

President's Corner



By Allen M. Terrell, Jr., Esquire

Last month, I wrote about the history of the various sections and committees of the Bar and encouraged DSBA members to become involved with a section or committee. This month, I want to highlight some of the specific activities of the sections and committees.

The Multicultural Judges and Lawyers Section ("MJLS") is one of the many active sections and committees of the DSBA. One of the key objectives of MJLS is to further the interests of attorneys, judges, and members of the community of diverse backgrounds, and MJLS accordingly strives to increase diversity in the membership of the Delaware Bar. Membership in the MJLS is open to anyone who would like to help further its mission and it encourages membership from lawyers in Delaware whether or not they are lawyers of color.

While the first member of a racial minority group was admitted to the Delaware bar in 1929, there was no consistent trend of admitting minorities between 1929 and 1980. In response to this problem, the MJLS created the Minority Supplemental Bar Review Program to "increase the diversity of the Delaware bar and enhance the success of minority applicants." Notwithstanding its objective, the Minority Supplemental Bar Review Program is a first-come, first-served program that is open to any applicant, regardless of race. Information about the program is provided to all of the area law schools and bar review offices. The program is only intended to supplement, not replace, an applicant's commercial bar review course, and consists of lectures, one-on-one discussion groups, coaching, intensive practice essay exams and critiques, and review of questions and answers to previous bar exams. The lecturers, mentors, and exam reviewers are volunteers from MJLS

or past program participants. Because it is staffed entirely by volunteers, the number of available spots in the program is limited, but MJLS attempts to accommodate as many interested applicants as possible.

The Minority Supplemental Bar Review Program has been highly successful in increasing the number of minority applicants admitted to the Delaware bar. For its efforts in increasing diversity amongst the ranks of the Delaware bar, the MJLS recently received a Partnership Award from the American Bar Association. This prestigious award is given to four state bar associations each year for "outstanding bar association projects that seek to increase the participation and advancement of lawyers of color in the organized bar and to attract students of color to the legal profession." The efforts of the MJLS in developing and administering the Minority Supplemental Bar Review Program is but one example of the important role that the Sections of the DSBA fulfill.

Other active sections include the Women and the Law Section and the New Lawyers Section. The mission of the Women and the Law Section ("WLS") includes addressing the effect of the law upon women in Delaware and the delivery of legal services to them, as well as, furthering the role of women in the Delaware legal community. The WLS has several subcommittees dedicated to furthering its mission, including subcommittees on alternative work schedules, childcare, legislation, human rights, and female incarceration. A few examples of the subcommittees' many projects include arranging an outstanding childcare award, given each year by Governor Minner, and the coordination of library visits for incarcerated women. The WLS also hosts an annual Women and the Law retreat.

Membership in the New Lawyers Section ("NLS") is open to newly admitted Delaware attorneys who have been practicing for ten years or less in Delaware. The NLS sponsors seminars relevant to the issues facing new attorneys and hosts a variety of social gatherings designed to promote collegiality and help new lawyers establish roots in the legal community.

Finally, the Veterans Law Committee was recently formed to help its members and other veterans of the United States armed services with legal issues. The Committee plans to use its members' legal skills and training to work with veterans service organizations, private citizens, charitable institutions, *pro bono* legal service organizations, government officials, and others that already assist members and veterans of the armed services in Delaware, and to provide service and support to lawyers who assist veterans.

While these and other sections address particular concerns of the bar, the majority of the sections focus on substantive areas of the law. For example, some of our biggest sections currently are the Corporation Law, Estates and Trusts, Litigation, and Real & Personal Property Sections. These sections are of particular value to attorneys practicing in these areas both because the sections provide CLE training and also because they provide the opportunity to get to know others who are practicing in the same areas.

Unfortunately, I do not have enough space in this column to highlight the projects of all of the active Sections and Committees. The Sections, Committees and activities that I have discussed are intended to serve as examples of the relevance and importance of membership in a Section or Committee and to hopefully provide further encouragement for DSBA members to participate. 