The Dominican Bar Association, Inc. 4th Annual Scholarship Dinner Dance Thursday, April 26, 2007





Uplifting our Communities Through Education



HIMNO NACIONAL DOMINICANO (Dominican National Anthem)



Quisqueyanos valientes alcemos nuestro canto con viva emoción y del mundo a las faz ostentemos nuestro invicto glorioso pendon

Salve el pueblo que intrépido y fuerte a la guerra a morir se lanzó cuando en bélico reto de muerte sus cadenas de esclavo rompió

Ningún pueblo ser libre merece si es esclavo, indolente y servil, si en su pecho la llama no crece que templó el heroismo viril

Mas Quisqueya, la indómita y brava siempre altiva la frente alzará que si fuere mil veces esclava otras tantas ser libre sabrá!



Bienvenidos!!!

Thank you for joining us at our 4th Annual Scholarship Dinner as we recognize and reward both law students and attorneys for their dedication and commitment to the community. Each of our honorees has played a vital role in their efforts to "Uplift the Community Through Education." Education is given in a variety of ways, it doesn't always come from a school environment. For example, if you are an administrative judge, you can create and implement a program that educates and recruits volunteer attorneys to assist people in housing court; you can mentor law students and lawyers, or you can plan a community street fair where you provide a range of services and information about available resources. These examples are some of the reasons we are recognizing Hon. Fern Fisher, Jose Perez, Esq. and the law firm of Rodriguez & Fuentes, P.C. In addition to recognizing the great work of our honorees, we also want to acknowledge and congratulate three law students; DinaMary Arvelo, Micheal Fusilli and Melissa Marcial; for their scholarship and community service.

I would like to thank our platinum sponsor United Parcel Service ("UPS") and our scholarship sponsors MetLife, United Parcel Service ("UPS") Raysa Castillo and Ted Zafiris. Finally, I would like to thank you for supporting our Scholarship Dinner. I hope you have an enjoyable evening!!!

Elsa Marte Hampton President THE DOMINICAN BAR ASSOCIATION (DBA) is an incorporated, non-profit, national association representing the interests of Dominican-American, native Dominican and Latino attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students in the United States and the Dominican Republic. Founded in New York City in 1990 as The American Society of Dominican Attorneys, DBA has grown to represent thousands of Latino attorneys and law students across the country. The DBA invites all Latino attorneys as well as others within the profession who subscribe to the goals and philosophy of DBA to become members.

DBA'S MISSION STATEMENT:

To increase professional opportunities for Dominican-American, native Dominican and Latino attorneys in the U.S. legal profession;

To assist native Dominican lawyers and attorneys of other nationalities in meeting the requirements for the practice of law in the U.S., including assisting foreign attorneys in obtaining the Foreign Legal Consultant License issued by the Court of Appeals of the State of New York and its counterpart in other U.S. states;

To assist in the recruitment and retention of Dominicans and Latinos in U.S. law schools and provide students with mentoring, scholarships and other assistance;

To partner with other bar associations, governmental agencies and community groups to foster greater participation in the U.S. legal system by the Dominican and Latino communities;

To address issues of concern to the Dominican and Latino communities in the U.S.;

To safeguard the civil rights of the Dominican and Latino communities and to empower said communities to fully participate in American society through public education and outreach; and,

To ensure fairness and diversity in judicial appointments by serving on various judicial screening panels and committees.

DOMINICAN BAR ASSOCIATION HISTORY

The history of the Dominican Bar Association begins with the large migration of people from the Dominican Republic to the City of New York that occurred in the 1960's and 1970's. Many of those migrating over that time were lawyers, doctors, engineers, *etc.*, who left professional careers in the Dominican Republic in search of a better life in the City of New York.

However, after their arrival in the city they quickly found that life would still be difficult despite their professional credentials. Early on most Dominican lawyers, doctors, architects, engineers, etc., struggled because their professional licenses obtained in the Dominican Republic were not recognized by the State of New York. As a result, although professionally trained and experienced, most people were forced to accept employment wherever they could find it, i.e. as laborers, blue-collar workers, etc. Yet, they never abandoned their desire to resume their professional careers in the State of New York.

With that goal in mind they gradually began to hold informal meetings to discuss how they could make the transition. Initially, meetings took place at their respective homes, in local restaurants and in local sporting clubs. As time went on and the number of Dominican lawyers in the city grew, the need to establish their own formal organization became apparent. It was then that four Dominican attorneys began to meet and discuss the creation of an organization dedicated solely to the interests of lawyers, law students and the legal interests of the Latino community.

The driving force in creating that organization was Victor M. Espinal. Along with co-founders Nurys De Oleo, Rosa Leyda Mateo and Aurea Vasquez, they collectively created the American Society of Dominican Attorneys (ASDA) in 1990. At the time, none were admitted to practice law in the State of New York. In fact, given that most Dominican lawyers living in New York at the time where only licensed to practice law in the Dominican Republic, most of ASDA's initial efforts were directed towards assisting those individuals in gaining admission to the bar.

As the years progressed, more Dominican lawyers became admitted in New York. In addition, second and third generation Dominicans, born and raised in this state, also became admitted attorneys in New York. That slow but steady rise shifted ASDA's primary focus away from easing the transition of foreign attorneys to advancing the interests of those attorneys already practicing law within the State of New York. As a result, in 1996 the organization began doing business as the Dominican Bar Association, Inc. to more accurately reflect its membership.

Throughout its history the Dominican Bar Association has demonstrated a commitment to furthering the legal interests of all Latinos and Dominicans in all facets of the community. DBA's efforts have consisted of providing pro bono legal clinics for members of the public, assisting law students by providing scholarships and mentoring, facilitating communication between the bar and the judiciary and actively participating in the selection process of judicial candidates to name just a few activities. While much has been accomplished, DBA looks forward to continuing to perform its work in the present day and into the future.

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PROGRAM

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DinaMary Arvelo	,
Michael Fusilli	
Melissa Marcial	
CLOSING REMARKS	Patria Frias-Colon

DANCING

Honoree



Hon. Fern Fisher
Administrative Judge of Civil Court Of
The City Of New York

Justice Fisher served as Deputy Director of Harlem Legal Services, Inc. and as an Assistant Attorney General of the New York State Department of Law. For four years, she provided <u>pro bono</u> legal services to Harlem-based community organizations as a project director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers. In 1989, she was appointed Judge of the Housing Part of the Civil Court, and later, in 1990, was elected to the Civil Court where she served as Deputy Supervising Judge. Justice Fisher was elected in 1993 to the Supreme Court of the State of New York. After serving in both the City and the Matrimonial Parts of Supreme Court, in December 1996 she was appointed Administrative Judge of the Civil Court.

Justice Fisher is a contributing author of Residential Landlord-Tenant Law in New York, a practice guide by Lawyers Cooperative Publishing. She served as the host of a series of television shows on housing issues for Crosswalk's, a public service cable show. Justice Fisher has implemented numerous access to justice initiatives in the Civil Court. Justice Fisher spearheaded the Housing Help Program, a homelessness prevention program she co-sponsors with United Way of New York City. Justice Fisher is a founding member of the Metropolitan Black Bar Association and is a member of Judicial Friends (an affiliate of the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association, the Association of the Bar of the City of New York and the New York County Lawyers Association. Justice Fisher also served as the Chair of the Housing Court (Judges) Disciplinary Committee and Chair of the Anti-Bias Committee of the New York County Supreme Court. She received her J.D. in 1978 from Harvard Law School and a B.A., Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Howard University in 1975.

Justice Fisher has received numerous awards, the most recent being the Gary Bellows Award for Public Service from Harvard Law School. However, her greatest reward has been being the mother of Sean and Ashley.

Honoree



Jose Luis Perez Acting Co-Chief, Consumer Frauds & Protection Bureau Office of the New York State Attorney General

Former NY Attorney General Eliot Spitzer appointed Jose Luis Perez as an Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Frauds & Protection Bureau in September, 2000. As an AAG, Jose led a year long investigation into an apartment

broker ring running 10 different apartment information vendors which were advertising non-existent no fee apartments for rent in order to entice consumers into paying an advance fee in exchange for fake or stale apartment listings. The investigation resulted in the arrest, indictment and conviction of the five principals and over \$120,000 in restitution being awarded to consumers. Jose was promoted to Deputy Chief of the Consumer Frauds Bureau in May, 2002 and has managed the Bureau's NYC office for the past 5 years. He was recently appointed Acting Co-Chief of the Bureau in March, 2007 and continues to lead the OAG's Immigrant Consumer Outreach Iniative which seeks to educate immigrant New Yorkers' about their consumer rights. He has conducted numerous presentations on immigration services and notario fraud, identity theft, consumer scams and telemarketing fraud.

Before joining the NY Attorney General's Office, Jose worked at the Legal Aid Society for over ten years beginning as a Staff Attorney in the Juvenile Rights Division where he represented abused, neglected and delinquent children in Family Court. He later served as a Supervising Attorney in Legal Aid's Civil Division Harlem and Brooklyn Neighborhood Offices where he oversaw the housing and family law practices. Jose taught in Hofstra Law School's Housing Rights and Disabilities Law Clinics, and began his legal career as a prosecutor with the Queens County District Attorney's Office and the NYC Housing Authority's Narcotics Strike Force where he prosecuted public housing residents engaged in illegal activity.

Jose is an alumnus of St. John's University twice over, receiving his Juris Doctor from the School of Law and Bachelor of Science from the College of Business Administration. While attending St. John's Law School, Jose created a Spanish Street Law Program where bilingual law students conducted Spanish "Know Your Rights" presentations in Queens and Brooklyn parishes. The program was reborn several years ago as a joint initiative of St. John's LALSA & the Latino Lawyers Ass'n of Queens under Jose's supervision and is now known as Street Law en Espanol. The Street Law program has conducted numerous workshops the past two years on topics such as Immigration, Tenants' and Workers' Rights, Family Law & Domestic Violence, and Consumer Smarts & Financial Literacy, and has received recognition from the Network of Bar Leaders, and the NYS and Hispanic Nat'l Bar Associations. Jose was the Hispanic National Bar Association's ("HNBA") New York Regional President in 1994-5, and has also served on both the Dominican and Puerto Rican Bar Associations' Board of Directors. He is currently the Co-Chair of the HNBA's National Mentoring and Youth Outreach Committee which is implementing a unique mentoring program for high school, college and law students in NYC and Phoenix. Jose previously served as Co-Chairperson of the HNBA's Youth Convention and created a Law Day program attended by over 200 high school & college students in October, 2004, that was replicated last year by the NYS Bar Association. He was previously an Advisory Board Member of ASPIRA's Project Leyes and the Youth Empowerment for Success ("YES") programs, and a board member of the Practicing Attorneys for Law Students ("PALS") mentoring program. Through these organizations and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund's Education Division, he has organized and been involved in numerous mentorship and law related activities for high school, college and law students of color over the past twenty years.



RODRIGUEZ & FUENTES, P.C

In June 2002, *Alisa Rodríguez Fuentes* and *José Antonio Rodríguez* established Rodriguez & Fuentes, P.C. and opened the firm at Soundview Avenue. *James Notice* came to work with them and helped

them direct the course of the practice. *Fiordaliza A. Rodriguez*, who came to the firm in late 2004, as of counsel, has been instrumental in helping Mr. Rodriguez with his Family Law practice. Fiordaliza has a separate solo practice near the Bronx Family Court.

The firm, in a short period of time, has acquired the good will of the community which it serves. The community where the firm is located is known as the "Soundview" section of the Bronx and the street where their building is situated is in a growing commercial/residential area. Complementing the churches, library, banks and small businesses, one can admire the tree lined streets with the one and two family residences.

In a 2004 survey conducted by **New York Law Journal Magazine** the firm was cited as being one among the Largest Minority-Owned Law Firms in New York State. At the time the survey was conducted the firm had three attorneys, now the firm has six attorneys and one attorney who serves as of counsel on Family Court cases. The 2006 survey recently published acknowledged the firm's growth. The firm is now tied for seventh place.

In January 2006 former Family Court Magistrate, **Afua Afriye-Fullwood** joined the firm to help expand the firm's Matrimonial and Family Law practice and later in May *Savina P. Playter*, former Court Attorney to Justice LaTia Martin also joined the firm to work in the Matrimonial and Family Law practice. **Jennese Torres**, who also is the Editor-in-Chief of **La Diva Latina Magazine**, joined the firm in October 2006 and has been handling general litigation.

The firm is appreciative of the fact that they are located in a residential community and has sought to be active and give to the community. In 2005 they formed a committee with the help of friends and colleagues, which later was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation, whose function is to promote the wellness of the community. The R&F Wellness Corp has hosted two annual street fairs where they have organized other organizations and businesses to come together for an afternoon of activities where information on health issues, financial issues, legal issues and safety issues, just to name a few areas, are distributed. In addition, money has been raised which, the first year, was used to make a generous donation to Project Club Clemente and its Flight for Humanity. The donation helped Project Club Clemente in its mission to bring humanitarian aid to the people of Nicaragua. The money raised during the second street fair, in 2006, was used to purchase four (4) new computers, which were donated to the Soundview Avenue Public Library for use by the children. The street fairs have been very successful and the third one is being planned for September 29, 2007.

2007 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Metlife Scholarship Recipient

Dinamary Arvelo is a second year student at the University of Connecticut of law. She graduated from Long Island University in an Accelerated Dual Degree Program, Master of Arts, cum laude, in Political Science. Her Dissertation was titled "Dominican Immigrants in New York City: A Compare and Contrast of Two Generations." Dinamary mentors Latina high school girls and inspires them by her own conduct.

United Parcel Service Scholarship Recipient

Michael R. Fusilli is a first year law student at Northeastern University School of Law. He obtained his B.S. at Boston College, graduating with many honors. Michael wanted to practice law to "see the idealistic tenants of the declaration of independence realized." He is confident in his ability to affect change. As a volunteer in Ameri Corps in Boston, he has shown his commitment to community service and will realize his vision of giving back.

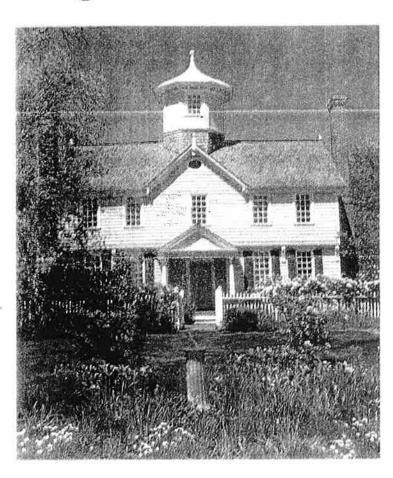
Milagros Matos Scholarship Recipient

Melissa Marcial is a second year student at New York Law School who finds the law very rewarding and challenging. She obtained her Bachelor of Science from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and also studied abroad at the University of Barcelona. She is interested in immigration issues and has worked with attorneys in providing free legal services to the Latino community. She hopes to impact many lives in reaching her goal of mastering her understanding of the Immigration and Naturalization Act.

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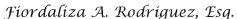
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DBA UPCOMING EVENTS

•	Legal Community Workshops - Our workshops are designed to provide basic legal information in Spanish to our community. Our workshops are held at El Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano, located at 619 W. 145th Street, between Broadway and Riverside Dr., 2nd Floor. On the 1 st Wednesday of every month, 6 - 8pm. Volunteers are needed!!! The scheduled dates and topics are:
	May 2, 2007 - Citizenship and Immigration Consequences June 6, 2007 - Starting Your Own Business/ What You Need to Know About Incorporating and Liabilities
	Community Legal Clinics - Our clinics are staffed with 1-2 attorneys who answer basic legal questions. The clinics are also held at <i>El Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano</i> , 619 W. 145th Street, between Broadway and Riverside Dr., 2nd Floor. The clinics are held on the 3rd Saturday of the month, 10:30am -1:00 pm. <u>Volunteers are needed!!!</u> The scheduled dates for the clinics are:
×	May 19, 2007. June 16, 2007.
	Networking Event - DBA in conjunction with the Latino Lawyers Association of Queens County and the Dominican American Professional Association will have a joint networking event on May 9, 2007 at Nuves Tapas Lounge, 7714 Queens Blvd, Elmhurst, NY 11373
	Networking Event - DBA in conjunction with Dominicans on Wall Street will have a joint networking event. Date and location to be announced.
	Toy Drive - Friday, December 7, 2007. Location to be determined.



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Deputy Chief, Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau,

Office of the New York State Attorney General

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