AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION SECTION OF TAXATION ANNOUNCES TWO PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWS

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 27, 2014 — The American Bar Association Section of Taxation has named its 2014-2016 Christine A. Brunswick Public Service Fellows. The Fellows will be providing services to low-income taxpayers through sponsoring non-profit organizations for two years.

The 2014 Christine A. Brunswick Public Service Fellows are:

- Patrick Thomas, a recent graduate of the Indiana University Maurer School of Law, will be working with the Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic in Indianapolis, IN.

- Lany Villalobos, scheduled to earn her J.D. from the Villanova University School of Law, will be working with the Pennsylvania Farmworker Project, a division of Philadelphia Legal Assistance.

“The Tax Section was pleased to have such a large pool of diverse applicants with interesting and innovative ideas,” said Michael Hirschfeld, Chair of the ABA Section of Taxation. “Patrick Thomas and Lany Villalobos have shown their commitment to low-income and underserved taxpayers,” he continued. “Their applications stood out because of their understanding of the communities they wish to serve and an impressive thoughtfulness about how best to meet the needs of these underserved taxpayers.”

Patrick will provide direct services to low income taxpayers with a focus on expanding outreach efforts to immigrant communities and building partnerships with other organizations working with immigrants.

“We are delighted to have Patrick work alongside us as an ABA tax fellow,” said Joshua Abel, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Christian Legal Clinic. “In the last 10 years, Indianapolis has experienced one of the largest per capita increase in immigrants in the nation, and Patrick will help ensure we can serve provide tax relief to all our immigrant neighbors—including refugees from Burma and Syria, asylees from Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and immigrants from central America,” Abel continued. “In addition, he will help us determine the tax consequences of the Affordable Care Act, especially for undocumented immigrants with U.S. citizen children, and he will help educate immigrants on how to avoid falling victim to tax identity theft.”

Lany will expand tax services to Spanish-speaking low-income immigrant farmworkers in rural Pennsylvania.
“Through this fellowship opportunity, Philadelphia Legal Assistance (PLA) will be able to address the tax issues faced by low income agricultural workers in rural Pennsylvania where the need is prevalent and accessible services are non-existent,” said Anita Santos-Singh, Executive Director of PLA. "Among the many unique tax issues encountered by low wage immigrant workers, Lany Villalobos will address the routine practice of employers to improperly classify workers as independent contractors. Lany's project is intended to raise awareness among the immigrant worker community of their taxpayer responsibilities and to alleviate the financial and legal complications resulting from the unfair application of tax laws,” she continued. “Ensuring the fair application of tax laws promotes the meaningful participation of immigrant workers in American society and helps them become stakeholders in the American Dream.”

The Public Service Fellowship program was developed in 2008 to address the need for tax legal assistance and to foster an interest in tax-related public service. In 2013, the fellowship was re-named the Christine A. Brunswick Public Service Fellowship in honor of the late Christine Brunswick, the Section’s former Executive Director for over 25 years. Christine was a strong proponent of advancing public service efforts in tax law and fostering a fair and equitable tax system. Under her leadership, the Tax Section devoted significant resources to further that goal.

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 Section’s Public Service Fellowship Committee. The Section plans to award as many as two fellowships each year.

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 one of the largest voluntary professional membership organizations 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. To review our privacy statement, click here. Follow the latest ABA news at www.abanow.org and on Twitter @ABANews.