

GOAL IX

TO PROMOTE FULL AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION BY MINORITIES

Volume 8, Number 4, Fall 2002

President-Elect Offers Words of Reflection and Hope as First Minority to Lead Association

P r e s i d e n t - E l e c t D e n n i s W . A r c h e r

On August 13, 2002, Dennis W. Archer became president-elect of the American Bar Association, the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. He is the first minority lawyer in the ABA's 125-year history to achieve that position. It was an historic moment for the legal profession, especially when we recognize that there was a time when lawyers of color were not welcomed into the ABA.

Archer has served the ABA in numerous other ABA leadership positions, but the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession (formerly the Commission on Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession) takes special pride in noting that he was instrumental in the founding of our Commission and served as our first chair.

Archer, a former mayor of the City of Detroit and justice of the Supreme Court of Michigan, cited a "new beginning, a new chapter and a brighter future" as he addressed the ABA House of Delegates. In a moving tribute to others who have helped promote diversity in the legal profession, he was escorted to the podium by Mrs. Thurgood Marshall, widow of the first African American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, and Senator Hillary Clinton, the first chair of the ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession, who Archer



said was "breaking glass ceilings while I was opening doors." Also joining Archer were numerous family members, friends, and supporters, including many former presidents of the ABA, the National Bar Association, and other minority bar associations.

Archer expressed thanks to those who walked with him throughout his long and well-established legal career. He shared with the audience what it was like growing up in the small town of Cassopolis, Michigan, and how he went from teaching students with learning disabilities to becoming a lawyer.

With more than 1 million licensed attorneys in the country, minority lawyers—Native Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans—represent only 7 percent or 8 percent of the bar. "We are woefully underrepre-

sented in the legal profession," Archer said during his speech to the House of Delegates.

Promising to continue to advance the initiatives of past ABA presidents, he will have a full agenda during his year as president.

Past President William Paul championed the full and equal participation of minority lawyers within the profession. President-Elect Archer will take that initiative a step further by supporting President A.P. Carlton's initiative

on creating more pipeline opportunities and strengthening those already in existence. This, Archer says, means starting to educate minority students as early as junior high and high school about "the majesty of the law and how great the law is and why they should consider becoming members of our profession."

Other extremely important initiatives taken on by past ABA presidents, including death penalty reform, law school loan repayment programs, and billable hour reform, will remain on Archer's radar screen during his year as ABA president.

Archer has come a long way from being a golf caddy and resetting pins at a bowling alley in his hometown with a population of 1,500. Graduating with a small high school class and deciding to attend law school, even though he knew very little about becoming a lawyer or

continued on page 6



Thank You, Dennis, From All of Us

L a w r e n c e R . B a c a
C o m m i s s i o n C h a i r

There are moments in each of our lifetimes we will never forget. Moments that affect us and change us. Moments of significance. On August 13, 2002, I participated in one of those moments. At the ABA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., when Dennis Archer was installed as president-elect of the American Bar Association, I was there.

I am an American Indian civil rights attorney, and that day was one of significance for all of us of color. I wasn't on the Edmund Pettus Bridge with Hosea Williams and John Lewis, because I was too young and too far away, but those who were there will always remember that day. I wasn't on the Capitol Mall to hear Dr. King give his "I Have A Dream" speech, because I lived in San Diego, but the memories of those who were there will never let that moment escape.

Those of us who were lucky enough to be in the room and to walk with Dennis to be a part of his moment in history will never forget it. We attorneys of color are proud to be members of the ABA—today. We all remember our history, when the ABA had restrictions against the admission of people of color. That makes August 13, 2002, a part of history. Although it was Dennis's history-making moment, he invited others to be a part of it. He invited the Minority Caucus of the House of Delegates, the past presidents of the National Bar Association and the ABA with whom he has served, and a few old friends like me.

Those of us who were honored to be invited to walk down the aisle into the well of the House of Delegates waited in the back of the room. The doors to our right opened up, and Dennis arrived with Mrs. Thurgood Marshall on his left arm and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton on his right, and his family gathered around. He motioned us to walk on ahead of him. Dennis led by example. This moment could have been singularly his. But he chose to share it with others. We thank you, Dennis.

This is a good time to reflect on where we've been and where we are going. It would be easy to say that the ABA has gone from an organization that was whites-only to one that now has had its first black person elected as chair of the House of Delegates and next year will have its first black president. That is too simple a response, and it skips past too many steps.

I mark the revolution that brought us to today with the formation in 1984 of the ABA

Task Force on Minorities in the Legal Profession, and Dennis was there. In 1986, the president of the ABA wrote to section chairs and encouraged them to give more attorneys of color appointments to their committees.

Also in 1986, the ABA adopted Goal IX, "to Promote Full and Equal Participation in the Association by Minorities and Women." That was followed by the creation of the Commission on Opportunities for Minorities in the Profession. Dennis was the first chair. He laid the foundation for all we do today as the Commission pursues Goal IX. Thank you, Dennis.

Much has changed in the ABA and the profession between 1971, when the National Bar Association received its seat in the House of Delegates, and 2001, when the National Native American Bar Association became the last of the national minority bars to receive a seat in the House. Unlike 1969, when the ABA had its first black section chair, the number of appointments of minorities to leadership positions has risen dramatically.

In the early 1990s, presidential appointments of minorities hovered at 10 percent. Since 1999, the average has risen to closer to 20 percent. There are more minorities in law school today than 25 years ago. Between 1976, when I graduated and 8 percent of the law school population was minority, and 2000, when 20 percent of all law students were minority, we have made great strides as a profession.

Between 1976 and 1999, 181 minorities were appointed to federal judgeships. Yet by 1999, minorities represented only 17 percent of federal district court judges and 13.8 percent of courts of appeals judges. These numbers are way behind our presence in the national population. The promised land in which there is full participation is yet to come.

This history in the making shows us what the ABA can do when it sets out to do things right. Dennis's rise to president-elect sets an example of dedicated service and accomplishment for all of us to follow. He continues to point the way to where we need to go to fulfill that promise of full and equal participation at all levels of our profession.

We thank you, Dennis.



TO PROMOTE FULL AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION BY MINORITIES

Volume 8, Number 4
Fall 2002



Published by the American Bar Association
Commission on Racial and Ethnic
Diversity in the Profession
750 N. Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60611
www.abanet.org/minorities

Staff
Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession
Director
Sandra S. Yamate
312.988.5638
yamates@staff.abanet.org

Program & Meetings Manager
Sharon Tindall
312.988.5642
tindalls@staff.abanet.org

Meetings Coordinator
Candace Smith
312.988.5508
smithc@staff.abanet.org

Technology Coordinator
Douglas Knapp
312.988.5679
knappd@staff.abanet.org

Administrative Assistant
Emily Merrick
312.988.5643
merrickc@staff.abanet.org

ABA Publishing
Jessica Washington, Editor
Andrew Alcalá, Art Director

© 2002 American Bar Association. All rights reserved. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the American Bar Association or the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession.



New & Noteworthy from the Commission

Spirit of Excellence Awards

The recipients for the 2003 Spirit of Excellence Awards have been announced. The awards recognize outstanding lawyers who have made significant contributions to the effort to promote racial and ethnic diversity within the legal profession. This year's recipients are:

- **Laura V. Farber**—During her term as chair of the ABA Young Lawyers Division, Ms. Farber developed the Division's first diversity plan, which was later adopted by local affiliate bars. Under her leadership, the Division created the successful public service program "Tolerance Through Education," which provides third grade through junior high school students with positive images of lawyers.
- **Stella Kinue Manabe**—Ms. Manabe created and implements the program "Opportunities for Law in Oregon," a comprehensive recruiting and retention strategy for minority law students that works to increase racial and ethnic diversity in Oregon's legal community.
- **Hon. Theodore McMillian**—A judge with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Judge McMillian has served as a role model and mentor to many minorities and non-minorities in the legal profession. The Hon. Theodore McMillian Scholarship Fund for Minority Students was created in recognition of his work to promote diversity.
- **Hon. Louis H. Pollak**—Judge Pollak served as part of the legal team for *Brown v. Board of Education*. While serving as chair of the ABA Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities, he led the ABA's first endeavor to involve law firms in pro bono service. In his position as dean, he promoted racial and ethnic diversity in the faculty and student body at Yale Law School and the University of Pennsylvania Law School.
- **Leroy Wilder**—For more than two decades, Mr. Wilder, a member of the Karuk Tribe of California, has represented Indian tribes and Indian peoples in the Pacific Northwest. He has served as role model, mentor, and motivational speaker assisting minority law students in building self-esteem. A founding member of the American



Indian Lawyers Association (now the National Native American Bar Association), he helped create an organization where new lawyers could seek professional advice from senior lawyers.

- **Rabb Emison** (Inspiration Award)—Mr. Emison has been the driving force behind diversity efforts in Indiana. The Indiana State Bar Association named its diversity award the Rabb Emison Award in recognition of his long history of commitment to increasing racial and ethnic diversity in Indiana.

The Spirit of Excellence Awards will be presented at the awards luncheon on Saturday, February 8, 2003, in Seattle, Washington. A highlight of the ABA Midyear Meeting, the luncheon draws hundreds of lawyers from across the country. To order tickets, contact Candace Smith at smithc@staff.abanet.org or 312.988.5508.

Minority Corporate Counsel Summit

The ABA Minority In-House Counsel Group is working with the Section of Business Law's Corporate Counsel and Diversity Committees to present a one-day summit for minority corporate counsel to explore professional development concerns and to provide an opportunity to discuss and share strategies for surviving and thriving in their corporations. As a bonus, registrants for the Summit will be offered a special discounted rate to attend

the Section of Business Law's Spring Meeting that begins immediately following the Summit. There, corporate counsel will be able to attend numerous CLE sessions on topics in their substantive practice area, as well as network with the many corporate counsel who regularly attend Business Law meetings. The Summit will be held on April 3, 2003, in Los Angeles and the Business Law Spring Meeting will follow on April 4-6, 2003. For more information, contact Candace Smith at smithc@staff.abanet.org or 312.988.5508.

Minority Counsel Program

The ABA Minority Counsel Program (MCP) brings together corporate counsel and the minority lawyers who hope to work with them to build mutually beneficial business relationships. This is accomplished through CLE programs, workshops, and the famous Mystery Networking Events. The Fall MCP Meeting featured a one-to-one ratio between corporate representatives and potential outside counsel. The Spring Meeting of the ABA Minority Counsel Program will be held on April 2-3, 2003, in Los Angeles. Registrants for the Minority Corporate Counsel Summit will be offered a special discounted rate to attend the Section of Business Law's Spring Meeting that begins immediately following the MCP meeting. If your law firm or corporation is not a member of the Minority Counsel Program but would like to be, contact Candace Smith at smithc@staff.abanet.org or 312.988.5508.

National Conference for the Minority Lawyer

Plans for the fifth annual National Conference for the Minority Lawyer are under way. This year's National Conference will be held in June in Philadelphia. To make sure that you get your invitation, please contact Candace Smith at smithc@staff.abanet.org or 312.988.5508.

For up-to-date information about programs and events for lawyers interested in diversity issues, visit the Commission's website at www.abanet.org/minorities.



The Impact of September 11 on the Muslim-American Community

G a z a l a A s h r a f

The effects of September 11, 2001, on the Muslim community in the United States have been monumental. They will be written about in history books for centuries to come. They rank up there with the internment of the Japanese during World War II, something many Muslims believe may still happen to them. To understand the fears and anxieties of the Muslim community, we need to go beyond legal discourse to human experience. One particular event helps shed light on the recent traumatic experiences of the Muslim community in northern Virginia. This article describes that event.

March 20, 2002, is a day members of the Muslim community in northern Virginia will remember for a long time. On that day, some of the community's most respected Islamic organizations and individuals experienced for the first time a previously unimaginable consequence of the events of September 11, 2001: Agents of various federal entities descended on the community in a collaborative investigative effort led by U.S. Customs. The homes and offices of prominent Muslims were raided.

The government claimed it was investigating possible financial links to terrorist groups. Most of those targeted by the raids were immigrants, and the experience brought back memories of scare tactics used by the military in their native countries. For this reason, many of them insisted that the raids were no more than a strategy to instill a sense of fear in American Muslims that would make them crouch and hide. Whatever the reason, the raids of fourteen homes and organizations caused anguish and fear.

Though some efforts had been made to address the concerns and anxieties of the Muslims targeted by the raids, those efforts have not reached the Muslim community at large. Soon after the one-year anniversary of September 11, Karamah: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights, and the Constitution Project, both based in Washington, D.C., collaborated on a program about civil rights issues. They hosted "Liberty, Security, and the Constitution: A Town Hall Meeting for the Muslim Community" for Washington-area Muslims. Attendees heard the personal testimonies of some of the people affected by the raids, as well as from a therapist who treated traumatized women. They also heard the legal analysis of constitutional law experts regarding the status of the civil rights of American Muslims in light of these raids and other developments. Significantly, a representative from the U.S. Justice Department's (DOJ) Civil Rights Division was also invited to speak about the efforts being made by the government to protect the civil rights of American Muslims.

The goals of the town hall meeting were twofold: (1) to acknowledge the trauma suffered by those whose homes and offices were raided and allow the community to vent its con-

cerns about the raids and its liberties publicly; and (2) to educate American Muslims about their constitutional rights in this country, current policies of the U.S. government, and ways to improve their situation in the coming days.

The panelists consisted of three women whose homes or offices were raided; a clinical social worker licensed by Fairfax County, Virginia; four university law professors; and a representative from the DOJ.

Azizah al-Hibri, a professor at the University of Richmond School of Law and executive director of Karamah, moderated the meeting. In her opening remarks, she set the tone by noting that the meeting was intended to build a bridge of understanding among all Americans—Muslim and non-Muslim, official and nonofficial—and to help the community work out problems through mediation and conflict resolution, the preferred Qur'anic methods for change.

Kareema Altomare followed. She introduced herself as an American-born Muslim who accepted Islam ten years ago after an intensive study of the religion. At that time she had a strong commitment to work in the newly forming institutions of the American Muslim community. She joined the then-fledgling Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS) as an administrator. GSISS was one of the institutions targeted in the 2002 government raid.

Altomare described the small school as an open and moderate educational institution that seeks to educate Muslims on Islamic studies and social sciences. One degree offered by the institution is a religious studies degree that, she pointed out, is accredited by the Department of Defense and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. These accreditations are important because the holders are trained to serve as chaplains in the U.S. armed forces and in correctional facilities. Currently, ten of the fourteen Muslim chaplains in the armed forces are graduates of GSISS. Despite government approval and its status as a fully accredited school in the Commonwealth of Virginia, GSISS fell under the government's scrutiny after September 11, 2001.

Altomare described the morning raid of March 20 as a "sudden surprise and shocking encounter with overwhelming force." She was one of six staff members present during the raid. Staff were herded into the library and kept there all day. Altomare asked for permission to pray during the day. She was permitted to do so only after the prayer room was searched. The raid lasted into the night. After almost everyone else was gone, an agent posed a question to her: Why would an intelligent woman like her, with all the freedoms that America affords her, choose to be a Muslim and wear the *hijab* (head scarf)? This comment greatly disturbed Altomare, and she asked the legal experts on the panel whether such a discriminatory question is acceptable from a federal agent.

An agent posed a question: Why would an intelligent woman choose to be a Muslim and wear the *hijab*?

The raid of GSISS lasted from approximately 10:30 in the morning until 9:00 at night. The next day, Altomare said that the university was “a school in name only,” without files, Rolodexes, or e-mail service. It was unable to meet the legal requirements of an educational institution because it could not obtain academic papers, including transcripts.

Altomare also recounted the story of a female faculty member of GSISS whose home was raided and who was awakened from sleep at gunpoint. The faculty member, according to Altomare, continues to suffer from severe trauma, is unable to sleep, and is grieving the loss of years of research and written materials. (Although Karamah tried to convince that faculty member to speak at the event, she utterly refused.) This event reminded Altomare of past discrimination against other groups; she notes that, in time, town hall meetings were held to build a bridge of understanding between African Americans and immigrant Muslims who now share with them the experience of the use of overwhelming force by the government.

Aysha Unus came to the United States in 1970 and became an American citizen because of the “freedom, civil rights, and the justice system.” She said that she supported President George W.

Bush and his fight against terrorism and believed his claim that the fight against terrorism is not a fight against Muslims. Despite all that, she said the government also raided her home on March 20. She was alone with her eighteen-year-old daughter when government agents broke into her home with guns. Agents did not give them the chance to put on their head scarves, handcuffing them immediately. They were held this way for four hours. The federal agents also took their pictures “uncovered” without their consent. She said she felt “humiliated” even though the agents said the women had done nothing wrong and that only the property was covered by the search warrant. She asked the attendees of the town hall meeting, “How could eight to ten federal agents, armed with guns, be so afraid of me and my daughter so that they keep us handcuffed for so long? I also do not understand what they meant when they said ‘We are better than your police.’ The Virginia police are our police!”

Unus feels a part of her has died since the raids took place, and she cannot trust anyone. Despite the time that has passed, she cannot forget those six hours the federal agents were in her home. Unus asked that we learn a lesson from the raids: “Are we now repeating [the negative aspects of our American] history [and] adding [another] black spot to [it]?”

I spoke next. I am a recent graduate of the University of Richmond School of Law. My home was also raided. Neither my family nor I was home at the time. My parents had just finished their pilgrimage and were en route back to the United States. I described my shock at the unnecessary mess caused by the federal agents during the raid. Like other families that were raided, both my family and I have since felt an overwhelming sense of paranoia, fearing that we are being watched and listened to at all times.

I also described another incident that occurred at my law school. A classmate and friend of mine received an anonymous note that read something like this: “When you befriend terrorists, you should be killed just like them.” I explained that I was sad-

dened by this comment because it must have come from a law student, a future lawmaker and policymaker of this nation.

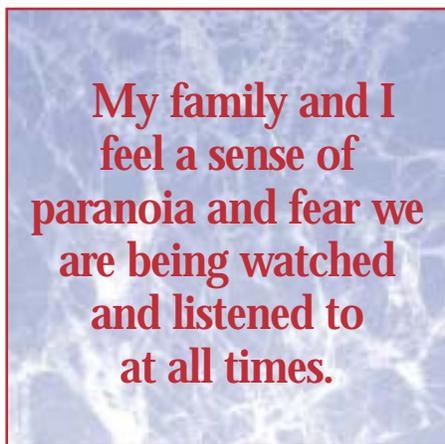
Meredith McEver provided group counseling services to some of the women who were affected by the raids, under a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. She said the raids had affected the women to such an extent that it was as if they had happened only days before. The women had physical symptoms such as angry outbursts, difficulty concentrating, hyper-alertness, and sleep deprivation. She said the trauma persisted because of the negative attention they continued to receive, including the fact that one woman’s natural gas line had been tampered with after the raids. McEver said that eventually the group moved beyond its trauma by talking about inspiring stories from the *Qur’an*. Ultimately, some women became more active in their communities. On the other hand, some continue to be stigmatized and traumatized by the raids.

McEver brought with her some art made by the women. One was a piece of clay in the form of a huge tear. Another was a death tent full of bodies. A third looked like a flag with the colors running into each other, as if it had been exposed to tears or rain. The woman who made it said that it represented her “exhausted patriotism.”

McEver was followed by Muneer Ahmad, a professor of law at American University’s Washington College of Law. In his comments he asked, “What does September 11 and its aftermath mean for community?” and “What does September 11 and its aftermath mean for coalition?” He answered by saying that it is not just the Muslim community but also the Arab and South Asian communities that have been affected by September 11. The discrimination against groups, therefore, is broad. Yet he finds “enormous opportunity for strength and resistance to the government policies and private violence that have been exercised on us.”

Ahmad observed that private discrimination and governmental policies to target “suspect” groups have continued after the one-year anniversary of September 11, 2001. He also pointed out that the increased scrutiny of asylum applications coming from nations that are under suspicion is “a form of racial profiling.” Furthermore, Ahmad stated that the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities have been more intimately affected by September 11 and its aftermath. Yet Americans must not regard the discrimination and violence against these groups as isolated events. Rather, they are part of a long history of discrimination in America, including the discrimination, hate, and violence against the Japanese during World War II and the continuous discrimination against African Americans, Latin Americans, and even the gay and lesbian populations.

He concluded that “if we are to make meaningful progress, with regard to meaningful policies,” we must ask ourselves: “When [the] racial profiling was . . . not [about] ‘driving while Muslim’ but ‘driving while black or brown,’ where were we? When immigration restrictions were a question of keeping Mexicans outside the United States . . . where were our communities; where were our voices?” In effect, Ahmad argued that American Muslims must look at themselves as part of a broader community in order to alter the course of American history and stop it from repeating its negative aspects.



Rodney Smolla, a professor of law at the University of Richmond School of Law, argued that to take a step toward such change, the Muslim community must talk not only to one another but also “to those that do not understand” or those outside the Muslim community. Furthermore, Smolla said that the majority of the American population and our Constitution are committed to and aspire to achieve equality and justice through legal values such as “probable cause, reasonable search and seizures, bringing one before a neutral magistrate, and the use of force in investigatory techniques that is proportionate to the danger.” He said that although the raids breached many of these values, we must not allow ourselves to believe those breaches to be the “ethos of our nation.”

David Cole, a professor of law at Georgetown University School of Law, however, did not completely accept Smolla’s optimism. Cole said that those values have been put aside since September 11. For example, he noted that both immigrants and citizens have been found to be guilty by association. He also noted that the concept of due process has not been applied to individuals allegedly linked to terrorist activities. The Patriot Act, he noted, has allowed the government to use secret evidence without consideration of due process.

Furthermore, Cole argued, although the government took truckloads of “evidence” from Muslim homes and institutions with claims that it was urgent that this material be reviewed immediately, it has failed to do so simply because it does not have the resources to follow through. The government has “cast the net so broadly,” Cole said, “that they have locked up 1,500 to 2,000 people, not one of whom is charged with the crime that they are investigating.” As for the proper balance between liberty and security, he noted the balance has been reached by sacrificing the liberty of American Muslims for “our” security.

This scenario reminds us of a previous era in American history, when thousands of legal Japanese immigrants and Japanese American citizens were locked up in camps due to fear. Despite the similarities between today’s discrimination and past actions, Cole also found differences. Unlike the past, coalitions of human rights, civil rights, and immigrant rights groups are now “coming together to try to challenge what the government is doing. They are giving voice to some of the concerns that [American Muslims] have.” He also noted that courts that used to side with the government are now declaring the practice of holding immi-

gration trials in secret as unconstitutional. This is the result of the willingness of individuals, the media, and civil rights coalitions to voice their concerns about government policies.

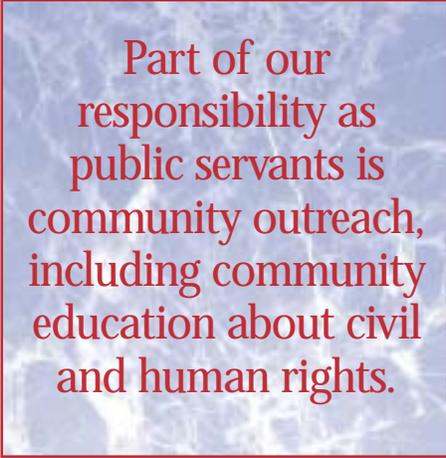
Juan Carlos Benitez, special counsel for the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, spoke last. He wanted to make American Muslims aware that his agency is there to help alleviate discrimination, specifically in immigration and employment practices. He further added that American Muslims must commit themselves to be active in the government and take steps to participate in policy making and outreach programs. The response of the audience was positive and welcoming.

The town hall meeting was one step in bringing together Muslims affected by the raids and repairing some of the damage. Perhaps this article will help extend these efforts to many more, including the legal community. Lawyers concerned with the issues presented at the town hall meeting can donate time, money, or other resources to organizations such as Karamah. View the Karamah website at www.karamah.org and send any suggestions or concerns to karamah@karamah.org. Videotaped copies of the meeting are also available from Karamah.

There is a grave need for pro bono attorneys in areas of civil rights, immigration, and family law. Those concerned with safe-

guarding the freedoms and rights valued by the Constitution are urged to join and support organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union to defend those civil liberties that the current administration is chipping away. In addition, part of our responsibility as public servants is community outreach, including community education about civil and human rights to the public at large. This can be done through town hall meetings or by publicly speaking out against private discrimination and government policies targeting specific groups. As lawyers, we must uphold the Constitution and its values, protect the rights of all Americans, and keep our profession in line with those legal values held dear to this nation. My simple hope is that our profession retains its objectivity toward all marginalized communities, which now includes my own: American Muslims.

Gazala Ashraf is a recent graduate of the University of Richmond Law School in Richmond, Virginia, and a Karamah volunteer.



Part of our responsibility as public servants is community outreach, including community education about civil and human rights.

Dennis Archer

continued from page 1

what the profession entailed, he has achieved an impressive and inspiring record. In addition to his service as mayor and state supreme court justice, he has served as president of the Wolverine Bar, the National Bar Association, and the State Bar of Michigan; first chair of the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession; a teacher for students with learning disabilities; and in many other positions of distinction.

Archer’s election as ABA president-elect has made history. History will continue to be made because of his unwavering, steadfast commitment to promoting the full and equal participation of minority lawyers within the profession.

We at the Commission take great pride in being a part of the legacy of Dennis Archer’s many accomplishments, and we pledge our support of his leadership. If history is any indication, the legal profession can expect many more great things from Dennis Archer as he makes history.

Putting My Legal Experience to Use in Different Ways

M e l a n i e H a r r i n g t o n



Many would say that making a big career change in this troubling economic environment is not the best move. I did just that, however, and there is no looking back. Thus far, it has proven to be one of the better decisions that I have made during my ten years of legal practice and sixteen years in the workforce.

In March 2001, I accepted a position as executive director of the nonprofit American Institute for Managing Diversity, Inc. (AIMD). It took nearly six months of conversation, interviews, research, and soul searching to make the decision to leave the familiar, for-profit world for the new and unfamiliar world of the independent sector. To date, I have no regrets. Perhaps the experience has been made worthwhile because of the contribution that I feel I am making to our society in my own way.

Unlike many others, I believe lawyers are not the scourge of the earth and are worthy of generous acknowledgments—and better jokes. Obviously, the profession has had its embarrassing and even shameful moments. But on balance we have fulfilled our professional obligations to society and made profound contributions to the advancement of our democracy.

Prior to commencing a new career in the nonprofit sector with AIMD, I was serving as general counsel to a management consulting firm in Atlanta, Georgia. The firm was small, the work was national, and the clientele was challenging. It was a tremendous learning experience.

Therefore, I did not leave the practice of law because of disillusionment. I found an opportunity to apply my valuable skills toward the advancement of a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening communities and their institutions through effective diversity management.

AIMD has spent eighteen years conducting research, education, and public information programs that broaden the public's perception of the meaning of diversity and increase its ability to make quality decisions about important diversity issues. At AIMD we believe this work is of critical importance to all sectors of our society. If we chose not to bring the best minds together to explore these fundamental issues, we would do so individually and societally at our own peril.

I chose to work for this particular nonprofit organization because its mission resonated with me, and its founder and president exhibited vision and demonstrated commitment. Perhaps more importantly, however, I accepted the position because I thought I might be able to make a difference. I hoped that I might work with industries such as the legal profession to help achieve sustainable change in the way the profession accesses, retains, and utilizes talent *no matter how that talent comes packaged*.

There have been some unexpected challenges and benefits resulting from my career transition. One challenge is the realization that fundraising is not your ordinary bake

sale. Fundraising is a strategic process that takes the smart thinking of many committed people to implement successfully. Moreover, securing financial support during these hard economic times is especially difficult and requires more time, skill, imagination, and energy than I ever anticipated.

The benefits of a career transition have been numerous. Without attempting to list all of them, I will simply say that change often presents magical opportunities for limitless growth and development. I recommend that other lawyers who are considering a change (1) rework your resumes for the last time and actually send them somewhere, (2) challenge yourself to think outside the box that you are in, (3) identify a circle of friends or associates that will help provide constructive support, (4) determine ways in which you can leverage your legal skills and experience in other areas, and (5) take action—don't just talk about it, do something.

I look forward to what lies ahead. There is much work to be done, and my legal knowledge and experience will be part of the many tools I will use from my personal arsenal of assets to help advance the mission and vision of the American Institute for Managing Diversity.

Melanie Harrington is the executive director of the American Institute for Managing Diversity, Inc. For more information on AIMD, call 404.302.9226 or visit the website at www.aimd.org.

ABA Annual Meeting

2 0 0 3

The 2003 ABA Annual Meeting will be held August 7-12 in San Francisco. The Commission will once again be organizing the annual Minority Lawyers Forums, a full day of meetings and programs of particular interest to minority lawyers, capped by the Minority Lawyers Reception. This year's events promise to be extra-special as we honor Dennis Archer on his historic achievement in becoming the first minority to serve as president of the ABA, the world's largest voluntary professional membership organization. Please be sure to join us for the celebration! For more information, contact Candace Smith at smithc@staff.abanet.org or 312.988.5508.

A n n u a l
M e e t i n g



**ABA Commission
on Racial and
Ethnic Diversity in
the Profession**

**Master Calendar
of Meetings**

February 7, 2003	Commission Business Meeting	Seattle, WA
February 5–11, 2003	ABA Midyear Meeting	Seattle, WA
April 2-3, 2003	MCP Spring Meeting (Minority Counsel Program)	Los Angeles, CA Contact Candace Smith 312.988.5508
April 3, 2003	Minority Corporate Counsel Summit	Los Angeles, CA Contact Candace Smith 312.988.5508
April 5, 2003	Commission Business Meeting	Los Angeles, CA Contact Candace Smith 312.988.5508
August 7, 2003	Commission Business Meeting	San Francisco, CA
August 7–13, 2003	ABA Annual Meeting	San Francisco, CA
August 8, 2003	Minority Lawyers Forum and Reception for Dennis Archer	San Francisco, CA
February 4–10, 2004	ABA Midyear Meeting	San Antonio, TX
August 5–11, 2004	ABA Annual Meeting	Atlanta, GA
February 9–15, 2005	ABA Midyear Meeting	Salt Lake City, UT
August 4–10, 2005	ABA Annual Meeting	Chicago, IL
August 3–9, 2006	ABA Annual Meeting	Honolulu, HI

m a s t e r
c a l e n d a r



Published by the American Bar Association
Commission on Racial and Ethnic
Diversity in the Profession
750 N. Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
American Bar
Association