

Bar Announces Award Winners

The D.C. Bar has selected John Payton, president and director-counsel of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Educational Fund and former partner at WilmerHale LLP, as the recipient of the 2008 Thurgood Marshall Award.

The award is presented biennially to an individual who has shown a strong commitment to and excellence in the fields of civil rights and individual liberties.

Payton, a former D.C. Bar president who served as corporation counsel for the District of Columbia from 1991 to 1994, will receive the award as part of the Bar's Annual Business Meeting and Awards Dinner on June 26.

The dinner also will feature the presentation of the Frederick B. Abramson Award to Project 990 of the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program's Community Economic Development Project.

The Legal Ethics Committee and the Rules of Professional Conduct Review Committee will present the Best Bar Project Award to Table of Affected Legal Ethics Opinions.

Two categories resulted in a tie. The Best Section Award will be shared by the Corporation, Finance and Securities Law Section and the Litigation Section, while the Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award will be shared by David Cleveland of the Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services and Seth Galanter, of counsel at Morrison & Foerster LLP.

The Government Contracts and Litigation Section's Government Procurement Training Program has been chosen the Best Section Community Outreach program, while Dickstein Shapiro LLP has been named Pro Bono Law Firm of the Year.

The evening begins at 6 with the Presidents' Reception, honoring incoming Bar president Robert J. Spagnoletti and benefitting the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program, followed by the Annual Business Meeting and Awards Dinner at 7:30. Both events will be held at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Avenue NW.

For more information on the Presi-



John Payton

dents' Reception and the Annual Business Meeting and Awards Dinner, visit www.dcbar.org/annual_meeting. —K.A.

Conference Offers Panel Discussion on Access to Justice Commission

The Judicial & Bar Conference on April 10 and 11 featured numerous seminars and other programs, among them a forum on the D.C. Access to Justice Commission.

The commission was created by the D.C. Court of Appeals for an initial three-year term in 2005 to address the unmet civil legal needs of low- and moderate-income District residents. The court issued an order in October extending the commission indefinitely.

Taking part in the panel discussion were Commission Chair Peter Edelman, a professor at the

Georgetown University Law Center; Patty Mullahy Fugere, executive director of the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless; Andrew Marks, a partner at Crowell & Moring LLP; and Inez Smith Reid, associate judge for the D.C. Court of Appeals. The commission's executive director, Sunil Mansukhani, served as moderator.

The panelists discussed how \$3.2 million in District funding in fiscal years 2007 and 2008 has resulted in the hiring of 31 legal services lawyers to work on

D.C. BAR TO PETITION COURT FOR DUES CEILING INCREASE

As *Washington Lawyer* went to press, the D.C. Bar Board of Governors was in the final stages of preparing a petition to the District of Columbia Court of Appeals requesting an increase in the Bar's dues ceiling to allow the organization to fund its activities for the next five years. Once finalized, the petition will be available online at www.dcbar.org/dues_ceiling. It is anticipated that the D.C. Court of Appeals will invite member comment on the petition.

housing issues and in underserved areas of the District, a shared legal interpreter bank for legal services providers, and a loan repayment program for legal services lawyers.

The commission also has numerous other initiatives.

"We have a long agenda... There's a huge amount to do to increase the quality and quantity of legal services," Edelman said.

Looking at how to assist pro se litigants at the D.C. Office of Administrative Hearings; enhancing the coordination of intake and referrals at legal services providers and creating support backup capacity; working with the D.C. Bar to encourage the pro bono support of mid-sized law firms; and looking at the results

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



From left, Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) are this year's recipients of the Joel A. Toubin Memorial Award, presented during the Whitman-Walker Clinic's "Going the Extra Mile" reception on April 3. The award recognizes the support and contributions of individuals advocating for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. —K.A.

of its legal needs assessment, which will be released as a report later this year, are among the items on the commission's agenda.—*K.A.*

Panel Discussion Defines, Debates Significance of Impact Litigation

Leonard Becker, who had served as bar counsel for the District as well as general counsel to the executive office of Mayor Anthony Williams, said he first heard of the phrase *impact litigation* when he was asked to moderate the D.C. Bar's discussion on the subject at the Judicial & Bar Conference.

"What is impact litigation?" Becker asked, and was told the term was for a distinguished panel of speakers to define. Becker laid out a working definition—"Any class-action suit or individual civil damage action which... is brought to vindicate or advance the rights or interests of aggrieved persons who are interacting with [the government]... which has the objective or the effect... intended or otherwise, of initiating... systemic change in government administration and policy"—upon which he invited the panel to expound and expand.

The panelists were Mary Cheh, a D.C. councilmember representing Ward

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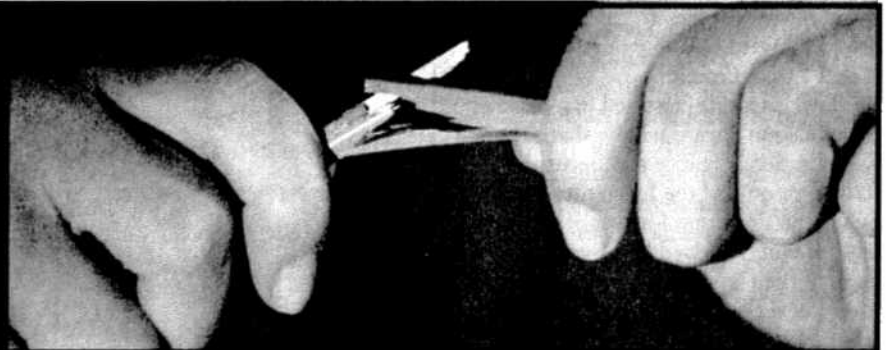
3 and law professor at The George Washington University; Michael Lewis, a leader in mediation and conflict resolution in cases involving governments; Richard Love, a senior assistant with the Appellate Division of the D.C. Attorney General's Office, and Peter Nickles, the interim attorney general and general counsel to Mayor Adrian M. Fenty.

Nickles, who was involved in some of the most notable and longest-running litigation against the District government, said he has seen the issue of

impact litigation from both sides and cautioned that such remedies as receiverships should only be used as a last resort, "when a government is recalcitrant." Nickles was a key figure bringing the grievances of prisoners at the now-closed Lorton prison and patients at St. Elizabeths mental hospital before joining the Fenty administration.

"It absolutely destroys the morale of the agency," he said, adding it can be very hard to get rid of a receiver if it doesn't work out, harder than it was to remove

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