THE ABA DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CENTER CELEBRATES NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

ALL BIOGRAPHIES AND PHOTOS FROM BIOGRAPHY.COM OR CREATIVE COMMONS UNLESS OTHERWISE LISTED
WHAT IS NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH? (NDEAM)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October and celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates them about the value of a diverse workforce inclusive of their skills and talents.

In recognition of the contributions lawyers and judges with disabilities make to the legal profession and to encourage law firms, judiciaries, and other legal employers to make disability diversity and inclusion a priority, the ABA’s Board of Governors recognized October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Learn more at ambar.org/ndeam.
Anthony Lee (Tony) Coelho was born June 15, 1942, in Los Banos, California. His parents, Otto and Alice Branco Coelho, were the children of Portuguese immigrants. As a teenager, Coelho had an accident on his parents’ dairy farm that caused lifelong epilepsy. Coelho went on to become an elected Representative for the state of California in 1978. Coelho became the first Hispanic-American in House history to serve in as Majority Whip. The most significant piece of legislation Coelho sponsored was the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which he introduced on May 9, 1989. He also founded The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation at Loyola Law School—Los Angeles.

* bio from House.gov
CHAI R. FELDMAN

Chai R. Feldblum helps companies and organizations create safe, respectful, and inclusive workplaces, focusing on preventing and responding to workplace harassment. Chai served as a commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) from 2010 to 2019. Chai was the first openly lesbian commissioner of the EEOC and the fourth person with a disability to serve on the commission. She played a leading role in helping to draft and negotiate the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, as well as bills to prohibit discrimination against LGBT people. Prior to her appointment to the EEOC, Chai was a professor at Georgetown Law, where she founded the law school’s Federal Legislation Clinic, which represented organizational clients focused on social justice issues. Chai is the 2015 recipient of the ABA Commission on Disability Rights Paul G. Hearne Award. Learn more at ambar.org/disability.

*bio from MorganLewis.com*
Lydia X. Z. Brown is a disability justice advocate, organizer, and writer whose work has largely focused on violence against multiply-marginalized disabled people, especially institutionalization, incarceration, and policing. They have worked to advance transformative change through organizing in the streets, writing legislation, conducting anti-ableism workshops, and testifying at regulatory and policy hearings. Currently, Lydia is a Justice Catalyst Fellow at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, working on defending and advancing the educational civil rights of Maryland students with psychosocial, intellectual, and developmental disabilities facing various forms of disproportionate discipline, restraint and seclusion, and school pushout. Lydia recently graduated from Northeastern University School of Law as a Public Interest Law Scholar. Brown is also a member of the ABA Commission on Disability Rights. Learn more at ambar.org/disability.

*bio from autistichoya.net
CLAUDIA GORDON

Born in Jamaica, Claudia Gordon is the first deaf Black female attorney in the United States. She currently works in the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs. Previously she held a position in the White House Office of Public Engagement as the Public Engagement Advisor to the Disability Community for less than a year. She is also the first deaf person to work at the White House in an detailee capacity. She graduated from Howard University in 1995. She now works at the Department of Homeland Security as senior policy advisor for the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.
ARLENE B. MAYERSON

Arlene B. Mayerson has been the Directing Attorney of Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) since 1981. One of the nation’s leading experts in disability rights law, she has been a key advisor to both Congress and the disability community on the major disability rights legislation for the past two decades, including the Handicapped Children’s Protection Act as well as other legislation ensuring the special education rights of students with disabilities, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). She has provided representation, consultation to counsel, and coordination of amicus briefs on key disability rights cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. In addition to her position at DREDF, Ms. Mayerson is currently a lecturer in disability law at Berkeley Law, University of California. Ms. Mayerson is also the 2016 recipient of the ABA Commission on Disability Rights Paul G. Hearne Award. Learn more at ambar.org/disability.
Ari Ne’eman is an autism rights activist who co-founded the Autistic Self Advocacy Network in 2006. He was an appointee to the National Council on Disability. He was the first Autistic person to serve on this Council. He currently works as a consultant to the American Civil Liberties Union, focused on disability policy. Ne'eman has stated that he believes that autism is both a neurological difference and a disability, not a disease that should be cured. Ne’eman views autism self-advocacy as a civil rights issue.

*bio from Newsweek, Left Brain Right Brain; photo from Wired.com*
CARRIE ANN LUCAS

Carrie Ann Lucas was Disabled Parents Rights founder and Executive Director. She specialized in legal representation of disabled parents. Ms. Lucas was also a Child Welfare Law Specialist. She represented clients in Northern and Eastern Colorado, and clients in child welfare law, child custody and divorce, adoption, guardianship, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Fair Housing Act cases. Ms. Lucas also trained attorneys, social workers, and judges on issues impacting disabled parents in child welfare cases around the county.

Ms. Lucas was a nationally recognized advocate for people with disabilities, and was lead plaintiff in an epic seven-and-a-half year suit against Kmart that resulted in the most far-reaching accessibility class-action settlement in history before founding Disabled Parents Rights. As a single adoptive parent to four children, Ms. Lucas was passionate for the rights of parents who have disabilities. Ms. Lucas, who had a form of muscular dystrophy, had an intimate understanding of the unique challenges that disabled parents face.

*bio and photo from DisabledParentRights.org
Haben Girma was born to an Ethiopian-Eritrean refugee family in Oakland, CA, and was the first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School. She received her J.D. from Harvard Law School in 2013 and her B.A. from Lewis & Clark College in 2010. During law school she interned with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The White House honored Haben as a Champion of Change for her advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities.

*bio and photo from HabenGirma.com
PAUL G. HEARNE
Paul G. Hearne was an advocate and visionary leader with a lifelong disability who achieved success as a nonprofit executive, foundation president, federal agency director, and mentor to countless people with disabilities. A passionate advocate for increased employment of people with disabilities, Paul opened doors for thousands through his leadership of Just One Break, an employment agency for people with disabilities in New York City, and The Dole Foundation for Employment of People with Disabilities in Washington, DC. Until his passing in 1998, Paul pursued two core passions: 1) to create a national association that gave people with disabilities more consumer power and a stronger public voice, and 2) to cultivate potential leaders to carry on the disability rights movement. He is the namesake of the ABA Commission on Disability Rights Paul G. Hearne Award.

*bio from AAPD.org
Marca Bristo was the president of Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago, which she founded in 1980. The former president of the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), Marca worked with the broader civil rights community on the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Former President Clinton appointed her to chair the National Council on Disability (NCD), a role she held from 1994 to 2002. She was the most recent emeritus president of the United States International Council on Disabilities. She was a member of the Obama Foundation Inclusion Council and co-chaired the Human Rights Watch Disability Advisory Committee.

*bio and photo from Access Living*
Paul Steven Miller was the Henry M. Jackson Professor of Law at the University of Washington School of Law. In addition to being an EEOC Commissioner for almost 10 years, in 2002, Miller was awarded the Little People of America’s Award for Promoting Awareness of Individuals with Dwarfism. He was a known international disability rights activist. Miller graduated from Harvard Law School and held roles in the Clinton Administration as the White House Liaison to the disability community, before being appointed special assistant in 2009 to President Obama.

*photo from Washington University, bio from Seattle Times