



SABA-DC News

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NASABA FOUNDATION/ SABA-DC 2008 PUBLIC INTEREST SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Please join us in congratulating the 2008 NASABA Foundation/SABA-DC Public Interest fellows: Ms. Shiwali Patel, of American University's Washington College of Law, Class of 2010 and Mr. Feraz Ashraf, University of Toledo College of Law, Class of 2010.

Ms. Patel will work this summer with the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs at the DC Prisoners' Project. Shiwali is a graduate of Boston University where she has a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and a minor in women's studies.

Mr. Ashraf will work this summer with the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center's (APALRC) domestic violence program. Feraz has a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Michigan.

We would like to thank everyone who applied and wish Ms. Patel and Mr. Ashraf great success at their summer positions.

MAY 2008

In This Issue . . .

| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| SABA-DC News | 1-4 |
| Recent Events | 5 |
| Upcoming Events | 6 |
| Save the Date | 7 |
| Public Interest | 8 |
| Spotlight on Language Access | 9-10 |
| Community Events | 11-12 |
| Law Students | 13-15 |

SABA-DC REFERRAL SERVICE

Looking to promote your legal business? Want to get your name out in the D.C. legal market? Submit your updated contact information to SABA-DC's Referral service. SABA-DC often receives requests for skilled South Asian legal practitioners and this will allow us to refer you. Your information will also be posted on the SABA-DC website. Only SABA-DC member's may advertise their services. There is no cost for this promotional service.

If interested, please email the following information to Padma Shah at secretary@sabadc.org:

- (1) Name
- (2) Firm Name
- (3) Business Address
- (4) Email contact information
- (5) Legal Practice Areas

SABA-DC Endorses D.C. Bar Candidates

The D.C. Bar Nominations Committee announced candidates for the Board of Governors for the 2008–2009 term. The nominees are running for the positions of president-elect, secretary, and treasurer; five vacancies for three-year terms on the Bar’s Board of Governors; and four seats in the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association.

Ballots and instructions for voting (by mail or online) were distributed to all active D.C. Bar members on April 30. Members have until June 6 to vote. Results of the election will be announced on the D.C. Bar’s Web site at www.dcbar.org/elections and at the Bar’s Annual Business Meeting and Awards Dinner on June 26, which takes place at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Avenue NW.

For the first time, SABA-DC will be endorsing six candidates in this year’s D.C. Bar Elections. The SABA-DC endorsements committee evaluated all the candidates and have chosen to endorse the following candidates based on their impressive legal accomplishments, bar leadership, and their significant efforts in advancing and promoting diversity and civil rights.

I. ABA House of Delegates

SABA-DC has endorsed the following candidates for the ABA House of Delegates.

Lucy L Thomson

Ms. Thomson is seeking re-election as an ABA Delegate. She has served in this position for the past four years (two terms). She is also currently the chair of the Homeland Security Committee of the Section Council of the ABA Section of Science & Technology Law.

Ms. Thomson has many years of bar leadership experience, having served on the D.C. Bar Board of Governors, as Bar Secretary, and President of the Women’s Bar Association and its Foundation. She has also previously served as Chair of the Screening Committee of the D.C. Bar and was responsible for ensuring a diverse representation of candidates for important Bar appointments.

Ms. Thomson began her legal career as a civil rights lawyer at the Justice Department. She is currently a senior principal engineer and privacy advocate for the Enforcement, Security and Intelligence Division of the Computer Sciences Corporation.

Marna S. Tucker

Ms. Tucker has served in the position of ABA Delegate from the D.C. Bar for approximately 30 years. She has also previously served as president of the D.C. Bar. As a leader in both the American Bar Association and District of Columbia Bar, Ms. Tucker has lobbied the bar to

devote more time to *pro bono* legal services. In the ABA, Ms. Tucker chaired the Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities, the Special Committee on Public Interest Representation, and the Commission on Domestic Violence, all of whose activities have promoted different aspects of justice for the disadvantaged. Recently, the ABA Section of Individual Rights honored her with the Father Robert Drinan Distinguished Service Award for sustained service in the field of human rights.

As Chair of the Mayor's Commission on Violence Against Women, from October 1996-April 2002, Ms. Tucker worked to assist victims of domestic violence in the District of Columbia. Ms. Tucker also serves on the Board of the D.C. Bar Foundation, which distributes funds to local legal services providers. She is currently a senior partner at Feldesman, Tucker, Leifer, Fidell, LLP.

II. D.C. Bar Board of Governors (Five Vacancies)

A. David J. Cynamon

Mr. Cynamon is a senior litigator with almost 35 years of experience in complex civil trial and appellate litigation. For many years, he has also worked on anti-discrimination cases with, and has been the Co-Chair and Director of the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. Additionally, Mr. Cynamon has previously chaired the Pro Bono program at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman.

In 2007, he was selected as the Washington Lawyer of the Year for Corporate Litigation by the Washington Business Journal and in 2008 he was the recipient of the Lawyer's Committee's Wiley A. Branton Award. Mr. Cynamon is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Council for Court Excellence, and is chair of the Council's Court Improvement Committee. He is currently a litigation partner in the Washington, DC office of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman, LLP.



B. Ankur Goel

Ankur J. Goel is a partner in the law firm of McDermott Will & Emery LLP based in its Washington, D.C. office. Before entering private practice, Ankur was a federal criminal prosecutor in the Justice Department's Criminal Division, Fraud Section, where he was an original member of the Department's health care fraud prosecution unit.

Ankur has also served as Senior Counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, where he advised on health care fraud and other white collar crime legislation. He also is a frequent lecturer and author on health and litigation matters. Ankur was named Outstanding Healthcare Fraud and Compliance Lawyers – 2007 by Nightingale's Healthcare News.

Ankur has been involved with Asian American (and South Asian American) issues and communities throughout his career. He was vice-chair of the Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership, an organization dedicated to encouraging Asian Americans to enter public policy. He also participated in the Asian Pacific American Bar Association, including serving on its judicial nominations committee. Ankur is also a director of the Asian American Justice Center, a national civil rights organization formerly known as the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium.



C. Rebecca McNeil

Rebecca M. McNeill is Of Counsel with Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett, & Dunner, LLP. Rebecca has been active in the DC legal community and is currently serving as Secretary to the D.C. Bar Board of Governors. Rebecca also serves as a Board Member for the Women's Bar Association Foundation.

Since 2001, Rebecca has been active in the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia, and she served on the Board of Directors for two years as Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect. She was active in the WBA's 2006 Initiative on the Advancement and Retention of Women in the Legal Profession, and was the co-producer of the video "Voicing the Vision." Previously, she served for four years as a co-chair for the Intellectual Property Law Forum of the WBA, hosting many CLE programs. Rebecca also served on the 2007 Nominations Committee for the WBA. Ms. McNeil has an active commitment to pro bono work and serving the community. She has represented both felony and misdemeanor clients in criminal cases in DC Superior Court. She has strongly supported increased funding for pro bono legal services, including translation services. Ms. McNeil is an active supporter of her firm's Diversity Committee and has participated in initial meetings and discussions regarding its launch.



D. Benjamin F. Wilson

Benjamin F. Wilson is currently the Managing Shareholder of Beveridge & Diamond, P.C., an environmental and litigation law firm. Mr. Wilson has been a member of mainstream and minority bar associations for more than 15 years. He has been an active in the American Bar Association and the National Bar Association, serving in various leadership capacities. Mr. Wilson serves as an Adjunct Professor in Environmental Law at the Howard University Law School where he teaches courses on Environmental Law and Environmental Justice. He was also appointed to the National Environmental Justice Committee as one of three representatives of Corporate America in 2004. Mr. Wilson also serves as Co-Chairman of the American Bar Association Environmental Justice Committee which received the Committee Excellence Award in 2004 for the Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities.

SABA-DC/AAPI FUNDRAISER FOR UPAKAR

SABA-DC and the American Association of Physicians from India would like to thank those that attended the fundraiser at Indebblue on May 1, 2008. With your help the fundraiser happy hour raised over \$1300 dollars for Upakar. Upakar was founded in 1997 and was created to assist Indian Americans who require financial assistance to pursue an undergraduate degree at a U.S. based college or university. Upakar is proud to award 25 scholarships this year and hopes to grow that number with community support.



SABA-DC June Dinner Series, June 11, 2008 at 7:00 PM
Hanging Out Your Own Shingle - Opening up Your Own Law Practice

Thinking about opening up your own practice? How do you get your first clients? How do you market yourself? Where do you set up your office? What are some of the things to consider? Come to the June Dinner Series to get all of your questions answered. This month's guests are Hassan Ahmad and Ashok Mannava .

Wednesday, June 11, 2008
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
The Indian Experience
1708 L St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 296-7640

Cost: The cost of your dinner

Seating is limited, so please RSVP to Habib Ilahi at hilahi@schertlerlaw.com or at (202) 628-0469.

Hassan M. Ahmad is the founder and principal of the Nubani & Ahmad, PC. Mr. Ahmad also maintains an of counsel relationship with the Law Offices of Kemet & Hunt, PLLC, a College Park, Maryland based general practice, where he heads that firm's immigration practice. Mr. Ahmad has experience in immigration and criminal defense, with a special emphasis on the immigration consequences of criminal activity. He also practices in the area of personal injury. He is fluent in Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi, and is able to speak, read, and write all these languages in their native scripts. He is also proficient in Arabic, French, and Mandarin Chinese. Mr. Ahmad holds a law degree from Tulane Law School in New Orleans , Louisiana. Prior to his career as a lawyer, Mr. Ahmad was a successful and motivational teacher. He taught Urdu and Hindi at North Carolina State University in Raleigh , NC and also taught high school classes in religion and law.

Ashok Mannava is a co-founder of Mannava & Kang, P.C. Ashok 's practice is focused on patent preparation and prosecution in electrical and computer-related technologies, client counseling and management of patent portfolios for our small to mid-size clients. In addition, Ashok has been involved in analyzing patents for infringement and validity issues. His technical expertise includes network devices, storage devices, computer architecture, software, business methods, digital video, and telecommunications including wireless.

Prior to co-founding Mannava & Kang, P.C. , Ashok was a senior patent attorney in the intellectual property group at the law firm of Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering and an associate at the law firm of Banner & Witcoff.

SABA-DC/CAPAL Joint Networking Happy Hour - June 5, 2008 at 6:30 PM
at Gazuza

SABA-DC Wine Tasting Event – June 12, 2008 at Kirkland and Ellis LLP

Mark your calendars for SABA-DC's summer wine-tasting event!

Thursday, June 12, 2008 – Time TBA

Stay tuned for details via email and www.sabadc.org

Also, please send an e-mail to sabastudents@gmail.com if your firm, organization, or agency would like to add law students working with you this summer to the invitation list.

NASABA CONVENTION – June 26-28, 2008



From June 26-29, 2008, the North American South Asian Bar Association (NASABA) will hold the Fifth Annual NASABA Convention aptly themed "Reaching New Heights," and hosted by the Indian-American Bar Association of Chicago (IABA-Chicago) and the Pakistani American Bar Association of North America (PABANA). IABA-Chicago is one of the founding chapters of NASABA and boasts over 450 members in the Chicago area, including four judges, several law professors, and attorneys from a wide-range of legal backgrounds. PABANA, the first Pakistani American Bar Association in the United States, is also rapidly expanding its membership to include law professors, attorneys and law students from diverse legal backgrounds. NASABA anticipates that about 800 attorneys and legal professionals will attend the National Convention. The Saturday night keynote banquet will be held at the Navy Pier Grand Ballroom, with the City of Chicago's famous skyline as the backdrop.

TO REGISTER PLEASE VISIT: <http://www.nasabaconvention.org/>

D.C. Bar Advice and Referral Clinic

SABA-DC provides pro bono assistance on a quarterly basis to the monthly DC Bar Pro Bono Program's Advice and Referral Clinics. We are currently seeking four to five volunteer attorneys to staff the Saturday, June 14 clinic. Attorneys with limited experience are welcome to volunteer; expert mentors and other resources will be available on site.

When: Saturday, June 14 from 9:30am-1:00pm

Where: Bread for the City
1525 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

(Green Line to Shaw/Howard University)

ABOUT THE CLINIC: The Brief Advice and Referral Clinic provides individuals with brief general information and advice on most legal matters governed by DC Law, including debt counseling and bankruptcy, immigration, family law, probate, tax, employment housing, public benefits, and consumer fraud. The Clinic is held on the second Saturday of each month at two sites (Bread for the City's NW and SE locations). The clinic is staffed by volunteers from law firms, government agencies, voluntary bar associations, and DC Bar Sections. In the event individuals require more than information and advice, or assistance completing pro se pleadings, volunteers attempt to locate referrals to other legal service agencies to provide representation. During the past year, nearly 1,000 low income individuals were served through the Clinic.

Although it is impossible to predict, most individuals have pretty basic questions. However, volunteers are not expected to be familiar with every area of the law. In fact, we anticipate that most volunteers will have very little, if any, experience in the types of matters on which they will advise. Therefore, Pro Bono Program staff and expert mentors are available on-site, as well as reference manuals and guidebooks. A follow-up letter or phone call may be appropriate in certain circumstances if a volunteer wishes to check a point of law.

PLEASE NOTE: Attorneys that work in the federal government and/or barred in DC are allowed to provide brief advice at this clinic. Unless you are barred in DC or have an application pending, the DC Bar Pro Bono Program's malpractice insurance cannot cover you. If you are not barred in DC, you can still attend the clinic and provide non-legal assistance in the form of interviewing clients prior to their consultations.

Regardless of your practice area or lack of experience, this is a great opportunity to donate your legal skills to people that really need assistance.

To volunteer/register or for more information, please contact: Padma Shah
secretary@sabadc.org

Language Access for DC Residents

Nadia J. Firozvi
Staff Attorney, Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center

America is a nation of immigrants, and this notion inspires pride amongst those whose ancestors came to the United States searching for freedom they did not have in their home countries, including my own parents. Recently, however, there has been controversy in relation to how far America should extend its arm in welcoming people from other countries.

The difficulties faced by language minorities are not always obvious to the outside observer. Those who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) or Non English Proficient (NEP) cannot speak, read, write, or understand English at a level that permits them to adequately engage with government agencies, health care providers, social service agencies, etc. Families and individuals that are eligible for public assistance have not been able to access services afforded to them because they lack the proficiency to understand government documents or to speak to government employees. Immigrants applying for immigration relief or public benefits associated with their immigrant status are often unable to apply because they lack the requisite language skills to complete applications or speak to immigration officers or government agents.

Currently, the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area is one of eight regions nationwide with at least one million foreign born residents.¹ The need for legal services within low-income immigrant communities cannot be stressed enough. Immigrants face barriers not only related to English proficiency, but more often than not, immigrants are unfamiliar with this country's social and legal framework, they are isolated from family members, and unfortunately, many immigrants are predisposed to poverty.

Limited English Proficiency also significantly impacts victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. While Congress has addressed problems faced by immigrant victims of domestic violence by passing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which allows victims of domestic abuse to acquire lawful immigration status independent of their abusive spouse, successful application of VAWA requires appropriate law enforcement responses as well. Because many immigrant victims of domestic violence have limited English proficiency and are unable to communicate in English, they are often unable to explain their abuse to officers

¹ 2005 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

if and when they are called. Law enforcement officers are, therefore, inclined to speak with “the English speaker,” more often than not the abusive spouse, to acquire an understanding of what may or may not have occurred. This has led to an increased number of arrests of victims of domestic violence.

Moreover, more and more local police are getting involved in immigration enforcement. When Comprehensive Immigration Reform failed in Congress, Prince William County, Virginia supervisors, for example, recently voted to allow local law enforcement to begin checking immigration status of anyone who breaks the law. Additionally, social services to undocumented immigrants have been cut as well.² Similar ideas are being debated throughout communities across the United States.

As stated, the need for legal services within low income immigrant communities cannot be stressed enough. I am currently a staff attorney with the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC) in Washington, DC. The APALRC is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the interests of Asian Americans in the Washington, DC metropolitan area through direct legal services, education, and advocacy. The APALRC’s work has led to the successful passage of the DC Language Access Act in 2004 making it mandatory for the DC government to provide contemporaneous bilingual interpretation and translation of all vital services and documents to LEP District residents, with limited exceptions. The APALRC also works with LEP individuals in matters pertaining to domestic violence, immigration, and employment law. Continued support for organizations like the APALRC and the work of SABA pro bono attorneys would ultimately help District residents access meaningful services.

² <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2007/10/18/DI2007101800988.html>

A Message from South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

At 10 am on May 14th, Indian guest workers, who are victims of trafficking and workplace exploitation on the US Gulf Coast, began a series of actions in Washington DC, including a hunger strike across from the White House. Over 500 Indian guest workers paid up to \$20,000 each to US and Indian recruiters who promised them green cards and visas for their families. Once they arrived in the US, workers found that these promises were false. Their employer, Signal International, held the workers in forced labor camps and subjected them to humiliating treatment, racial slurs, and threats of deportation. In March 2008, over 100 workers broke the trafficking chain by walking off their jobs, reporting Signal to the Department of Justice, and filing a class action lawsuit.

The workers' demands include the right to stay in the US to participate in the investigation of their case; Congressional hearings on the abuses of the guest worker visa program in the US Gulf Coast; and action from the Indian government to protect Indian guest workers and their families in the future.

There are a number of ways that people around the country can show support for the workers, including:

1. Donating- the workers need financial support to continue their journey to justice. Please consider donating - even the cost of your meals for one week - to:

National Immigration Law Center (3435 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2850, Los Angeles, CA 90010).
*Please include **NOWCRJ/IWC** on the subject line*
<http://www.neworleansworkerjustice.org/contribute.htm>

2. Ask Congress to take action - Click here to send a message to your senators and representative demanding Congress to hold hearings on the trafficking of workers on the US Gulf Coast and the actions of their employers; and to urge government agencies to investigate the workers' claims quickly and thoroughly.

3. For those living in the Washington DC Area:

- **Observe** or monitor during the hunger strike (no legal experience necessary, training will be provided on-site). If you are interested, please email saalt@saalt.org with your

name, cell phone number, and days and hours you are available (either 9am-1pm or 1pm-5pm shifts).

- **Visit** the workers and offer your support and encouragement (see below for a schedule of where the workers will be)
- **Identify** faith-based or community leaders who can visit with the workers to provide moral support
- **Donate** Malayalam, Tamil, or Hindi books, magazines or newspapers
- **Drop off in-kind donations** (cases of water, folding chairs, bedding, kitchen items or rain gear such as ponchos, umbrellas and tarp) Please contact SAALT at 301-270-1855 or saalt@saalt.org if you would like to drop off donations to the SAALT office (6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 506, Takoma Park, MD 20912).

The workers will be at the following locations from 9am - 5pm throughout the month of May:

May 15th - May 16th: Lafayette Park -the White House

May 17th - May 19th: Gandhi Statue - Indian Embassy Chancery Office

May 20th - May 25th: Capitol Reflecting Pool

May 26th - onwards: Please contact SAALT for updated information

4. For those around the country:

You can show your support for the workers through **local solidarity events** in May and June in order to raise awareness about the issues the workers have faced and the guest worker program in the United States. You can host these discussions on your campus, place of worship, or cultural/professional organization. SAALT can provide articles and materials for discussion. Email saalt@saalt.org or call 301.270.1855 for more information.

To learn more about the workers' campaign, visit the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice blog. You can also read a recent article on the workers and the implications of trafficking written by Svati Shah featured in SAMAR Magazine.

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) is an ally of the Alliance of Guest Workers for Dignity, a project of the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice.

RECENT EVENTS

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW SALSA NETWORKING EVENT

The American University SALSA and Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett, & Dunner LLP hosted a networking panel event on April 17, 2008. The panel included several SABA-DC practitioners in private practice, government, and the public interest. The discussion covered a wide range of topics from the law student interview process to the summer associateship/internship experience and was followed by a networking reception. SABA-DC hopes to continue assisting law students in the area.





SABA-DC Summer Program for Summer Associates/Interns

The South Asian Bar Association of Washington, D.C. (SABA-DC) is proud to announce its summer associate/intern mentorship program that it will be providing this summer for Washington area summer associates and interns.

The program, a continuation of the SABA-DC mentorship program, is designed to provide guidance and networking opportunities to law students interning in Washington this summer. The goal of the program is to promote awareness of the South Asian Bar to law students interning in Washington with the hopes that these same law students can one day contribute to SABA-DC as attorneys. The SABA-DC summer program will kick off with a wine tasting networking event at Kirkland and Ellis on June 12.

For any interested students, please contact Ritu Kelotra at sabastudents@gmail.com for more information about the program and for periodic updates.