



# UPDATE



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Spring 2009



Committee founder John E. Nolan, Partner, Steptoe & Johnson LLP (left); with Committee Trustee Joseph N. Onek (center); Committee supporter Eldon Greenberg (rear); and The Honorable Patricia M. Wald, Retired Chief Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia (right).

## 2009 Founders' Reception Draws Over 120 Attendees

More than 120 past and present Washington Lawyers' Committee Co-Chairs, board members, trustees, staff, and other supporters attended the Committee's 2009 Founders' Reception on May 5 at the home of Tersh and Sally Boasberg in Washington, D.C.

John Nolan, the Washington Lawyers' Committee's founding co-chair and a partner at **Steptoe and Johnson LLP**, Committee Executive Director Rod Boggs, and Judge James E. Boasberg, son of hosts Tersh and Sally Boasberg, welcomed attendees to the reception. John Nolan noted a number of individuals in attendance who were also involved in the Committee's creation, including Robert Wald, a partner at **Baach, Robinson & Lewis PLLC**. He expressed his appreciation for the contributions that the Committee has received over the years from its many supporters and colleagues at their law firms.

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## Committee Report Documents Exploitation of D.C.'s Day Laborers

On October 29, 2008, the Washington Lawyers' Committee and a team of attorneys at **Arent Fox LLP**, released a report that describes the abuse and exploitation of D.C.'s day laborers. The report, *Wages Denied: Day Laborers in the District of Columbia*, details many problems faced by day laborers, including nonpayment of minimum wages, unlawful deductions, abandonment at work sites, and hazardous working conditions.

The report includes recommendations that the District of Columbia create a workers' center, improve policies and practices within the city's Department of Employment Services, and implement a "bad-check" program within the city's Office of the Attorney General.

The report's findings were based on a survey of 140 D.C. day laborers. Of those surveyed, 88% reported working primarily in the District of Columbia and 62% reported that, on at least one occasion, they had not been paid for work performed. The type of work performed included work for construction companies, eviction companies, temporary agencies, and work performed on behalf of the D.C. government.

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**Roderic V.O. Boggs**  
Executive Director  
Washington Lawyers' Committee  
for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs

This issue of the Committee's **Update** discusses several developments reflecting both the remarkable levels of pro bono support being provided by so many cooperating firms and the serious financial challenges we face as a result of the significant downturn in charitable giving impacting virtually all non-profit organizations.

On the positive side, the Committee is enormously grateful for the victories recorded in recent months by all of its litigation projects. Among other things, we are especially pleased to note the agreement in principle just negotiated by a team of **Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP** lawyers in our longstanding case on behalf of African-American police officers

in Baltimore and the resolution of two major cases assuring thousands of units of accessible housing to people with disabilities across the country. Similarly, we applaud the many attorneys at cooperating firms who are working with the staff of our D.C. Prisoners' Project in representing inmates in newly ordered parole hearings. Of course, it is also especially heartening to note the exceptional work of the **Arent Fox LLP** attorneys who authored a fine report on the plight of day laborers in our city.

Unfortunately, these successes were recorded at a time when serious funding shortfalls have forced the Committee to conclude most reluctantly the funding for staffing of our public education programs. Thus, as noted in this **Update**, two of the Committee's finest senior staff members, Iris Toyer and Mary Levy, will be leaving the Committee this summer. While we hope to continue the operation of our D.C. Public School Partnerships Program with the help of volunteers, we deeply regret the departure of two exceptional colleagues, who have given so much to the city's children and to our public schools. I know that all Committee supporters join in thanking Iris and Mary for all of their fine work and wishing them well in their future endeavors.

The loss of two key staff members and the possibility of further staffing reductions are reasons to work even harder for the engagement of more law firms in the programs and financial support of the Committee. As always, we welcome the help of new law firms and volunteers. If you or your firm would like to learn more about how you might get involved, please let us know. Your support will be most appreciated.

### 2008/2009 Annual Funding Campaign Proceeds

For the 2008-2009 Annual Campaign, the Committee had received contributions of \$ 208,037 from 22 firms and \$ 273,405 from 707 individuals as of June 5, 2009. These figures do not include contributions to the Committee's Wiley Branton Awards Luncheon or special gifts directed to the Burke Fund or Founders' Fund. To be included in the current year's campaign, gifts from individuals and firms should be sent to the Committee by the end of the campaign year on November 30, 2009.

The Committee thanks all of its contributors for their gifts to the Committee, and expresses great appreciation for the service of the many Associates and Partners who coordinated funding drives for the benefit of the Committee at their law firms.

# Fair Housing

## Six Source of Income Complaints Filed in Montgomery County

On February 24, 2009, the Washington Lawyers' Committee and co-counsel filed six administrative complaints on behalf of the Equal Rights Center (ERC) in the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights challenging the refusal of landlords to accept housing choice vouchers.

The complaints allege, *inter alia*, that the ERC's testers were told that the developments categorically refuse to rent to individuals who use housing choice vouchers (formerly Section 8 program vouchers), place quotas and steer individuals who use housing choice vouchers, and/or place different terms and conditions on the rental applications for individuals who use housing choice vouchers. Each of these acts violates the Maryland County Ordinance which prohibits landlords from discrimination against prospective tenants based on their source of income, including housing choice vouchers.

The cases are: *ERC v. Avalonbay Communities, Inc. and Avalonbay Traville L.L.C.*, filed with co-counsel **Morrison & Foerster LLP**; *ERC v. The Donaldson Group LLC and Selborne House at Saint Marks Owner, LLC*, filed with co-counsel **Howrey LLP**; *ERC v. Rock Creek Springs Holdings LLC, Dreyfuss Brothers Inc., Potomac Springs Ltd. Partnership*, filed with co-counsel **Covington & Burling LLP**; *ERC v. Equity Residential*, filed with co-counsel **Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP**; and *ERC v. Rakusin & Becker Management, Inc, Topaz House*, filed with co-counsel **Howrey LLP**; and *ERC v. Riverstone Residential, CAS Partners, Cap-Park Bethesda LLC*, filed with co-counsel **Foley & Lardner LLP**.

## Dittmar Signs Agreement on Housing Accessibility

On January 28, 2009, the Equal Rights Center (ERC), represented by the Washington Lawyers' Committee and **Gilbert Oshinsky LLP**, reached a voluntary agreement with the Dittmar Company, a Virginia-based apartment developer, to make more than 1,100 apartment units in the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro corridor accessible to people with disabilities.

In 2007, the ERC found that some Dittmar properties were not accessible to people with disabilities and immediately began working with Dittmar to address these accessibility concerns.

As part of their agreement, Dittmar will also work with the ERC to develop a fair housing training program, include accessibility-related advertising in its marketing materials, and will be an active participant in the web-based National Accessible Apartment Clearinghouse—a searchable, national database of accessible apartments.

## Trammell Crow Residential Settles Design & Construction Case

On November 7, 2008, the Equal Rights Center (ERC), represented by the Committee and co-counsel **Crowell & Moring LLP**, and Trammell Crow Residential (TCR) reached a settlement agreement in a design and construction case that will provide accessible housing for thousands of persons with disabilities.

The settlement agreement includes the establishment and funding of an ERC Fair Housing Program sponsored by TCR, and retrofitting of over thirty properties and between 3,500 and 4,500 dwelling units that will be made accessible.

In the lawsuit, filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia on July 10, 2007, the ERC alleged that TCR, a privately owned company headquartered in Atlanta, GA, was discriminating against persons with disabilities at 112 of its apartment complexes nationwide.

The lawsuit is one of several in an initiative brought by the Committee and co-counsel on behalf of the ERC to ensure accessible housing to persons with disabilities, which collectively involve over 100,000 housing units.

# Disability Rights

## Accessibility Lawsuit Filed Against Filene's Basement

On November 21, 2008, the Committee and co-counsel **Kirkland & Ellis LLP** filed a federal lawsuit, on behalf of the Equal Rights Center (ERC) and two individuals who use wheelchairs, against Filene's Basement, alleging that the national clothing store chain discriminates against people with disabilities. Filene's Basement is alleged to have violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the D.C. Human Rights Act, by failing to provide people with disabilities equal access to its stores.

After receiving complaints that three Filene's Basement stores in the District failed to meet ADA accessibility requirements, the ERC performed accessibility surveys at other Filene's Basement stores in the District, Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The surveys found that the stores had architectural and structural barriers to accessibility that resulted in inaccessible merchandise departments, display counters, fitting rooms, restroom facilities, and elevators and lifts. The surveys also found discriminatory policies, practices, and procedures at the stores, including a pervasive failure to maintain accessible paths of travel and adequate aisle width between merchandise displays.

Subsequent to the lawsuit, Filene's Basement filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The Committee and co-counsel will continue to work to ensure that accessibility is a priority in future plans for the stores.

## Committee Challenges District of Columbia's Failure To Provide Sign-Language Interpreters

The Committee and co-counsel **Steptoe & Johnson LLP** filed an amended complaint on May 16, 2008 in a class action case against the District of Columbia for its failure to provide sign-language interpreters in meetings with agencies. The Committee based this action on the many complaints it has received on this issue.

In the amended complaint, the Project cites a complaint from a deaf District resident who did not receive adequate interpreter services for a hearing before the District of Columbia Zoning Board, and another deaf resident who did not receive interpreter services at his ANC meetings and other events hosted by the District of Columbia.

The District is working to remedy the problems alleged in this complaint. Recently, the D.C. Council approved a \$400,000 budget proposed by the D.C. Office on Disability Rights that will include funding for a sign-language interpreter contract.

## Hilton Hotels Denied Dismissal of ADA Case

On March 25, 2009, Judge James Robertson issued an opinion denying in part Hilton's Motion to Dismiss an accessibility lawsuit filed on behalf of the Equal Rights Center and the American Association of People with Disabilities by the Washington Lawyers' Committee and co-counsel **Gilbert Randolph LLP**.

The opinion addressed several issues that had not previously been raised in the District of Columbia. It provided favorable precedent on the standards required for individuals to state a claim under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the standards required to state a claim against a franchisor for ADA violations at a franchised location, and the ADA's requirement that hotels disperse accessible rooms among the various classes of available rooms. On May 1, 2009, the Court granted plaintiffs' Request for Reconsideration, providing clarification on the standing of the organizational plaintiffs to bring claims under the D.C. Human Rights Act.

The lawsuit was filed in August 2007, alleging that Hilton Hotels violated the ADA by failing to disperse its accessible rooms among different classes of rooms. The complaint also alleged serious accessibility issues throughout the hotel chain, including barriers to access in rooms designated as accessible and barriers throughout common areas of the hotels.

# Equal Employment Opportunity

## Baltimore Police Dept. Settles Race Discrimination Lawsuit

Racial discrimination within the Baltimore City Police Department (BPD) has been a highly publicized and openly acknowledged problem for decades, and African-American police officers for years have complained about a racially discriminatory disciplinary system within the BPD.

Against this historic backdrop, a dedicated team of attorneys from **Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP** is currently in the process of finalizing a far-reaching settlement of a case brought in 2004 on behalf of fifteen current and former black officers alleging a pattern and practice of racially discriminatory discipline within the BPD.

Under its terms, the BPD must pay \$2.5 million, including attorney's fees and costs. It must also retain, for three years, a special consultant who will assist in developing remedial policies to eliminate racially disparate discipline, investigating and responding to complaints of racial discrimination and retaliation, and assuring equal opportunity to all officers within the BPD.

Weil, Gotshal & Manges was assisted in the case by **The Law Office of Robert L. Smith, Jr.**, as well as by Dispute Analytics LLC, a Bethesda-based consulting firm that provided substantial pro bono assistance.

## African-American Employees Secure Back Wages, Improved Work Conditions at Moving Companies

When the Committee was approached by **The Law Firm of Nathaniel D. Johnson** in October 2008 seeking co-counseling assistance on a significant wage & hour case, **Covington & Burling, LLP** volunteered to assist immediately. The plaintiffs in the

case were twelve African-American current and former employees of two affiliated Maryland-based moving companies, Quality Transfer & Storage Co., Inc. and Tri-County Moving and Storage, Inc. They alleged that the defendants systemically denied them overtime wages, and subjected them to a racially hostile work environment.

Working closely with the Committee, Covington & Burling and attorney Johnson successfully negotiated a settlement agreement on behalf of the twelve plaintiffs. Among other terms, the agreement provides for substantial improvements in working conditions at the Defendants' facilities, including installation and repair of heaters and fans, improved safety training, and enhanced workplace safety measures.

## Discharged Employee Reinstated in Family and Medical Leave Act Lawsuit Against WMATA

Liem Truong was a loyal employee of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in April 2008 when he found out that his newborn son was ill and required emergency surgery. Mr. Truong immediately informed WMATA that he would need to take two weeks of leave to care for his son. Notwithstanding the federal Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which prevents employers from discharging employees for taking leave in such situations, WMATA fired Mr. Truong while he was on leave, purportedly for failing to call in each day.

The Committee with co-counsel **Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP** first worked to get Mr. Truong reinstated to his prior position, with a salary increase, and then negotiated a settlement providing Mr. Truong with full back pay and damages. Mr. Truong is now back on the job with his rights under the FMLA fully vindicated.

# Immigrant and Refugee Rights

## Committee Report Documents Exploitation (cont.)

Of day laborers interviewed, 39% stated that they have been forced to pay their employers for transportation from their hiring location to the work site and back, while 45% reported being abandoned at a work site by their employer and left to find their own way home after work. Fifty-eight percent reported working more than 12 hours in a day, 19% reported working more than 16 hours in a day, and 22% claimed that they had received an insufficient funds check on at least one occasion.

Publication of this report has already led to an important meeting with the Director and staff of D.C. Office of Wage and Hour and a series of reforms based on recommendations made in the report.

## Asylum Training Participants Win Victories for Clients

Pro bono lawyers recently won asylum in Immigration Court and at the Arlington Asylum Office for several individuals.

Attorneys from **Kirkland & Ellis LLP** won a grant of asylum in Immigration Court for a student from Cameroon who was arrested and severely assaulted because of her involvement in an opposition party.

In the Arlington Asylum Office, an attorney from **Howrey LLP** gained a grant of asylum for a woman from El Salvador who was sexually harassed and then assaulted by a high-ranking government official.

Attorneys from **Winston & Strawn LLP** obtained a grant of asylum in the Arlington Asylum Office for a teacher from Eritrea who was detained because of his conversion and participation in a banned church, and for a university student from Haiti who was targeted by pro-government gangs because of his expression of anti-government views in his neighborhood and on the radio.

Also in the Arlington Asylum Office, an attorney from **Crowell & Moring LLP** gained asylum for 3 members of a Somali family who feared persecution on account of clan affiliation, the violence against women and persons with handicaps throughout the country, and that female circumcision would be imposed upon the mother and daughter.

The Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project has many new asylum cases and clients awaiting attorneys. For more information, contact Ruth Spivack at (202) 319-1000, ext. 120.

## Committee Recovers Wages for Immigrant Workers At Painting Company

On March 20, 2009, the Committee and co-counsel **Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP** obtained a consent decree, approved by the Maryland District Court, against S.C.C.P. Painting Contractors, which agreed to pay \$200,000 in unpaid wages, damages, and attorneys' fees to immigrant workers who had claimed wage payment abuse by the company.

The Committee and co-counsel had filed a collective and class action against the area painting company on February 21, 2007, in Maryland District Court for engaging in a uniform and systematic scheme of wage payment abuse against their immigrant employees for work performed throughout Washington, D.C., and Maryland.

The case established important precedent in the 4th Circuit on January 14, 2008 when the District Court of Maryland ruled, in a published decision, that an individual's immigration status is irrelevant in an FLSA action. The court held that the protections provided by the FLSA are available to citizens and undocumented immigrants, regardless of immigration status.

This result will help protect thousands of exploited immigrant workers in the future.

# Public Accommodations

## Charges Filed Against Landmark Hotel, Sea Horn Motel, and Hamburger Joe's in Myrtle Beach

In November 2008, the Committee and co-counsel **Covington & Burling LLP, Patton Boggs LLP, Crowell & Moring LLP, Relman & Dane PLLC** and **Derfner, Altman & Wilborn, L.L.C.**, filed race discrimination charges with the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission on behalf of the NAACP and individual African American Black Bike Week attendees.

The charges alleged that during Black Bike Week, the Sea Horn Motel and Hamburger Joe's closed, and the Landmark Hotel raised its rates, closed several of its facilities, and imposed other discriminatory terms on its guests.

Black Bike Week is a predominantly African American motorcycle event held annually in the Myrtle Beach area. It is preceded by another bike rally held the previous week known as the Harley Davidson Spring Bike Rally, whose participants are predominantly white. During Black Bike Week, a number of popular restaurants, hotels and other retail establishments in Myrtle Beach closed or offered substandard services and amenities, which was in sharp contrast to their practices during Harley Week.

Since May 2003, the Committee and co-counsel have brought a number of lawsuits against the City of Myrtle Beach and certain restaurants and hotels alleging widespread race discrimination against African Americans during Black Bike Week. The Committee has settled all of the Myrtle Beach lawsuits filed since that time, including those against the City of Myrtle Beach, Greg Norman's Australian Grille, Yachtsman Resort Hotel, Damon's Grill, J. Edward's Great Ribs & More, and Fleming's.



Lisa A. Estrada  
Arent Fox PLLC

**Lisa A. Estrada**, a partner at **Arent Fox PLLC**, served as lead author of the Committee's report *Wages Denied: Day Laborers in the District of Columbia*. She talked with **UPDATE** staff about her experience with the Committee in preparing the report.

**Q:** Why did your firm get involved in this project?

**A:** Arent Fox has a long history of working with the Committee. We find the Committee to be a great partner. This particular project allowed a team of attorneys, all with a long-

## An Interview with Lisa A. Estrada, Lead Author Of *Wages Denied: Day Laborers in the District of Columbia*

standing interest in the issue of fair treatment of immigrant and homeless day laborers, to engage in creative problem-solving that we hope will lead to positive changes in our own community. As busy lawyers at a national law firm, those kinds of opportunities don't present themselves everyday.

**Q:** What special challenges did the project present?

**A:** One challenge was making the report more than a compilation of data. We wanted to tell stories with a human face. This was sometimes difficult, given language barriers and legitimate concerns by workers that speaking out might bring negative repercussions. A second challenge was focusing the report on the recommendations that are attainable in the current political and economic climate. All of us fought the urge to push for sweeping changes and broad protections and instead focused on the

smaller-scale and, hopefully, attainable goal of a day laborers' center in the District.

**Q:** What was your experience working with Committee staff?

**A:** This was a great collaborative effort. The Committee staff came up with the concept and did the legwork to collect the data. We then worked together to package it and add the real-life stories that make the report so powerful. It was a true joint effort.

**Q:** How would you describe the impact of working on this project for lawyers at your firm?

**A:** The report team included attorneys at different levels from all of our departments -- corporate, regulatory and litigation. So, from the institutional perspective, it provided valuable opportunities for relationship building. From a personal perspective, each individual attorney appreciated the opportunity to work on a project that we hope will lead to positive change in our community.

## Public Education



*J.O. Wilson Elementary School students compete in the 4th GeoPlunge Geography Tournament, which they later won.*

### 40 D.C. Public Schools Compete In 4th GeoPlunge Tournament

On Friday, November 21, 2008, the Committee and **Arent Fox LLP** hosted the 4th Annual GeoPlunge Challenge Tournament. The event was a great success, with teams of enthusiastic students competing in the popular award-winning card game GeoPlunge created by Arent Fox LLP partner Alan Fishel to encourage students to learn about U.S. geography. The winning team from J.O. Wilson Elementary School gave the school its second straight championship.

Forty-eight teams representing 40 DCPS elementary and middle schools participated in the tournament. Dozens of D.C. area law firms and individuals donated funds to sponsor the teams' participation in the tournament.

D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee provided opening remarks and invited the winning team to lunch with her at school headquarters.

The Washington Lawyers' Committee's D.C. Public School Partnerships Project worked with Arent Fox LLP and the Office of the Chancellor of D.C. Public Schools to organize the tournament, with attorneys and staff from the law firm and the D.C. public school system managing logistics, serving as monitors, and judging the competition.

Tournament evaluations from students and teachers were uniformly positive. Fifth-grade Teacher Kendal Evans from J.O. Wilson Elementary School wrote: "I love the fact

that students are excited about learning and displaying their knowledge in this game. It also gives them the chance to interact with other children from all across the city. This tournament promotes learning through competition."

Participating students commented: "This is the best tournament yet!" "It's a fun way to learn Geography," and "All I have to say is I love GeoPlunge!"

### Committee Announces New School Partnerships

The Committee is pleased to announce that three D.C. law firms have established new educational partnerships with D.C. Public Schools this year.

**Dow Lohnes, PLLC** will enter into a partnership with Kelly Miller Middle School located in far Northeast Washington. **Brown Rudnick, LLP** will begin a partnership with Whittier Elementary School. Also, **Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP** will be establishing a new partnership with Anne Beers Elementary School.

The Committee looks to its network of area law firms to serve as prospective partners with individual D.C. public schools to provide tutoring, mentoring, and other supportive services that benefit thousands of at-risk K-12 D.C. public school students.

As a result of school closings and mergers implemented during the last school year, the need for local school support has increased significantly. Firms are encouraged to consider becoming involved in a local school. For more information, interested firms should contact the Committee at (202) 319-1000.

### Education Projects Staff Reductions

Due to severe budgetary constraints, the Washington Lawyers' Committee has reluctantly been forced to cut back on the staffing for its education programs beginning July 1, 2009.

As a result, D.C. Public School Partnerships Project Director Iris Toyer and Public Education Reform Project Director Mary Levy will be leaving the Committee after many years of extraordinary service to Washington, D.C. public schools and students.

*(Continued on page 10)*

# Prisoners' Project

## Lawsuit Filed Against Halfway House For Refusing To Accept Blind Inmate

Anticipating his release from the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in 2007, D.C. Prisoners' Project client "John" requested placement in a BOP halfway house a few months prior to his release. John had lost his eyesight while incarcerated, and wanted a few months in a halfway house to give him time to learn how to survive as a blind man in the city. Much to his surprise, and disappointment, the halfway house refused to accept John into its facility because he is blind. John ended up serving out his entire sentence in prison and was released. Within days of his release, he was homeless.

John contacted the D.C. Prisoners' Project immediately upon his release. In subsequent communications with the halfway house provider, a private corporation under contract to the federal government, the provider explicitly stated that they simply did not allow blind people into their program. In March 2009, the D.C. Prisoners' Project and Fair Housing Project of the Washington Lawyers' Committee, along with co-counsel **Steptoe & Johnson LLP**, filed a lawsuit against Hope Village, a D.C. halfway house, on John's behalf. The lawsuit asserts that halfway houses are bound by both the D.C. Human Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act not to discriminate on the basis of disability. The lawsuit seeks damages on behalf of our client, who could have benefited more than most from time in the halfway house.

## Attorneys Volunteer For Parole Representation, More Needed

In May 2008, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia issued a watershed decision in the case of *Sellmon v. Reilly* (551 F. Supp. 2d 66 (D.D.C. 2008)), ruling that the members of the U.S. Parole Commission (USPC) violated the *Ex Post Facto* Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The USPC has consistently applied its own parole regulations and practices to D.C. prisoners, rather than the regulations and practices of the former D.C. Board of Parole in effect at the time the prisoners committed offenses, resulting in the Court's finding of constitutional violations. In virtually every case prior to *Sellmon*, the USPC had extended the incarceration of D.C. prisoners, insisting that they serve more prison time beyond their minimum sentences, essentially re-sentencing them beyond sentences imposed by the courts. Several hundred D.C. prisoners are now entitled to new hearings, and probable release.

In response to *Sellmon*, the D.C. Prisoners' Project initiated efforts to recruit and train *pro bono* attorneys to handle parole hearings. Dozens of attorneys at cooperating law firms have volunteered to provide *pro bono* representation. Firms participating to date include: **Dechert LLP; Wiley Rein LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP; Patton Boggs LLP; Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson LLP; Bryan Cave LLP; Covington & Burling LLP; Winston & Strawn LLP; Hunton & Williams LLP; Goodwin Proctor LLP; Morrison & Foerster LLP; Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP; and Sidley Austin LLP.**

The Project has placed approximately 35 parole cases so far, with dozens more cases ready for placement. Contact the Project for videotapes of previous training sessions. Another training session will be scheduled this summer. For more information, contact Philip Fornaci, Director, D.C. Prisoners' Project at (202) 319-1000, ext. 121.

## Parole Reform Legislation Signed by Mayor Fenty

In January 2009, the Committee and co-counsel **Covington & Burling LLP**, along with other advocates and community groups, were successful in legislative efforts toward overturning the disastrous *U.S. Parole Commission v. Noble* decision that significantly curtailed the rights of D.C. parolees, when Mayor Adrian Fenty signed legislation that partially achieves this goal.

Under the law, which became effective in March, parolees will no longer lose street time if parole is revoked for a so-called "technical" or administrative violation of parole, an important reform. Another provision of the law allows for early termination of parole, a huge benefit for people previously affected by the loss of street time.

The *Noble* decision required that a parolee forfeit his "street time," or time spent successfully on parole without a technical violation or a new violation of law, when his parole is revoked for any reason. Reversal of this decision, which has forced thousands of D.C. parolees to literally "re-serve" the same parole time multiple times, is the top public policy goal of the Project.

# Arrivals

## New Board Members

The Washington Lawyers' Committee is pleased to welcome 13 new members to the Board of Directors.

They are: **Barry Buchman (Dickstein Shapiro LLP); Barry W. Graham (Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, L.L.P.); Anne Harkavy (Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP); Broderick D. Johnson (Bryan Cave LLP); Stephen B. Kinniard (Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP); Alex C. Lakatos (Mayer Brown LLP); Amy J. Mauser (Boies, Schiller & Flexner, L.L.P.); Michael J. McManus (Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP); Alison B. Marshall (Jones Day); Edward S. Scheideman III (DLA Piper US LLP); Matthew Shors (O'Melveny & Myers LLP); Duane K. Thompson (Baach Robinson & Lewis PLLC); and Charles F. Walker (Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP).**

## New Staff:

### Shalini Goel Agarwal

Shalini Goel Agarwal joined the Committee as its Fair Housing Project Staff Attorney in May 2009. Previously, she was a litigation fellow at Relman & Dane, PLLC, a civil rights law firm, where she represented plaintiffs in employment and housing discrimination cases. She is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California, Berkeley, and clerked for the Honorable David S. Tatel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

### Emily Read

Emily Read recently joined the Washington Lawyers' Committee as Staff Attorney with the Equal Employment Opportunity Project. She previously worked with Bernabei and Wachtel PLLC, a public

interest law firm in Washington, D.C., where she represented clients in civil rights matters. She is a graduate of Cornell University, earned her J.D. at Northeastern University School of Law, and received her L.L.M. at Georgetown University Law Center.

### Barbara Schmidt

Barbara Schmidt recently joined the Washington Lawyers' Committee as Assistant to the Executive Director. She previously worked at The Williams School in New London, Connecticut, and at Oakdale Elementary School in Oakdale, Connecticut.

## Education Projects Staff Reductions (cont.)

"The Committee is deeply indebted to Iris and Mary for their remarkable service to the public school children of this city," said Committee Co-Chair Denise A. Vanison, a partner at **Patton Boggs LLP**. She added: "While we will miss them very much, we shall strive hard to continue their work."

In recognition of their many years of service, Iris Toyer and Mary Levy will jointly receive the Vincent E. Reed Award for public education advocacy at the Committee's 2009 Wiley Branton Awards Luncheon on June 16.

An appreciation reception for Iris Toyer and Mary Levy will also be held on Wednesday, June 24 at the firm of **Sidley & Austin LLP**.

The Committee will schedule a special meeting over the summer to discuss plans for ongoing coordination of the D.C. public school partnerships by using interim volunteer staffing and internal support.

## 2009 Founders' Reception (cont. from page 1)

Rod Boggs praised the vision of the Committee's founders, and acknowledged the contributions of the dozens of attorneys, current and former board members and Committee staff, who have worked with the Committee during the past 41 years.

David Cynamon, a former Committee Co-Chair, Executive Committee board member and a partner at **Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP**, briefed attendees on the Committee's current activities and encouraged everyone to attend the 2009 Wiley Branton Awards Luncheon on June 16.



Committee board member Thomas S. Williamson, Jr., Partner, Covington & Burling LLP; and Sally Boasberg, Committee supporter and host of the 2009 Founders' Reception.



L/R: Committee Co-Chair George D. Ruttinger, Partner, Crowell & Moring LLP, with Committee board member Peter B. Hutt, II, Partner, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP.



L/R: Susan E. Huhta, Director, EEO Project, Washington Lawyers' Committee; Committee Trustee Stuart J. Land, Partner, Arnold & Porter LLP; Judge Gladys Kessler, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia; and Roderic V.O. Boggs, Executive Director, Washington Lawyers' Committee.



L/R: Committee Co-Chair Denise A. Vanison, Partner, Patton Boggs LLP; and Kristine J. Dunne, Associate Trustee, Arent Fox PLLC.



L/R: Committee board members Ronald S. Flagg, Partner, Sidley & Austin LLP, and H. Guy Collier, Partner, McDermott, Will & Emery LLP, with Committee Trustee Steven P. Hollman, Partner, Hogan & Hartson LLP, and E. Elaine Gardner, Director, Disability Rights Project, Washington Lawyers' Committee.

## WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE

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