

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY

The mission of the Diversity Committee is to increase the participation of diverse lawyers in the activities of the Section and in its committees. The Committee worked with the Section in developing the Section's Diversity Plan, which is available on the Committee's website. As a result of the Plan, the Committee has embarked on several activities.

Thus, the Committee has begun to offer a series of career panels at law schools and other locations. These panels are designed to attract diverse law students to tax practice by exposing them to individuals who can tell them about the practice of tax law and serve as role models. During the current academic year the Committee will sponsor, and in some cases, co-sponsor with the Young Lawyers Forum or the ABA Young Lawyers Division, approximately fifteen such panels, including some at a number of historically black colleges and universities. Several Tax Court judges have agreed to participate in these panels, the first of which was held on September 10, 2001, at New York University Law School.

The Committee recently co-sponsored the creation of the *Tax Exempt Toolkit*, a joint project of the Diversity Committee, the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, the Business Law Section Nonprofit Committee and the Asian and Asian American Studies Department of Loyola University, Chicago, IL. The *Toolkit* gives directors, executives, volunteers and others associated with small public charities

a basic overview of the laws and financial responsibilities with which such organizations must comply. The *Toolkit*, which is available on the Committee's website, was presented in a jointly sponsored seminar at the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago. The program was such a success that the Committee is planning to sponsor similar seminars in conjunction with future Section meetings.

In addition to the career panels and the *Tax Exempt Toolkit*, the Committee is planning to sponsor a joint program with the Committee on State and Local Taxes during the Fall, 2002 Section meeting. The Committee also hopes to co-sponsor a program with the Young Lawyers Forum to educate young lawyers about the various opportunities for involvement in Section committees.

For additional information on the work of the Committee, or to volunteer to help with a career panel, please contact Co-Chairs Wayne Hamilton at 954/420-3236 or Jessica Hough at 202/371-7054, or visit the Committee's website at www.abanet.org/tax/groups/diversity.

COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL TAXES

The Committee on State and Local Taxes is unique in that it sponsors programs and activities that not only meet the needs and interests of practitioners who specialize in state and local tax law but also educate and serve as a resource to other practitioners as well. Most notably, the Committee publishes two desk or reference books, the *Sales and Use Tax*

Deskbook and the *Property Tax Deskbook*, which cover sales and use and property taxes, respectively, in all 50 states. In addition, the Committee is now in the process of publishing a third reference work on environmental taxes, which it expects to complete soon.

On the legislative front, members of the Committee submit comments on legislative and regulatory proposals, and the Committee has drafted a number of model acts for use by state and local governments. In cooperation with the Georgetown University Law Center, the Committee publishes, on an annual basis, *The State and Local Tax Lawyer*, a publication that contains scholarly articles and reviews developments in all 50 states. Every spring the Committee also sponsors, together with the Institute for Professionals in Taxation (formerly, the Institute of Property Taxation), a seminar on state and local taxes which is held in New Orleans.

The Committee is actively working to increase the diversity within its ranks as well as to increase the number of young members. It is working with the Diversity Committee to these ends and is proud that the immediate past co-chairs of the Diversity Committee hold leadership positions in the Committee on State and Local Taxes. Those interested in further information on the Committee should contact the Chair, David R. Cassidy, Breazeale Sachse & Wilson, LLP, P.O. Box 3197, Baton Rouge, LA, 70821-3197, (225) 387-4000, e-mail, drc@bswllp.com, or visit the Committee's website at www.abanet.org/tax/groups/salt. ■

REMINDER: Section members may apply to join committees with the new online *Committee Preference Form* at www.abanet.org/tax/groups/comember.html. You will need your eight-digit ABA member ID number and your password (usually your last name) to access the form. If you do not know your ID number, contact the ABA Service Center at service@abanet.org. *One Committee Rule:* As of July 1, 2001, the Section has rescinded its *One Committee Rule*. Section Members now may join as many committees as they like.