



Torts, Insurance & Compensation Law Section

TICL RISES TO THE NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION SECTION DIVERSITY CHALLENGE

TICL Diversity Challenge Plan

For the Torts, Insurance and Compensation Law (TICL) Section, Diversity and Inclusion are not merely words that are bandied about in response to a Challenge; they are a way of life. Whether it is actively pursuing diverse members of the legal community to become Executive Committee members or diversity outreach at local law schools, TICL has for some time been at the forefront of the Diversity and Inclusion movement because it's who we are.

When President Vincent Doyle announced the Section Diversity Challenge as a focal point for his year, TICL knew two things: (1) TICL wanted NYSBA President Vincent Doyle to attend its 2011 Summer Meeting to speak on the Section Diversity Challenge; and (2) that the TICL Executive Committee, led by its Diversity Committee, would take up the gauntlet and exceed the expectations of this extraordinary challenge.

The metric to measure the success of the TICL Diversity Challenge Plan will be a dramatic increase in minority and diverse speakers at all TICL events and CLE panels. That should result over time in an increased percentage of minority and diverse TICL Section members as well as on the TICL Executive Committee.

We are pleased to present the 2011 Diversity Challenge Plan of the Torts, Insurance and Compensation Law Section, and some of the Section's diversity efforts already underway.

2011 Diversity Reception, Open Meeting and Diversity Seminar

The TICL Diversity Committee, under the leadership of Mirna Martinez Santiago and Joanna Young, had an equally extraordinary proposal for the TICL Section to meet the NYSBA Section Diversity Challenge.

At the TICL Section Summer 2011 Meeting held in Bar Harbor, Maine, the Executive Committee members unanimously agreed to utilize the funds allotted to its TICL Executive Committee Fall Meeting and instead hold a “Diversity Reception”. The Diversity Networking Reception would be preceded by an “Open” TICL Executive Committee meeting at which all attending will be able to participate. The TICL Executive Committee wanted the Fall Executive Committee to be publicized as an “Open” meeting to send out a strong message that the TICL “welcome mat” is out for inclusion and diversity.

It was further unanimously agreed, that the Reception would be held in the State’s most urban center, New York City, in a borough other than Manhattan, to attract the largest number of diverse candidates and to make it accessible to all using public transportation.

The Reception will be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Brooklyn Heights on Thursday, November 17, 2011. The Reception will shine a light on various minority members of the Judiciary, including Judges Lucindo Suarez (Supreme Court, Bronx County), George Silver (Supreme Court, New York County), Laura Douglas (Supreme Court, Bronx County) and Gloria Dabiri (Supreme Court, Kings County).

The judicial honorees will conduct an hour-long CLE and floor discussion titled, “Strength by Association – Mentoring and the Power of Diversity.”

The “Strength by Association” Series is a continuing TICL conversation on diversity and mentoring that started in Bar Harbor this past August. The Strength by Association Series will continue that important conversation at the January 2012 NYSBA Annual Meeting with a panel now in development by TICL executive committee members Mirna Martinez Santiago and Ken Krajewski, “Strength by Association – Recruitment and Retention of the Diverse Associate and Partner”. The panel is now recruiting several prominent minority attorneys for the panel.

The TICL Diversity Team

The TICL Diversity Team is comprised of TICL Executive Committee Members (a diverse group itself): Tom Maroney; Jean Gerbini; Lawton Squires; Carlos Calderón; Hon. George Silver; Roderick Coyne; Mirna Martinez Santiago; Joanna Young and JP Delaney.

Regional Drives toward Diversity of Membership – the “TICL 2011/3000 Project”

Throughout 2011, the TICL Section has made efforts to diversify its membership through regionally-based membership recruitment events and through offering free Section membership in 2011 to NYSBA members that become new Section

members. The TICL 2011/3000 Project has as one of its goals, outreach to bring TICL Section membership to 3000 in these challenging economic times.

Megan O'Toole and her staff are to be particularly commended in this regard. This past May, TICL Chair Tom Maroney, Vice Chair Jean Gerbini, Upstate Membership Chair Rob Coughlin, Downstate Membership Chair Rich Kokel and several newly-appointed Regional Event Chairs met with Megan O'Toole at the Bar Center in May to discuss outreach to NYSBA members who listed themselves as minority/ethnically diverse (as well as outreach to other NYSBA members who might have an interest in Section membership).

A number of recruitment events have been held and are scheduled. In June, 2011, the Section held a wine tasting in Albany New York, to which NYSBA members in a broadly-defined region, including the Capital District, were invited. Outreach specifically targeted NYSBA members who did not belong to the Section already, and who self-identified themselves as minority/diverse.

On October 26, 2011, the TICL Section, in collaboration with the Minority Bar Association of Western New York, will hold a reception in Buffalo honoring NYSBA President, Vincent Doyle III. Again, a special effort is being made to invite non-Section members of diverse backgrounds, hailing from the western region of the State. The reception was organized by Sharon Gerstman, a member of the TICL Executive Committee, as well as the NYSBA Executive Committee. Sharon is to be commended for her efforts to arrange the Buffalo reception with the Minority Bar Association of Western New York.

Diversity in the Bar: "Strength by Association" Panel Discussion at the 2011 TICL Summer Meeting

The Section's keynote panel at its annual Section meeting in August, 2011 specifically addressed the NYSBA Diversity Challenge. Among the panelists were NYSBA President Vincent Doyle and Immediate Past President Stephen Younger. The panel spoke eloquently on the strength of professional associations, diversity, mentoring; how the three are interrelated to make our professional and personal lives stronger.

The panel was part of a series of continuing conversations in the TICL "Strength by Association" Series. The Bar Harbor panel also included Matt Cairns, National President of the Defense Research Institute (DRI) and Cody McCone of the Brehon Law Society. The panel included a floor discussion in which several leaders of various diverse and specialty bar associations participated.

Law Student Events

Law School Events

As part of the Section's outreach plan, representatives of the Section are attending a number of Law School events in 2011 in an effort to recruit our future diverse leaders. Section leaders attended a law student reception at Albany Law School in September. Students expressing an interest in the Section were put directly in touch with the Section's Diversity Chairs and Law Journal Editor, and invited to network in person at the TICL Section's "Law School for Insurance Professionals."

The Section has scheduled outreach to diverse law students at NYSBA events planned for Brooklyn Law School, New York Law School, Cardozo School of Law, SUNY Buffalo School of Law, Syracuse University School of Law and Pace University School of Law in October and November.

Tim Fennell, of the Executive Committee, will speak on behalf of the NYSBA at the Syracuse University School of Law event. Tim has been instrumental in leading TICL's outreach to young lawyers and law students. In addition to speaking at law schools, Tim participates on the faculty of the Young Lawyers Trial Academy and TICL is a proud sponsor of that event every year.

Upstate Membership Chair Robert Coughlin and Downstate Membership Chair Rich Kokel serve as the coordinators for the October – November law school events.

NYCLA Mentor for a Day Auction

The TICL Executive Committee members participated in the New York County Lawyers Association (NYCLA) Young Lawyers' Section "Mentor-for-a-day-Auction" held September 7TH. Law students from several law schools bid (with fake money) on "an experience" with a judge or attorney of their choice for a day.

TICL Executive Committee members Tom Maroney, Jeff Block, JP Delaney, Rich Kokel, Jim O'Connor and Charlie Siegel formed "Team Mentor" and offered to spend the day with six law students. Team Mentor will provide a fun, lively and interesting opportunity to have lunch and a group discussion on the importance of Bar Association membership as well as a range of law related topics. The winning law student members of Team Mentor have also been invited to attend the TICL open Executive Committee meeting, CLE and Diversity Networking Reception on November 17TH.

Collaboration with Minority Bar Associations

Planning for the TICL Section's 2012 Summer Meeting in Montreal, Quebec (at an accessible and inexpensive location) includes collaboration with the leaders of New York's minority/ethnic bar associations, women's bar associations and LGBT bar associations. Outreach has already begun, with invitations to help plan diverse panels. Leaders of the Quebec and Montreal Bar Associations will be invited to collaborate with the TICL Section in that regard.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas J. Maroney, Chair, TICL Section
Mirna Martinez Santiago, Chair, TICL Diversity Committee