



FALL 2008

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www.lagbac.org

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION

Dear Members,

Greetings! I hope this finds you well and having enjoyed the Summer (and still enjoying the Summer-like weather). This Summer was an exciting one for LAGBAC. In conjunction with the LAGBAC foundation, we awarded THREE scholarships to deserving law students interning at local non-profit organizations focusing on LGBT work. In addition, LAGBAC participated in Northalsted Market Days, where we signed up new members and disseminated information about the various LAGBAC programs and initiatives. And, for the first time, LAGBAC joined forces with the Legal Assistance Foundation and participated in the annual AIDS Foundation Chicago AIDS Walk/Run. As Summer draws to a close, we are busy preparing for a busy academic year. For example, we are in the process of developing a new series of legal seminars in conjunction with Howard Brown Health Center. We are also designing CLEs to be offered to members. And, we are putting together another stellar Mentorship program.

I hope you will check out what we have going on and consider joining us for some, if not all, of it! I look forward to seeing you soon.

Best regards,

Jeremy

FALL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM UNDERWAY

Fall is here and the LAGBAC Mentorship Program is now in full swing. Now in its second year, new board members Nicole Bashor and Skip Harsch have taken over as co-chairs. For those who might not be familiar, the mentorship program is designed to pair local attorneys with Chicago-area law students. These pairings provide law students with a unique opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge about different practice areas along with the support of attorneys who have been down the law school path.

In its first year the program paired over two dozen law students with local attorneys. One student involved in the program had this to say about his mentorship experience:

“The LAGBAC mentorship program has provided a great opportunity for students to get out of the classroom and meet practicing legal professionals doing real work in the real world. LAGBAC paired me with a mentor who shared my particular practice interests. I was able to get a great first-hand view of what life would be like after law school without having to pass the bar to get it!”

The program has also received praise from participating attorneys. “As practicing attorneys we all too often forget how difficult it can be starting out in law school, especially for the LGBT student. I wish a program like this had existed when I was still in school.”

LAGBAC is making a call to attorneys and law students to get involved and become a mentor/mentee. You can obtain more information from our website or email Nicole (nbashor@lagbac.org) or Skip (sharsch@lagbac.org). Additionally, LAGBAC will be hosting a speed networking event in October. Please look to your emails for event information.

OUTLAW COALITION NEWS

The Outlaw Coalition of Chicago, now in its third year of existence, is comprised of members of the LGBT groups at all six Chicago law schools—Chicago-Kent, DePaul, John Marshall, Loyola, Northwestern, and the University of Chicago—and continues to work closely with LAGBAC’s Law School Committee to plan educational and social events that bring together students from each of the schools. The OCC had its first meeting of the fall semester on Sunday, September 21 to welcome back the member schools and make plans for the coming months. The next event OCC will be hosting is its semi-annual philanthropic event, and the group plans to volunteer at the Brown Elephant on Halsted and Waveland on Saturday, October 25. In November the Coalition will invite its members to play Whirly Ball, so stay tuned for more details! Also in November, the OCC, with The John Marshall Law School, will co-sponsor an Out at Work panel discussion in which lawyers from different practice environments will discuss their experience being out (or not) among their work colleagues. If you are interested in participating in or getting more information about any of these events, please contact the current Presidents, Shaun Sperling and Paul E. Johnson, at galla.jmls@gmail.com.

Not a member yet? There’s a membership application inside!

Check out
www.lagbac.org!

UPCOMING EVENTS

LAGBAC Fall Programming

LAGBAC will be presenting three substantive programs "The last thing hanging in the Closet: Domestic Violence in LGBT Relationship," "Who gets to judge us? The impact of judicial appointments and elections on LGBT litigation," and "Toward a More inclusive movement: Addressing the needs of LGBT people of color." LAGBAC will be applying for CLE and Ethics Credits for these programs. Dates and times will be scheduled shortly. Please check our website for specific dates and times during the month of October, 2008.

LGBT Programming at John Marshall Law School

Join JMLS Gay and Lesbian Legal Alliance and JMLS Career Services Office for a special presentation regarding how the military's discriminatory "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is preventing willing citizens from serving their country. Hear ex-serviceman Jason Gall tell the compelling story of how the Navy discharged him after he truthfully answered the question of whether he was gay. Come ask questions as to what you can do to repeal the military's discriminatory policy against gays and lesbians who would like to join the military and serve their country. Discuss why at this time, when the military needs more eager and dedicated service personnel than ever, it is turning away willing and trained soldiers, sailors and pilots based solely on their sexual orientation. The event will be held on Monday, September 29, 2007, 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 pm. The John Marshall Law School, Room 1102.;

LGBT Programming at the Illinois State Bar Association

October 17, 2008 at 12:00 p.m.--Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Meeting, ISBA Chicago Office, 20 S. Clark, Suite 900.

December 11, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.--Task Force on Diversity Meeting, ISBA Midyear Meeting, ISBA Chicago Office, 20 S. Clark, Suite 900.

December 12, 2008 at 8:30 a.m.--Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Meeting, ISBA Midyear Meeting, Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers

LAVENDER LAW

Lavender Law 2008 was a huge success with over 165 recruiters, over 1,300 attendees, and numerous substantive programming. Lavender Law 2008 was a celebration of NLGLA's 20th anniversary of Lavender Law, which was held in San Francisco, CA.

Mark your calendars for Lavender Law 2009, which is to be held in Brooklyn, New York, September 10-12.

JUDICIAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Judicial Evaluation Committee is almost finished with rating the approximately 70 judges who will be seeking retention in the November 2008 general election. Ratings on those candidates will be released in early October and will be on our website (www.lagbac.org). Please contact Mark Dupont (312-435-3001) if you have any questions about the JEC or think you might be interested in serving on the committee.

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CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION/YOUNG LAWYERS' SECTION COMMITTEE FOR LGBT RIGHTS

The CBA/YLS Committee for LGBT Rights allows regular opportunities for lawyers interested in LGBT legal issues to meet in a supportive, professional atmosphere to exchange ideas and information. The committee furthers the professional development of LGBT attorneys through the sharing of information at monthly meetings and continuing legal education programs. The committee offers an environment where lawyers and student members of the CBA can discuss practical issues of "coming out" in law school or in the workplace. The committee also enables the Association to sponsor programs that would improve access to the legal and judicial system by members of the LGBT community. All meetings are held at the CBA, 321 South Plymouth Court, on the third Monday of each month beginning at 12:15pm unless otherwise noted.

LAGBAC FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS.... IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The LAGBAC Foundation awarded three scholarships for summer 2008. This allowed our three recipients to spend the summer working for LGBT causes. As part of their scholarship requirements, we asked them to write a short reaction paper detailing their experiences...

This summer I was an intern at the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC). Specifically, I worked in the area of asylum law as it relates to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or HIV status, under NIJC's National Asylum Partnership on Sexual Orientation (NAPSO). The internship was a great experience and exceeded my expectations. Overall, I found the work challenging, interesting, and exciting.

During the course of the summer I worked with Jonathan Eoloff, who represents LGBT/HIV immigrants and asylum seekers who have fled their home countries due to the persecution they suffered because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or HIV status. I assisted Jonathan in representing his clients in their affirmative applications before the Chicago Asylum Office, an office of the Department of Homeland Security, and in a defensive posture in deportation proceedings before the Immigration Court. I also worked on cases of individuals who have been denied admission into the U.S. or adjustment of their status to lawful permanent resident because of their HIV status.

I had many high points during my summer with NIJC. I gained great knowledge of immigration law, while improving my legal writing and analytical skills. I also found the experience of assisting in the amicus brief to be extremely gratifying. However, the highest points of my summer internship were working one-on-one with clients. These experiences were both challenging and gratifying because they gave me the greatest sense of the impact I was making on their lives. The LAGBAC summer scholarship program is a great opportunity for law students. I feel privileged to have been a recipient. I feel that my summer internship with NIJC is extremely valuable to my career and scholarly goals. I now have a strong understanding of the immigration system and an interest in pursuing future opportunities in the area of immigration law. While I have always had an interest in LGBT and HIV rights, this experience has broadened that experience to a new level. I will be able to use this experience in my career, the LGBT and legal community, and to my involvement with the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

- Shaun Sperling

This past summer I interned at Equality Illinois, where I was in charge of a legal project for the small, non-profit organization. The organization functions as a lobbying group to the Illinois legislature and their mission is to fight for, protect, and advance the cause of the LGBT community in Illinois. Equality Illinois is currently working to pass Illinois House bill HB1826, which would create a system of civil unions in the state of Illinois. On the last vote, the bill failed by a small margin. Equality Illinois is currently working to convince legislators to support the bill and pass civil unions. In the next few months, HB1826 will be up for the third and final vote in the General Assembly. The project I worked on will create a catalogue of all the state laws in Illinois that affect marriage. These laws would demonstrate the many rights and benefits that are bestowed to couples upon marriage through concepts such as rights of survivors. Since Illinois does not recognize same-sex marriages performed here or in other states, my project aimed to highlight all the ways in which the Illinois government discriminates against same-sex couples by not providing them with the right to marry. A similar study was done last year in New York State and provided a model to follow. Further, there have been numerous studies done on the national level that also provided help throughout my project.

My experience with Equality Illinois exposed me to a different side of the law that I had never considered. Before the summer, I assumed, like most law students, that I would work for some large firm after law school making a high salary but only mildly enjoying the work. Now, after my summer with Equality Illinois, I have realized that there are multiple tracks I can follow to pursue my career goal of being a lawyer. I discovered that even outside of being a lawyer, there are many ways I can continue to be involved with the law and legal policy. For instance, I can go into lobbying or policy work. I could help fight for the causes I care about while using my legal education in analyzing policies and outcomes. The summer helped open my eyes to numerous possibilities after law school and things I am now willing to consider while planning my legal career. Equality Illinois gave me the amazing opportunity to work for something I care about while teaching me what it means to be an engaged member of the community. This summer was uniquely rewarding and it won't be something I will soon forget. There is no better feeling than using my qualities and abilities as a law student to help those who have been neglected by the law. I would like to say thank you to LAGBAC for the generous stipend this past summer. The scholarship I was given allowed me to pursue a job that I wanted to do while providing me with reasonable financial means. Without this assistance, I would not have been able to work for Equality Illinois and I would not have had this amazing experience.

- Clay Rebrig

This summer I worked on several projects for the Lambda attorneys as part of my summer internship with Lambda Legal. The first project involved gathering information about cities and other public entities that had enacted domestic partnership benefits for their employees and successfully defended those benefits against attacks based on Defense of Marriage laws. The project looked at the rationale courts had used to determine that domestic partnership employee benefits were unrelated to issues of same-sex marriage, civil unions, or similar constructions seeking legal recognition of same-sex partnerships, and the project was designed to be a first step in defending public entities offering domestic partner benefits from attacks by those seeking to uphold state Defense of marriage laws. Another project looked at the role ERISA would play in a case where a private employer's insurance refused to cover infertility treatments given to a covered same-sex partner of an employee with domestic partner health benefits, on the grounds that infertility treatments were only available to heterosexual couples. The largest project we worked on was compiling a database of third-party custody and visitation rights in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This database will be used to help attorneys for non-biological parents determine the extent of their visitation rights to the children they conceived with ex-partners.

There were several high points in my summer internship with Lambda. One amazing experience we had was attending the "Be-in" transvestite, transsexual and transgender conference in Schaumburg, where one of our staff attorneys was giving a primer on the current state of transgender rights law. The attendees were courageous, activist, extremely open and friendly, and interested in building a truly diverse community. Another high point of the summer was marching in gay pride with the Lambda float. Afterwards a man in a bar wanted to shake my hand because I worked for Lambda. I'm not sure if I could have worked for Lambda without the scholarship. With it, I was able to get a feel for the shape of same-sex family law, constitutional law, labor and employment law, and health law. I saw how exciting LGBT law issues are right now, and I felt that I could make a contribution to the work Lambda does doing impact litigation to make a better legal landscape for all LGBT people everywhere who just want to live their lives, work their jobs, and take care of their partners and families. Working at Lambda helped me see how important same-sex family law is to securing LGBT rights, and my experience helped solidify my interest in practicing and doing scholarship in LGBT family law. Because of my experience, I am working on a paper looking at inconsistencies in same-sex adoption law across the country. Thank you for the opportunity you gave me to serve the LGBT community and explore my interests in LGBT law. I hope I will make a contribution that will multiply your investment a thousandfold.

- Jaime Hovey

**COME JOIN US!
MEET THE BAR NIGHT**

at



September 26 - October 24 - November 21

Join practitioners, judges, and the students of The John Marshall Law School, DePaul University College of Law, Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Chicago-Kent College of Law, University of Chicago Law School, and Northwestern University School of Law in a casual setting. (Free for members - \$5 for guests) If your firm would like to sponsor a Meet the Bar Night, contact Jeremy Gottschalk at jgottschalk@lagbac.org.

LAGBAC MEMBER DIRECTORY

A resource for members, the LAGBAC Member Directory provides contact and practice related information on its members through the website, on a voluntary basis. It is available to LAGBAC members only, and is designed to provide current and specific information about the member's area of practice, firm, specialties, whether or not the member's firm or practice is LGBT friendly, and whether the member is open to accepting referrals. The Directory is updated and kept current based upon member-submitted data, on a regular basis. The LAGBAC Member Directory is for informational purposes only. LAGBAC neither endorses any member nor the quality or nature of the services offered or provided. Persons who use the directory agree and acknowledge that LAGBAC is not liable for any representations contained in the directory or for any matter in connection with representation by a member as a consequence of or arising from the referral. The directory is available on LAGBAC's website, at www.lagbac.org. To become a participating member of the Directory, please complete and return the attached LAGBAC Member Directory form to: LAGBAC Member Directory, by regular mail to: c/o LAGBAC, P.O. Box 64933, Chicago, Illinois 60664-0933, or pdfs by e-mail to jgottschalk@lagbac.org.

**ARE YOU
A
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OF
LAGBAC?**

Join now by going to www.lagbac.org or mailing your membership dues to:

LAGBAC
P.O. Box 64933
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LAGBAC members enjoy the following benefits:

- *Meet the Bar nights (nonmembers and guests will be charged \$5);
- *Lawyers for Diversity Mid-Summer Barbecue (nonmembers, non-sponsoring firms & guests will be charged to attend);
- * Judge's Pride Reception and other receptions and events;
- *Continuing Legal Education seminars (as offered);
- *Membership on LAGBAC's committees; and
- *Much, much more...

Future communication from LAGBAC will be electronic. You MUST provide us with an email address to receive future information and newsletters. If you are unable to accept electronic communications, please note that on this form and add \$10 to your dues. Membership runs January 1-December 31.

Name: _____
Address: _____
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Amount Enclosed: _____

ANNUAL DUES:
_____ Sustaining Member \$100
_____ Sponsoring Member \$75
_____ Regular Member \$50
_____ Student Member \$30 (*valid through
December 31 of graduating year*)
*If applying for Student Membership,
please indicate law school/graduation
date: _____*