AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION TAX SECTION ANNOUNCES TWO YOUNG LAWYERS AS PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWS

Winners to Provide Two Years of Public Service Tax Work for 501(c)(3) Organizations

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 9, 2011 -- The American Bar Association Section of Taxation has named its 2011-2013 Public Service Fellows. The Fellows will be directly involved in providing services to low-income taxpayers through sponsoring non-profit organizations.

The 2011 Public Service Fellows are:

- Anna Tavis, scheduled to earn her J.D. from the Boston College Law School in May 2011. After graduating, Tavis will be working on tax-related matters at the South Brooklyn Legal Services in Brooklyn, N.Y.

- Sean Norton, currently a lawyer in private practice in Jenkintown, Pa. Norton will be returning to his native state of Maine to work with Pine Tree Legal Assistance, Inc.

Both Tavis and Norton have committed to two years of tax-related public service with their sponsoring organizations.
“We were pleased to receive applications from well-qualified young lawyers interested in providing tax legal assistance to those who need it most,” said Charles H. Egerton, chair of the ABA Section of Taxation. “The applications demonstrated a strong commitment to help underserved taxpayers in a variety of ways,” he continued. “Anna and Sean are very motivated, and are an inspiration to those of us in the profession,” said Egerton. In addition to serving as inspiration to those in the profession, “We know that their work will be extremely helpful in addressing some of the unmet needs of low-income taxpayers who have little or no access to tax legal assistance.”

Anna Tavis will work with the Immigrant Workers’ Tax Advocacy Project to provide community education, outreach and representation to low-income immigrants in Brooklyn. Anna’s project will focus on Russian- and Spanish-speaking workers who encounter barriers to obtaining tax credits, and who are involved in controversies with the IRS. Anna is fluent in both Russian and Spanish.

“Anna’s fellowship project will greatly enhance our ability to serve immigrant taxpayers throughout Brooklyn, particularly the substantial Russian-speaking population,” said Sarah Dranoff, director of the Workers’ Rights and Benefits Unit at South Brooklyn Legal Services, the organization sponsoring the fellowship. “With Anna on staff, SBLS will be able to provide culturally sensitive legal services to an array of communities and neighborhoods that have been difficult for us to reach in the past,” Dranoff continued. “Anna’s work will build and solidify new relationships with community-based organizations, allow us to explore new approaches to tax controversy work, and dramatically expand our tax clinic’s connection to low-wage, immigrant workers in Brooklyn.”
Sean Norton will be working with Pine Tree Legal Assistance to expand federal tax assistance in Maine and to implement an outreach program that will increase the organization’s panel of volunteer tax lawyers and allow the organization to offer services to the mentally ill.

“The ABA Section of Taxation Fellowship will allow us to expand legal advocacy around the state at a particularly challenging time for our clients and our program,” said Nan Heald, executive director of Pine Tree Legal Assistance. “Sean is already admitted in Maine and knows the state; his tax expertise will allow him to begin handling a caseload as soon as he starts work in August,” she explained. “Sean will help us expand the pool of pro bono attorneys around Maine who are willing to handle tax matters for low-income clients,” Heald continued. “His efforts through this fellowship will have a significant impact on the lives of low-income taxpayers in this area.”

The Public Service Fellowships were developed in 2008 to address the need for tax legal assistance, and to foster an interest in tax-related public service among those individuals who participate. The fellowships provide funding for the Fellows’ salaries and benefits, as well as law school debt assistance, by means of charitable contributions to the sponsoring organizations. All applications were reviewed and the successful applicants selected by the Tax Section’s Public Service Fellowship Committee. The section plans to award as many as two fellowships each year.

For more information about the ABA Tax Section Public Service Fellowships, please go to [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/taxation/awards/home.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/taxation/awards/home.html).

The American Bar Association Section of Taxation is the largest professional association of tax lawyers, with approximately 23,000 members nationwide. Its goals
include helping taxpayers better understand their rights and obligations under the tax laws and working to achieve a simplified tax system that is equitable and efficient.

With nearly 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.