



# CONNECTICUT ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION E-NEWSLETTER

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## CAPABA Founder Is Recipient of 2006 Edwin Archer Randolph Diversity Award

by Shirley Ma

Amy Lin Meyerson, CAPABA’s founder and first president, will be presented with the 2006 Edwin Archer Randolph Diversity Award on April 26, 2006, at the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, by the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity, Inc. (“LCD”), formerly known as the Connecticut Lawyers Group. The Edwin Archer Randolph Award is presented to an individual or organization who has demonstrated the ability to influence change, while inspiring others to include and advance women and attorneys of color in Connecticut’s legal community. The award is named for Edwin Archer Randolph, a Yale Law School graduate, who was the first attorney of color, admitted to the Connecticut Bar in 1880.

Amy was selected from a number of outstanding nominees with many more years of experience. However, her ability to influence change while inspiring others to include and advance attorneys of color in Connecticut is evident in the short time she has been part of Connecticut’s legal community. Amy founded CAPABA in 2000, and under her direction provided a much needed support network for Asian Pacific American attorneys and law students. At the first CAPABA annual dinner, the first “official” gathering of Asian Pacific American attorneys in Connecticut, there were only thirty attendees. In five years, the number of attendees have more than tripled, and includes not just Asian Pacific American attorneys, but attorneys of all colors.

Amy has also advocated for nominating Asian Pacific American lawyers to the bench in Connecticut and was instrumental in having an Asian Pacific American appointed on the Judicial Selection Committee. Thanks, in part, to her efforts, Connecticut finally has an Asian Pacific American judge.

Amy’s other notable achievements include her current role as President of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA). This is a culmination of her years of service with NAPABA as its President-Elect (2004-2005), Vice President of Membership (2003-2004), and Vice President of Communications (2001-2003).

Furthermore, Amy is active in the American Bar Association (ABA). She is currently the Chair of the Outreach Committee for the General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division, a member of the Standing Committee on Technology and Information Systems, and a Fellow of the ABA.

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## President's Message by Joe Khanna

Welcome to CAPABA's new E-newsletter. I want to devote this message to a discussion of a recent meeting, held early on the morning of Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup> by CAPABA's Board of Directors. We met at Pitney Bowes' facility in Danbury to set the strategic vision for CAPABA for the coming two years. This was a mandatory strategy session and thus, all Directors participated. A volunteer moderator from Pitney Bowes, Michael Holmes, served as facilitator.

The strategy session was very successful. The Board was able to refine CAPABA's mission statement to better reflect the the broader goals of the association:

*CAPABA's mission is to advocate and advance the interests of Asian Pacific American lawyers, the legal profession and Asian Pacific American communities throughout the State of Connecticut.*

The Board also identified five concrete goals for the next two years. They are to: (1) Increase paid membership and participation; (2) Create infrastructure (finances, committees, etc.); (3) Increase visibility (through, among other things, community service, signature events, outreach and collaboration with other minority organizations); (4) Gain greater awareness of APA issues; and (5) Provide professional development opportunities.

However, these goals cannot be achieved without your active participation in CAPABA. One way we hope to jump start your involvement in the organization and to improve communication between the Officers and the membership is to launch CAPABA's e-Newsletter.

I welcome your active involvement in making this new e-Newsletter a success by contributing articles that you think will be of interest to CAPABA's membership. All story ideas should be submitted to CAPABA's Vice President of Communications, Tanya Wolanic at [wolanict@jacksonlewis.com](mailto:wolanict@jacksonlewis.com).  
Joe Khanna  
President, 2005-2007  
[joe.khanna@pb.com](mailto:joe.khanna@pb.com)

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## Meyerson Is Recipient of 2006 Edwin Archer Randolph Diversity Award, continued

In addition to Amy's endeavors to increase diversity in the Connecticut legal community, she is a member of TEAM Westport. TEAM (Together Effectively Achieving Multiculturalism) Westport strives to achieve and celebrate a more welcoming, multicultural community in Westport and Weston, Connecticut. Through TEAM Westport, Amy works with the leaders of community organizations in Westport and Weston to reinforce awareness and encourage activity planning to include multicultural issues.

Come join CAPABA on April 26, 2006 at 6 pm at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford to celebrate Amy's many achievements and learn how she has advanced APA lawyers and the APA community here in Connecticut. Please **rsvp** to the event by **April 17th** to Dawn Gezelman at (860) 275-0507 or [dgezelman@dbh.com](mailto:dgezelman@dbh.com). *This event is free of charge, but rsvps are required.* To highlight the achievements of CAPABA's diversity trailblazer, any organization or individual interested in sponsoring the event honoring Amy may also contact Dawn Gezelman.

## **■ A Word From NAPABA from Amy Lin Meyerson**

Greetings from NAPABA! NAPABA has had an exceptional year so far – due in large part to the hard work of the NAPABA Board and its Staff. We currently have four people working in our DC office – Executive Director Les Jin, Policy Director Jiny Kim, Administrator Katharine Williams, and Administrative Assistant Nnenna Uzochukwu.

NAPABA continues to create opportunities for its members in the areas of career development, public service and advocacy for APA communities. For example, there will be networking and CLE opportunities at our upcoming Northeast Regional Conference in New York City on May 20 and at the NAPABA 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention that will be held at The Westin Philadelphia from November 9-12, 2006. We hope you will be able to attend both of these events.

In May, NAPABA affiliates will be joining together to participate in NAPABA's APA Heritage Month "Legal Access to Justice" Project to educate and advocate on the need for improved language access to the courts and to identify and document the language access needs of the APA communities across the country. NAPABA looks forward to working with CAPABA and other affiliates to make this year's public service project a success.

Partnering with other national APA organizations, NAPABA established the first-ever APA Community Education and Legal Clinic for Hurricane Katrina Legal Aid focusing on limited English proficient Vietnamese, Chinese & Korean communities in the New Orleans area. NAPABA Staffers Les Jin and Jiny Kim recruited 12 attorneys and 14 law students and traveled to New Orleans this past weekend. Over the course of two days, the Clinic helped over 100 people. If you are interested in participating in future Clinic sessions, volunteer sign up information is on the NAPABA website at [www.napaba.org](http://www.napaba.org). In this initial Clinic session, NAPABA supplied the lawyers and law students while Juliet Choi of the Asian American Justice Center in Washington, DC spearheaded the community outreach efforts. Many thanks go to Paul Lee of Goodwin Procter in Boston, MA who we also credit for the Clinic's success. As many of you know, Paul's generous establishment of the NAPABA Law Partners Fellowship gave Juliet the opportunity to do the good work she does at the AAJC.

Feel free to contact me at [amy@almesq.com](mailto:amy@almesq.com) with any questions or comments about NAPABA or its upcoming events.

## **UCONN Diversity Networking Event a Success**

by An-Ping Hsieh

On February 9th, CAPABA together with South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut (SABAC), the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA) and the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association co-sponsored the first ever Diversity Networking Event. The event was intended as an informal gathering of law students and attorneys to discuss issues and careers and to generally have an enjoyable evening. Over 75 people attended the event, including students and attorneys from government, firms and local corporations.

Participation was enhanced by special guests: Judge Nina Elgo (also a Board member of CAPABA), John Rose (Corporation Counsel for the City of Hartford), and U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut, Kevin O'Connor.

## **Efforts to Establish an Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission** by Angel Feng

CAPABA has been collaborating with a task force of community leaders to urge the Connecticut legislature to establish an Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (APAAC). The APAAC will give the growing APA community a political voice. Its mission will be:

- To promote and improve the economic development, education, physical and mental health, social well-being, and political empowerment of the Asian Pacific American community in the State of Connecticut.

- To bring together the diverse Asian Pacific American community.
- To further collaboration and mutual support among all Connecticut residents.
- To serve as a resource for law makers, government officials, and the public on Asian Pacific American issues.

The task force has set forth to unite the diverse sectors of the APA community and to organize the community. The task force will hold a retreat on Saturday, June 3, 2006, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Guest speakers will discuss health disparities, lack of cultural competency resources, and voting (facilitating voter registration in communities).

For more information about the efforts of the task force, contact Angel Feng, [afeng@ghla.org](mailto:afeng@ghla.org).

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## **Connecticut's Bar Associations Working Together** by Joe Khanna

The Connecticut Bar Association's Council of Bar Presidents hosted a reception in January bringing together the presidents of CAPABA, the South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut and the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association with the leaders of other state and local bar associations. The purpose of the reception was to discuss how all of the bar associations in the state can work together to develop necessary relationships to help make all bar associations here in Connecticut more successful. CAPABA President, Joe Khanna, and CAPABA Vice President of Communications, Tanya Wolanic, represented CAPABA. Representatives from each of the minority bar associations had an opportunity to talk about the history and purpose of the bar association they represented. The meeting expanded to discuss issues of diversity in the legal profession in Connecticut in general as well as the topic of bar associations working more closely together.

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## **UCONN Sponsors Women's Panel** By Tanya Wolanic

On February 9, 2006, the Women's Law Student Association and the Moot Court Board of the University of Connecticut School of Law sponsored "May it Please the Court" in order to increase the interest and participation of women law students in oral advocacy and litigation. Judge Nina Elgo, who is on the Board of Directors of CAPABA, along with fellow panelists, Judge Anne Dranginis, and Assistant Attorney General Antoria Howard and Attorney E.J. Robbin, a partner at Rogin, Nassau, Caplan, Lassman and Hirtle, addressed and fielded many questions from a well-attended crowd of women and men about the rewards and challenges of being litigators.

## CBA Diversity Committee Meeting Update

by Shirley Ma

The Diversity Committee of the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) convened on February 6, 2006, at the CBA's offices in New Britain. Attorneys Dean R. Singewald and Daniel A. Schwartz, both of Epstein Becker & Green PC of Stamford, are this year's co-chairs. Committee members are selected by CBA President Lou Pepe. Amongst this year's committee members, CAPABA is represented by Joe Khanna, President; Shirley S. Ma, President-Elect/Treasurer; and Tanya Wolanic, Vice President of Communications. CAPABA member Asker Saeed was also present to lend a voice to the South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut (SABAC).

Through the Diversity Committee, the CBA has made a commitment to its Diversity Initiative which seeks to promote and encourage diversity in the legal profession. The goal of the Diversity Initiative is for the legal community to recognize and embrace diversity. The Diversity Initiative's objectives are as follows: to increase the diversity of the CBA and the legal profession; to create more opportunities for diverse lawyers to obtain leadership positions within the CBA and to advance their careers; to promote interaction and the exchange of ideas, experiences and perspectives; and to make the legal profession more attractive to individuals with diverse backgrounds.

Committee members broke out into teams to brain storm on three areas: (1) determine what types of programs that can be established and/or what changes can be made to the CBA to improve the diversity of the Association, its leadership and/or its programs; (2) encourage more attorneys of color to practice in Connecticut; and (3) identify long term projects/programs that can be established to broaden the diversity of the legal profession in Connecticut. Out of the brainstorming session, three themes emerged, which will be further addressed by a subcommittee. Those themes include reviewing CBA structure and governance to determine whether any infrastructure changes can be made to address diversity issues; outreach to members and law students; and creating a pipeline by exposing middle and high school students to the legal profession.

Co-chairs Dean and Dan emphasized at the meeting that the Diversity Committee was not a "Task Force"; it was not charged with "looking" at the issue of diversity, or issuing a "report." Rather, the Diversity Committee is charged to advance programs where it sees fit, make proposals or recommendations where the larger CBA is needed, and to raise the profile of the issue within the CBA. By engaging the mainstream bar, and participating in the Diversity Committee, CAPABA hopes to bring greater awareness to the issues faced by minority attorneys in Connecticut.

Please send any articles or information, such as news or announcements, that you would like to have published in the next issue of the CAPABA E-Newsletter to Tanya Wolanic at [wolanict@jacksonlewis.com](mailto:wolanict@jacksonlewis.com). Please also feel free to provide suggestions for future articles or comments on what you read.

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