

Politics and Policy Focus at Spring Meeting

BY ROBERT SNODDY AND KYO SUH

The ABA Criminal Justice Section's 2009 Spring Meeting, held April 2-4 in Birmingham, Alabama, was an overwhelming success, with attendance numbers far exceeding expectations. The three-day event opened with a town hall meeting featuring an in-depth discussion between current and former assistant U.S. attorneys on how they view the Obama administration's Justice Department's approach on law enforcement. The "Ethics Politics and Public Corruption" CLE program explored the boundaries between legitimate political activity and corruption, and the impact of aggressive prosecutions on political conduct.

On April 4, the CJS Council met to discuss, among other things, policy issues including collateral consequences of an arrest and/or conviction for juveniles; transparency of the Department of Justice Office of Professional Responsibility; culturally and developmentally accessible standardized *Miranda* warnings; and a Sectionwide diversity policy. The Council had a lively debate over a proposed policy defining "lawyer misconduct versus lawyer error." This recommendation will be presented before the ABA House of Delegates at the Annual Meeting in August. James Sturdevant, president of the Birmingham Bar, met with Council concerning the Mediation in Criminal Matters (an ABA Board Enterprise project) that is being implemented in Birmingham.

Section Fosters Connections with Students. As part of a new initiative to increase law student membership and involvement—as well as increase retention once they embark on their legal careers—the Criminal Justice Section staff and leadership visited and conducted presentations about careers in criminal justice and the important work of the American Bar Association at two Alabama-area law schools (the University of Alabama School of Law and Samford University's Cumberland School of Law) in conjunction with the Spring Meeting. The Section plans to

ROBERT SNODDY is the outreach coordinator for the Criminal Justice Section; contact him at snoddyr@staff.abanet.org. **KYO SUH** is the technology and publications manager for the Criminal Justice Section; contact him at suhk@staff.abanet.org. Both are also contributing editors to Criminal Justice magazine.

visit law schools in the Washington, D.C., area in the coming months and will connect with law schools regarding site visits in areas where Sectionwide meetings take place.

Also, the Section visited a local high school, a youth church group, and one juvenile detention center as part of its youth outreach initiative. Senior staff attorney Chris Gowen and Reginald Dwayne Betts, a former juvenile offender turned author, spoke to students about the importance of setting goals and believing in second opportunities. Betts is the living embodiment of a second chance embraced: he spent nine years in an adult prison starting when he was 16 years old. After release, he graduated from high school and a community college program with honors and then received full academic scholarships from two higher learning institutions—one of which withdrew the scholarship offer after learning of his arrest. The University of Maryland honored the scholarship and this spring Betts will graduate at the top of his class. Betts is the author of two books, the first is based on his experiences and will be published in the fall; the second is a book of poetry. Betts explained to the youths, all of whom have a troubled past, that they can either spend the next several years blaming people for how they got where they are or they can be accountable for their actions and do something about it. He stressed the power of knowledge that is acquired by reading. The ABA has since received letters from each of the hosts thanking the Section for the outreach program; the superintendent of the Birmingham Public Schools wants to put a copy of Betts's book in every school as required reading. The youth outreach effort was the idea of Section Director Jack Hanna to encourage members and staff to reach out to youths in the communities the Section visits. Similar events are in the planning stages for Chicago during the 2009 ABA Annual Meeting.

National Institute on White Collar Crime

More than 1,300 prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, forensic experts, and in-house counsel attended the 2009 National Institute on White Collar Crime, held March 4-6 in San Francisco. The institute featured a faculty of leading white collar crime experts and panels focused on the hottest issues in white collar crime investigations and prosecutions. The presentations included white collar staples such as money laundering, criminal tax enforcement, and health care fraud and hot issues such as the FCPA, corporate charging guidelines, and mortgage fraud.

Neil M. Barofsky, the special inspector general for



Mercer University Law School won the 2009 National Criminal Justice Trial Advocacy Competition, sponsored by the Criminal Justice Section and The John Marshall Law School. Federal Judge Charles P. Kocoras (N.D., Ill.) displays the first place award. Upper row (l. to r.), are Ronald C. Smith, competition director, final round jurors Stephen Komie and Rosanne Faraci, Judge Kocoras, Mercer student Katie Powers (who won the best advocate and the best cross-examination awards), and Mercer coach Rudjard Hayes. Front row (l. to r.): Mercer students Cayce Myers, Michael Lyles, and Joan McCallum. *Photo courtesy of John Marshall Law School.*

the Troubled Asset Relief Program (SIGTARP), gave the luncheon keynote address, which reported on the status of TARP and what is being done to ensure that funds are being used as required.

If you were unable to attend the conference but would like to order the materials, go to www.abanet.org/abastore and search for “white collar crime.”

Criminal Justice Congress Held May 28-29 in Washington, D.C.

The Section convened the first annual Criminal Justice Congress, a new endeavor through which several organizations joined with the Section and other partners to address complex issues concerning the proper and just operation of the criminal justice system.

Representatives were from the Department of Justice, Federal Public Defenders, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Association of Attorneys General, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, National Black Police Association, National District Attorneys Association, the Na-

tional Judicial Conference, National Legal Aid and Defender Association, and numerous ABA representatives including the president and president-elect.

The initial congress focused on two primary challenges for the criminal justice system: improving cross-cultural communication and reentry/collateral consequences. The participants identified ways to enhance four core areas of the criminal justice field related to these issues: policy development, outreach, committee work, continuing legal education and publications.

Section Programs at Annual Meeting

The Section’s Annual Meeting in Chicago (July 30-August 2) will feature programs covering topics such as public corruption; the best means to keep criminal or regulatory practice thriving during and after the economic meltdown; a review of all criminal law cases argued before the U.S. Supreme Court during the 2008 term; and an array of juvenile law-related programs.

Additionally, numerous CJS committees will be meeting and the Section Council will convene August 1-2. For more information on the Annual Meeting, which is continually updated, go to www.abanet.org/crimjust/calendar.

State of Criminal Justice—2009

The Section prides itself on being the preeminent voice on national criminal justice issues. The Section continues to extend its influence on the field of criminal law with the release of a new edition of the *State of Criminal Justice*. The 2009 edition, edited by Prof. Myrna Raeder of Southwestern Law School, features authors from across the criminal justice spectrum providing essays on topics ranging from white collar crime to international law to juvenile justice. This annual publication examines and reports on the major issues, trends, and significant changes in the criminal justice system. As one of the cornerstones of the Section's work, the publication serves as an invaluable resource for policy-makers, academics, and students of the criminal justice system alike. The 2009 volume contains 21 chapters focusing on specific aspects of the criminal justice field, as well as an appendix of full text and reports of all of the adopted official ABA policies passed in 2008-2009 that address crimi-

nal justice issues. For more information and to order a copy, visit www.abanet.org/crimjust/pubs.

Section Inks Sponsorship Deal with Huron Consulting Group

The ABA Criminal Justice Section and Huron Consulting Group recently agreed to a three-year comprehensive sponsorship agreement. Huron Consulting Group is a leading provider of independent litigation, financial, and operational consulting services, with more than 1,500 professionals in 20 offices nationwide and internationally. Huron's forensic accountants and fraud investigators team with clients and their counsel to assist in regulatory and internal investigation matters involving asset tracing, BSA/AML and FCPA compliance, reconstruction of accounts and other financial transactions, financial reporting and restatements, and tax matters as well as providing expert testimony in litigation. Huron's professionals are specialists in fraud detection and a wide variety of forensic accounting and white collar investigations and have an established recognition among federal regulatory and law enforcement agencies for its work in this field. To learn more about Huron and the services it offers, visit www.huronconsulting.com. ■