E.I. duPont De Nemours & Company, Wilmington, DE), Judy Perry Martinez (assistant general counsel-litigation, Northrop Grumman Corporation, New Orleans), Samuel E. Mathis, Jr. (director of diversity & inclusion, Pfizer, Inc., New York, NY), and K. Todd Wallace (shareholder, Liskow & Lewis, New Orleans), and moderator Kim M. Boyle (partner, Phelps Dunbar, LLP, New Orleans and then LSBA President-Elect designee).

diversity, educated on ways to improve diversity, and exposed how internal personal and organizational biases impede diversity.

Panelists described how their organizations' business plans are encouraging diversity and noted that companies are improving diversity in the legal profession by helping firms with diversity planning, implementing recruiting programs, assigning work based on law firm diversity, and/or providing positive incentives for firms willing to actively take steps to be inclusive. Another panel analyzed the numbers of female and minority students applying to law school and acknowledged that the numbers of applicants have dropped. They suggested programs to expose young children to lawyers so that they consider law as a career choice. The panelists also suggested programs to empower students taking the LSAT and also recognized that law schools must reevaluate their admissions criteria and policies to reduce the emphasis on the LSAT. Additional panel recognized the obstacles preventing inclusion in the legal profession and offered many suggestions for programs through which firms can advance diversity.

During lunch, Kay H. Hodge (partner, Stoneman, Chandler & Miller, LLP, Boston, MA; Member, ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession; and President, National Conference of Bar Presidents) gave a keynote address titled "Diversity: Tough Issues." Ms. Hodge reminded participants that diversity

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The "Plumbing the Diversity Pipeline" panelists included moderator Tara B. Hawkins (administrative general counsel, Third Circuit Court of Appeal, Lake Charles) and panelists K. Michele Allison-Davis (assistant dean of admissions and minority affairs, Loyola University College of Law, New Orleans), Linda Perez Clark (partner, Kean Miller, Baton Rouge), Eric Eden (director of admissions, Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge), Freddie Pitcher, Jr. (chancellor, Southern University Law Center, Baton Rouge), Lawrence Ponoroff (dean, Tulane Law School, New Orleans) and Maurice C. Ruffin (associate, Adams and Reese, LLP, New Orleans).

The "Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges" panelists included Sharon F. Bridges (partner, Brunini, Grantham, Grower & Hewes, PLLC, Jackson, MS), Shelley Hammond Provosty (Attorney at Law, New Orleans), Petrina R. Johns (The Hanover Insurance Group, New Orleans), Todd S. Manuel (Taylor, Porter, Brooks & Phillips, LLP, Baton Rouge), Karelia R. Stewart (assistant district attorney, Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office, Shreveport), Michelle P. Wimes (national director of strategic diversity initiatives, Shook, Hardy & Bacon, LLP, Kansas City, MO), and moderator Naomi K. McLaurin (Managing Director, Southeast Region, Minority Corporate Counsel Association, Atlanta, GA).

S. Dennis Blunt (partner, Phelps Dunbar, LLP, Baton Rouge) moderated the "Judgment on Future Diversity" panel discussion. The "Judgment on Future Diversity" panel consisted of Hon. Kern A. Reese (Civil District Court, New Orleans), Hon. James E. Stewart, Sr. (Second Circuit Court of Appeal, Shreveport), Hon. Ulysses Gene Thibodeaux (Third Circuit Court of Appeal, Lake Charles), Hon. Fredericka Homberg Wicker (Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal, Gretna), and moderator S. Dennis Blunt (partner, Phelps Dunbar, LLP, Baton Rouge).

includes many personal characteristics besides race and gender and gave many practical examples of actions firms and judges can take to improve diversity and increase the credibility of the entire system of justice. Building upon the lunch presentation, Dorothy Reese, MPH, MSW, CDP and Margaret Montgomery-Richard, PhD (DMM & Associates, LLC, New Orleans) presented the interactive session titled "Managing High Performance Law Firms in the 21st Century: Are You Diverse or Inclusive?" The session, which involved a video and several exercises for participants, focused on three issues: the impact that individual differences have on the workplace, how understanding diversity impacts an organization's office culture, and how actions consciously and unconsciously affect clients.

The program culminated with a panel of judges who discussed the importance of diversity within the court system and among the courts' publics and evaluated the impact of Supreme Court precedent concerning juries and judicial districts on the composition of the courts and the staffing of cases. The judges also provided insight regarding their perceptions of symbolic rather than real diversity and provided advice to firms regarding the benefits of diversifying. Many of the judges and speakers remained for a networking reception with Conclave participants.

### ***"Continuing the Conversation"***

Held on March 13, 2009, the second annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession, titled "Continuing the Conversation," continued the diversity discussion with an audience of approximately 90 attorneys and judges. The second Conclave did not simply regurgitate information provided during previous year's program. The 2009 Conclave was more interactive and allowed the participants to discuss everyday diversity issues during a workshop using vignettes of real situations submitted anonymously by attorneys. After a networking lunch, participants received practical information from two groups of panelists.

Michael Brandwein, a lawyer, internationally acclaimed speaker, author and consultant from Chicago, Illinois, facilitated a three-hour workshop during which he shared stories and examples of situations in which people struggle with how to interact with people who are not like them. He also allowed participants to engage in activities that made them realize how quickly they pre-judge people. Armed with basic information regarding interpersonal communication and an awareness of their personal biases and predispositions to pre-judge, the participants were separated into groups of eight to 10 people and given several diversity vignettes to

digest, discuss, and propose solutions to. The vignettes were based upon anonymous submissions by attorneys to the LSBA and the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. The topics touched on a host of issues (i.e., age, stereotyping based on educational background, race, disability, and more. Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Catherine D. Kimball addressed the group briefly at lunch. Mr. Brandwein, serving as the keynote speaker, summarized several issues and ideas that surfaced during the workshop. He also challenged the audience to actively engage in the diversity dialogue by attending other diversity workshops and offering their assistance to the LSBA.

After lunch, participants received practical information from two groups of highly-credentialed panelists. The first panel<sup>2</sup> guided a discussion addressing the impact of *Batson* on our changing and more diverse society and explored ethical issues surrounding *Batson* violations. The second panel<sup>3</sup> discussion, titled “Hitting Home: How Diversity Practices Can Impact Your Bottom Line,” addressed the impact on law firms and businesses if their diversity practices are deficient. Participants had the luxury of continuing that enlightening discussions during a networking reception immediately following the panels.

### ***“The Professional Workplace: Diagnosing the Issues and Finding the Cure”***

The LSBA held its third annual Conclave on Diversity, titled “The Professional Workplace: Diagnosing the Issues and Finding the Cure,” on March 5, 2010, for an audience of approximately 170 participants. The Committee did not want the third Conclave to simply update information provided during the first two programs. This Conclave was more interactive and allowed participants to gain tangible skills to address everyday diversity issues in their offices and in their practices. The Conclave began with an interactive exercise titled “Expanding your View of Diversity” and facilitated by Kelly McNeil Legier. Participants had to use symbols to convey in small group settings information about their backgrounds, childhoods,

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<sup>2</sup> The panel consisted of: Earl M. Campbell (assistant United States attorney, Western District of Louisiana), M. Nan Alessandra (partner, Phelps Dunbar, LLP, New Orleans), Thomas L. Lorenzi (partner, Lorenzi & Barnatt, LLP, Lake Charles), Hon. Ulysses Gene Thibodeaux (chief judge, Louisiana Third Circuit Court of Appeal, Lake Charles), and moderator Kim M. Boyle (partner, Phelps Dunbar, LLP, New Orleans, and then LSBA President-Elect).

<sup>3</sup> Karl J. Connor (BP America, Inc., New Orleans), Sandra Diggs-Miller (senior counsel – litigation, Entergy Services, Inc., New Orleans), Judy Perry Martinez (assistant general counsel litigation, Northrop Grumman Corporation, New Orleans), Sherry D. Williams (vice president & corporate secretary Halliburton, Houston, Texas); and moderator Joseph K. West (associate general counsel-outside counsel management, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Bentonville, Arkansas).

values and life experiences. They learned quickly how much they shared in common with people who were very different than them, and they were encouraged to emphasize the things they share in common. Ms. Legier reminded participants "The similarities bring us together; the differences tear us apart. Build on the similarities."

During a three-hour morning workshop, highly credentialed facilitators Hon. Wendell Griffen (Ret.) and Manny Brandt of Griffen Strategic Consulting, PLLC, facilitated exercises to make participants culturally aware and skillful in cross-cultural situations. Participants learned the difference between diversity and inclusion, gained an understanding of the diversity challenge (i.e., that differences matter especially those that do not matter to you but matter to someone else), and received tools to develop a cultural competency compass.

Lt. General Russel L. Honoré, USA (Ret.), the keynote speaker during the networking lunch, mesmerized participants with the impact of diversity on Louisiana history, the military, and the future of the children on "Railroad Street" where the poorest of society reside.

The first panel discussion, titled "Enhancing Professionalism and Our Practices through Acknowledgement of Our Differences," consisted of Louisiana practitioners with diverse backgrounds and addressed hot button topics such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and disability and how these topics impacts the professionalism of attorneys, office dynamics and the ability to attract and keep clients. The panelists offered practical suggestions regarding how to address these important issues in daily practice.<sup>4</sup> The second panel discussion, titled "Smart Business Managers Are About Diversity," consisted of in-house counsel and executive managers from major Louisiana and international businesses.<sup>5</sup> The panelist discussed the powerful impact of diversity in their organizations, how the lack of diversity initiatives can impact an organization's productivity and financial health, and how diversity impacts their outside counsel

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<sup>4</sup> The panelists consisted of Jeremy M. Bolton (associate, Irwin Fritchier Urquhart & Moore, LLC), Cesar R. Burgos (managing partner, Burgos & Evans, LLC), Susan K. Jones (attorney-as-law), Patricia A. Krebs (partner, King, Krebs & Jurgens, PLLC), and Scott J. Spivey (general counsel, Hammerman & Gainer, Inc.), and the moderators Danatus N. King (owner, Danatus N. King & Associates) and Charles F. Seemann, III (senior counsel, Proskauer Rose, LLP).

<sup>5</sup> The panelists consisted of Trudy R. Bennette (associate counsel and vice president, Whitney National Bank), Dominique Bright-Wheeler (vice president and in-house counsel, Capital One Bank), Mathew Butler (senior vice president, The Shaw Group), Robert Johnson (managing counsel, McDonald's Corporation in Illinois), and moderator Judy Perry Martinez (assistant general counsel litigation, Northrop Grumman Corporation).

hiring decisions. They also addressed the benefits of diversity committees and diversity strategic plans within major businesses. The audience fully engaged the panel in enriching discussions that addressed practical issues facing lawyers and judges every day. They seemed particularly interested in gaining information from Mr. Bolton, who is hearing impaired and who presented a wealth of information regarding his experiences in the profession with this challenge.

The LSBA hosted the conclaves with the Louisiana Supreme Court and several local and specialty bar associations. All of the conclaves have qualified for continuing legal education hours.

## MINI CONCLAVES

### *Lafayette*

The LSBA launched its first mini diversity conclave in Lafayette, Louisiana on October 14, 2009. The LSBA partnered with the Greater Lafayette Chapter of the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. and the Lafayette Bar Association to host the free mini conclave at the Lafayette Bar Association office for an audience of about 50 attorneys.

Kelly McNeil Legier gave an introductory presentation regarding the scope of diversity. She likened people to an iceberg, explaining “On the surface, you only see 10% of what makes up a person. Ninety percent of what makes a person diverse lies far beneath.” Ms. Legier had the audience identify primary dimensions of diversity, which are the physical characteristics you immediately see, such as race, age, gender, and size. Ms. Legier continued, “There also are secondary dimensions of diversity, which are the person’s characteristics and background that you cannot see.” The audience identified many secondary diverse characteristics, such as personal experiences, sexual orientation, education, economic levels, parental status and class. The audience then discussed how the secondary dimensions of diversity benefit a firm or organization by providing new ideas, new perspectives, new problem solving methods and networking resources.

A esteemed panel of Louisiana attorneys and judges<sup>6</sup> then continued the diversity discussion, focusing on the business case for diversity. The panelists explained that diversity is important to a firm’s financial bottom line because many clients

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<sup>6</sup> The panelists included Michael C. Garrard (partner, Kean, Miller, Hawthorne, D’Armond, McCowan & Jarman, LLP), Nannette Jolivette Brown (special partner, Chaffe McCall, LLP), Hon. Ulysses G. Thibodeaux (chief judge, Louisiana Third Circuit Court of Appeal), and moderator Hon. Jules D. Edwards, III (Louisiana Fifteenth Judicial District Court).

are demanding that firms diversify and are firing firms that refuse. They also explained that firms lose credibility with judges and juries if they lack meaningful diversity, where diverse members of the firm are actively involved in the proceeding.

Panelist Nannette Jolivette Brown explained that making the business case for diversity is easier today than when she began practicing law over 20 years ago. "Nowadays, most corporate clients insist upon a diverse team of people working on their matters and in fact expect firms to fill out forms identifying women and minority attorneys and explaining the role they play in the firm and will play in the matters the client expects to send to the firm. The reason they do this is simple: diversity in people usually means diversity in thought which makes for better problem-solvers. Additionally, if the matter is one to be litigated before a judge or jury, the trial team is a representation of the client and most clients want to appear as a reflection of the community it solicits business from or see itself as serving, in such situations. Therefore, if you are not diverse in the makeup of your organization you are missing out on substantial business opportunities."

A networking social followed the discussion. Participants were able to generate individual diversity dialogue to continue the conversation begun during the mini conclave.

### ***Baton Rouge***

The LSBA partnered with the Greater Baton Rouge Chapter of the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. and the Baton Rouge Bar Association to host a free mini conclave for an audience of about 135 lawyers and judges on November 3, 2009 at the Sheraton Baton Rouge Convention Center Hotel.

The Baton Rouge program was very similar to the Lafayette program. It began with Ms. Legier presenting a similar introductory session to clarify the scope of diversity, stating that it encompasses much more than race and gender. Participants were then captivated by two distinguished panels that discussed "The Business Case for Diversity"<sup>7</sup> and then "The Practical Impact of Diversity on

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<sup>7</sup> The panelists included the following: Verge Ausberry (senior associate athletics director, Louisiana State University), Domoine D. Rutledge (advisory member, East Baton Rouge Parish School System), Stephen M. Moret (secretary, Louisiana Economic Development), Jacqueline D. Vines (senior vice President and General Manager, Cox Communications), and moderator Prof. Russell L. Jones (vice chancellor for academic affairs, Southern University Law Center).

Representation of Clients.”<sup>8</sup> The panelists articulated and discussed the financial and business impact of not valuing diversity as well as practical issues and best practices regarding diversity. The audience peppered the panelists with lively, practical questions ranging from language barrier issues to how to expand the pool of candidates to encompass more diversity.

A networking social followed the discussion. Many participants lingered to expound upon the interesting discussions begun during the conclave.

### *Other Cities*

Similar mini diversity conclaves are scheduled in Lake Charles, Louisiana on April 16, 2010, and Alexandria, Louisiana on May 14, 2010. The mini conclaves are being scheduled to begin conversations farther north in Louisiana in Shreveport and Monroe. Additionally, planning is in the early stages to return to Lafayette and Baton Rouge to build upon the diversity discussions begun last year through more interactive sessions and breakouts. All of the mini conclaves have qualified for continuing legal education hours.

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<sup>8</sup> The panelists, which gave perspectives from the bench and bar, included Mathile W. Abramson (partner, Kean, Miller, Hawthorne, D’Armond, McCowan & Jarman, LLP), Hon. James J. Brady (United District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana), Hon. Robert D. Downing (Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeal), Timothy W. Hardy (partner, Lemle & Kelleher, LLP), Leo C. Hamilton (partner, Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, LLP), Michael D. Hunt (partner, Phelps Dunbar, LLP), and moderator Hon. Sheral C. Kellar (chief judge, Office of Workers Compensation).



## **TARGET AUDIENCE AND PARTICIPANTS**

### ***Target Audience:***

The target audience is attorneys and judges, especially those with management and hiring authority within their offices or organizations.

### ***The participants for the conclaves have been as follows:***

2008 Inaugural Diversity Conclave – 120 participants

2009 Second Annual Diversity Conclave – 80 participants

2010 Third Annual Diversity Conclave – 170 participants

Lafayette Mini Conclave – 50 participants

Baton Rouge Mini Conclave – 135 participants

Lake Charles Mini Conclave – 30 registered (as of 3/30/10)

## MEASURABLE RESULT OF EFFORTS TO DATE

The LSBA deems the conclaves and mini conclaves successful. The numbers of attendees at the conclaves are increasing. The annual conclave attendance has risen from 120 attendees to 170 attendees. Notably, the demographics of the audience have shifted from primarily minority attorneys to an audience comprised of 40% non-minority attorneys. Additionally, the number of bar association co-hosts has increased from 7 to 20. Further, the number of financial sponsors has increased from 8 to 17. The numbers reflect an increase in a conscious, focused attention by the leaders of many firms and bar associations on diversity issues. These leaders are investing their time and energy into prompting and participating in diversity discussions – for half to an entire day! This was unheard of in Louisiana before 2008.

More importantly, one of the initiatives encouraged during the conclaves and mini conclaves is the execution of the LSBA Diversity Statement of Principles. The LSBA realizes that it cannot advance diversity within the profession alone. Significant meaningful diversity advancements will occur only when the leaders in organizations embrace diversity and demonstrate through their actions that diversity is a priority to the organization. Accordingly, the LSBA has encouraged the leaders of the law firms, law departments, courts, and bar associations to demonstrate a commitment to diversity by executing the LSBA *Statement of Diversity Principles*. (See attached.)

By executing the Statement, the leaders of an organization agree to use their best efforts to increase diversity in their hiring, retention and promotion of attorneys and the elevation of attorneys to leadership positions within their organizations. They also agree to promote and participate in appropriate diversity awareness training programs as well as programs to measure their progress in the pursuit of the stated diversity principles.

The number of signatories to the Statement increased significantly after the mini conclaves and third annual conclave. The LSBA recorded only 53 signatories as of its Annual Meeting in June of 2009. To date, we have 87 signatories.

The LSBA has disseminated a survey to all 2008 and 2009 Conclave participants to assess changes that the firms or organizations have made because of information and practice tips obtained during the conclave(s). (See attached.) The Association is awaiting responses. The LSBA will disseminate a similar survey to participants of the mini conclaves and the 2010 conclave.

## **FUTURE PROGRAM PLANS**

The LSBA's fourth annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession has been set for March 18, 2011. The Committee on Diversity plans to add a few small breakout sessions the day before the Conclave to provide specific tools for small groups in a format that is not possible in a large assembly setting. For example, the Committee is exploring a diversity strategic plan workshop and a diversity facilitator training workshop.

The LSBA also will continue to have the numerous mini diversity conclaves in various cities throughout the state of Louisiana. The LSBA will return to the cities where mini conclaves occurred 2009 and will expand to several new cities.

## **TOTAL PROGRAM BUDGET**

The Conclave was funded by the LSBA (\$25,000), its generous Gold, Silver, and Bronze level sponsors (\$11,750), and a modest registration fee (\$50, early and \$75, after February 28, 2010) (\$6,990).

The goal of the program was to provide information, rather than to generate a profit. Accordingly, the LSBA allowed each of the four law schools in Louisiana to send ten (10) law students to attend the conclave at no charge. It also provided complimentary registration to a limited number of public interest attorneys. Conclave speakers and facilitators were also admitted for free.

The expenses totaled approximately \$39,867, which primarily included speaker honoraria and expenses \$12,071, printing costs \$8,095, hotel facilities and food \$17,007. It should be noted that costs can be reduced by using more local speakers and speakers who do not or cannot charge an honorarium.

## **IDENTIFY OTHER "PARTNERS" WHO SUPPORTED THE EFFORT**

The LSBA invited all of the courts and local and specialty bar associations to co-host the annual Conclaves. As a co-host, the organization did not have any financial obligation to the LSBA; however, the organization was required to publicize the event and encourage attendance by its members. It also was responsible for sending its officers to attend the event.

The following organizations and courts have co-hosted the Conclave with the LSBA:

- Louisiana Supreme Court
- 4th Judicial District Court Bar Association
- 18th Judicial District Court Bar Association
- American Inn of Court of Acadiana
- Association for Women Attorneys New Orleans Chapter
- Baton Rouge Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association - New Orleans Chapter
- Greater Baton Rouge Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.
- Greater New Orleans Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc.
- Hispanic Lawyers Association of Louisiana
- Jefferson Parish Bar Association
- Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. Greater Alexandria Chapter
- Louis A. Martinet Legal Society, Inc. Greater Lafayette Chapter
- Louisiana Asian Pacific American Bar Association
- Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel
- New Orleans Bar Association
- Northeast Louisiana Louis A. Martinet Legal Society
- Southwest Louisiana Bar Association
- Shreveport Bar Association
- Shreveport-Bossier Black Lawyers Association

## IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

The long term benefit of these programs is that the conclaves demonstrate the LSBA's commitment to diversity by committing resources, time and travel expenses to produce a day-long and several half-day long workshops dedicated solely to issues of diversity. The LSBA's current president and a member of the LSBA Board of Governors were in attendance the entire day of the Conclave. The president and other Board members also have traveled and will travel to attend the mini conclaves. Another long term benefit is that the managing and hiring attorneys who attend the conclave will return to their firms and convey to others in management how the failure to diversify their firms and their clients may negatively impact their organizations financially.

A short term benefit is that the legal community will hear from a very diverse group of people who attended the program how informative the conclave was and may consider attending future diversity programs. Another short term benefit is that the annual program provided participants over six (6) inexpensive continuing legal education hours. The program qualified for 6.08 hours in 2008, 6.50 hours in 2009, and 6.66 in 2010. Similarly, the mini conclaves qualified for 1.5-3.0 hours of continuing legal education credit at no cost to attendees.

The LSBA was able to host a full-day diversity program that drew an over 160-person audience comprised of more than minority attorneys, and provided information regarding why diversity is important to all law firms and departments regardless of size. The evaluations demonstrate that the participants enjoyed the program. The majority to date gave the speakers and panel discussions the highest rating of "4" with additional positive comments. The LSBA has gotten 50-120 people to gather to seriously discuss diversity in areas of the state that have never engaged in this type of discussion.

The LSBA disseminated a survey on [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) to participants who did not have the ability to fill them out at the conclave. The LSBA is expecting additional feedback and will analyze the evaluation data collected from these surveys in the coming weeks.

### **EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS FROM THE 2009 CONCLAVES:**

Christine Changho Bruneau (Abbott Simses, APLC), who also attended the 2008 Conclave, expressed that she had not thought that the Diversity Committee could top the previous year's Conclave, but it did.

"I thought the Diversity Conclave was excellent," said Ariel Campos, Sr. (Acadiana Legal Service Corporation). "I was very impressed with the caliber of the speakers. I especially enjoyed Michael Brandwein's presentations and the manner in which he got audience participation."

Mary K. Peyton (Blue Williams, LLP) said, "I greatly enjoyed the Diversity Conclave. It openly and honestly discussed topics which are too often ignored in the everyday practice and provided valuable information from the corporate industries in Louisiana as to their interests and concerns."

Carl A. Butler (LeBlanc Butler LLC) likewise had a positive experience, finding that the conference was "well organized and no doubt well intentioned" and that the panelists "were accomplished, prepared and thoughtful in their comments." Mr. Butler recommended topics for next year's Conclave, such as encouraging corporations to retain attorneys from minority-owned law firms.

Many attendees verbalized what they gained from the Conclave and their willingness to share the information with colleagues. "I found the conclave both rewarding and informative," said Thomas P. Anzelmo (McCranie, Sistrunk, Anzelmo, Hardy, Maxwell & McDaniel). "The active interaction with the other participants was most rewarding and revealing and provided me with insight that I will be able to share with my partners and assist us in the development of the firm now and into the future."

## EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS FROM THE 2010 CONCLAVES:

“This is the best Conclave that the LSBA has sponsored since its inception.” Kim M. Boyle, 2009-10 LSBA President. “Specifically, we had our highest attendance with over 150 registrants for the Conclave. At various points of the day, there were literally attendees standing in the back because all of the seats were filled. Also, each and every presentation at the Conclave was excellent, starting with the opening session by our own Kelly Legier. Every single presenter and panelist was prepared, engaging and entertaining and the audience enjoyed all of them. . . . Of particular significance is the fact that even though this was an all-day conclave, almost every registrant stayed for the entire day. Moreover, not only did a number of the attendees tell us how great the presentations were and how much they enjoyed the Conclave, a number of them stated that this was one of the best LSBA CLEs that they had attended. The program was a complete success and I am sure that the evaluation forms will reflect that. Many of the attendees stayed for the concluding reception that evening.”

“I really think y’all did a great job in keeping it interesting, informative and also entertaining. It was a great seminar and I’m so glad I got to attend.” Kerry L. McEachin, Legal Recruiting Director, Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann L.L.C.

“I wanted to compliment you on the phenomenal job you did to in facilitating an awesome Diversity Conclave this past Friday. I truly enjoyed all of the presentations. I was also thoroughly impressed with the materials and the diversity of participants. I really feel as if the legal profession in our area is moving in the right direction of "inclusion" thanks to your tremendous contributions” said Tara L. Mason, Esq., Lobman, Carnahan, Batt, Angelle & Nader.



## CONCLUSION

The LSBA diversity conclave initiative is a truly cooperative effort by numerous courts and bar associations. The LSBA, the Louisiana Supreme Court, and several bar associations are all interested in one thing: improving diversity and inclusion within the legal community in Louisiana. The conclaves provide a wealth of information on the importance of diversity, the impact of not valuing diversity, and problems associated with non-inclusive legal environments. Additionally, the conclaves provide participants with tangible tools to help them approach diverse situations differently and avoid diversity missteps.

There may be programs in different states that attempt to educate lawyers about diversity issues. However, we believe none attempts to get the leaders of the legal profession – from the judiciary, law firms, law departments, bar associations, public interest entities, and government agencies - with a vested interest together in one place for the same cause to engage in the non-politically correct and sometimes difficult diversity discussion. The LSBA diversity conclaves do this and the attorneys, judges, and people of the state of Louisiana will be better served in years to come for that effort.

The credibility of our profession hinges on improving diversity so that the people making, interpreting and prosecuting the laws look like the people who navigate the system. The LSBA's diversity conclaves not only create an awareness of the need to diversify, they provide tools, tips and practices on how to achieve a more diverse and inclusive profession. Therefore, the LSBA Committee on Diversity humbly requests that the ABA award the LSBA Diversity Conclaves Initiative the ABA Partnership Award.

Thank you for your consideration.

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