

# 2008 Awards of Distinction Honor Public Service, Diversity, and Technology

by David Montoya

Three award winners emerged from several worthy nominations considered this year by the Awards of Distinction Committee. The awards were presented during the opening plenary of the 2008 Annual Education Conference in Toronto, Ontario.

The Award of Distinction for Public Service went to Touro Law Center — Public Advocacy Center, for the creation and support of the William Randolph Hearst Public Advocacy Center.

The Award of Distinction for Diversity went to Lavender Law Career Fair, for becoming the nation's largest recruiting event for the GLBT legal community.

The Award of Distinction for Technology went to the OSCAR Development Staff for creation of the Online System for Clerkship Application and Review, which streamlines and simplifies the judicial clerkship process for judges, applicants, and recommenders.

## Recognizing a Commitment to Public Service

Touro Law Center's William Randolph Hearst Public Advocacy Center, under the leadership of Executive Director Tom Maligno, brings together nonprofit legal advocacy agencies to provide service to the local community and beyond, while affording Touro students the opportunity for pro bono work and hands-on legal training. The first of its kind in the nation, the Center currently houses 15 nonprofit legal advocacy agencies within the law school at no cost to the agencies.

More than 30 other affiliate organizations are also furnished access to Touro Law facilities, faculty, and students. The resident agencies and affiliates employ law students, who gain understanding of the problems facing their community while honing legal skills.

The Center organizes monthly meetings with resident and affiliate agencies to provide a forum for collaboration and support among all participants. The meetings include educational programming with legislators, judges, law professors, and other guest speakers who cover relevant and timely topics on laws, court interaction, and advice on trial preparation. Agencies share ideas, perspectives, and resources to better serve their constituents.

Throughout the year, Touro Law also hosts and co-hosts several educational conferences with Center agencies. The conferences have included *Erase Racism*, *Keys for the Homeless*, *Human Trafficking*, *Civil Gideon*, and many others. The conferences connect experts with interested individuals for exchange of ideas and discussion while also providing a stage for greater exposure to important community issues.

The Center is a clear demonstration of Touro Law's dedication to instilling in students the benefits of pro bono work and the value such work has in the community.

## Recognizing Advancement for Diversity

Begun as a small "table talk" event during the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association's Philadelphia conference in 2002, the Lavender Law Career Fair has grown to over 150 legal employ-

ers and 500 student candidates. It is the only national career fair of its kind, designed to achieve a sense of community and inclusion for GLBT candidates within the legal profession's recruiting efforts. Participating candidates interact directly with recruiters from law firms, government agencies, GLBT rights groups, and legal departments who seek to hire and mentor GLBT candidates.

This year's 2007 fair included for the first time individual career counseling to students. The 2008 program will formalize this new service, providing students the opportunity to meet on-site with legal career services professionals. Qualified counselors will be available to offer advice on résumés, cover letters, the interviewing process, and their career choices.

For its tremendous growth and significant contribution to NALP's mission to advocate for diversity, the Lavender Law Career Fair is deserving of this award.

## Recognizing Advancement in Technology

The Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (OSCAR) simplifies and streamlines the judicial clerkship application process for judges, applicants, and their recommenders. The preparation and delivery of judicial clerkship applications and recommendation letters is a labor-intensive, time-consuming, and expensive process. OSCAR has saved time and money and helped to level the field by lowering financial and information obstacles for applicants and schools.

In just three years OSCAR has grown from a pilot project to *the* single online application system for the federal judiciary. OSCAR now assists 800 judges from all circuits and nearly 6,000 applicants. The Judicial Conference of the United States this year assured permanent funding and oversight of the system through the Administrative Office of the US Courts.

Credited for getting off the ground the mammoth undertaking of creating and developing OSCAR is the OSCAR Development Staff: Laura Simon, Management Analyst, U. S. District Bankruptcy Courts for the District of Columbia; Christopher Warner, Assistant Director for Automation and Technology, U. S. District Bankruptcy Courts for the District of Columbia; and Mark Soltys, Assistant Circuit Executive, U. S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. For their years of hard work and generous collaboration with NALP and the OSCAR Working Group, Laura, Chris, and Mark are deservedly recognized.

Please join the Awards of Distinction Committee in congratulating the Touro Law Center — Public Advocacy Center, Lavender Law Career Fair, and the OSCAR Development Staff for their outstanding achievements and contributions this past year.

## 2008 Awards of Distinction Committee

The members of the 2008 Awards of Distinction Committee were: Chair Gayle Englert, NALP Vice-President (Cole, Schotz, Meisel, Forman & Leonard, P.A.); Vice-Chair David Montoya, NALP Treasurer (The University of Texas School of Law); Members: Magalie Austin (Florida International University College of Law), Susan Guindi (University of Michigan Law School), and Amy Hancock (Andrews Kurth, LLP).

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