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Wingspread 8 conference, 10/4/07:

Topic: Collaborative Power Diversity, Education and the Profession

It is a pleasure and an honor to be with you for this Wingspread 8 conference. Thank you to Eduardo Rodriguez, Sarah Redfield and the conference organizers for inviting me to participate.

I look forward to learning more about the innovative work of the Wingspread consortium and hearing first-hand of the pipeline initiatives of organizations represented here. I came to listen and learn.

At this early point in my year as ABA President-Elect, I am gathering information to solidify and fine-tune the areas the ABA will focus on during my presidential year. One of those key focus areas will be diversity in the legal profession, particularly legal education.

In my acceptance speech to the House of Delegates in San Francisco in August, I noted that each time a gifted

person of color faces systemic barriers to entering law school, passing the bar, and climbing the ranks of our profession, it's not just a lack of opportunity for those gifted people – it's a lost opportunity for all lawyers as we strive to serve a diverse society.

Hearing about your experiences, insights, plans and priorities will help to inform and shape our planning.

From what I've already learned about this Wingspread consortium, I am impressed, and I am encouraged. Impressed with Wingspread's creative and courageous beginnings. And encouraged by its sustainability and development in the past 3 years.

I applaud Dean Elizabeth Rindskopf Parker, who not only recognized early in her tenure serious problems in the educational pipeline to law school, but who also took action. She convened the first Wingspread meeting in June 2004. From my understanding of the history, Dean Parker and the excellent team that worked with her started with a vision: that partnerships could be formed among

law schools, colleges, graduate schools, the legal profession and P-12 schools to help students from under-represented groups pursue legal and public service careers. Since that first gathering, the Wingspread particulars and participants may have changed and expanded, but I believe the core principle remains intact. That is: There's power in collaboration. Collaboration creates a mighty force that will generate change.

The ABA believes in that same principle:

Collaborative Power. It is particularly potent when addressing a multifaceted issue with multifarious causes, such as "Diversity in the Educational Pipeline." For the next few minutes, ~~I would like~~ ^{ALLOW ME} to share with you some of the ways the ABA is fulfilling its commitment to diversity in education and in the profession through the power of collaboration.

For more than 20 years, one of ABA's operating principles has been its Goal 9, which is to promote full and equal participation in the legal profession by

traditionally underrepresented groups, including women and people of color. There are enormous reserves of talent and creativity and energy and strength in our diverse communities, with riches that can only improve and enhance the law and our service to the public.

Like the Wingspread Consortium, the ABA has also recognized that a diverse profession cannot, and will not exist without sufficient diversity at all points along the educational pipeline. Almost 40 years ago, the ABA's Fund for Justice and Education founded the Council on Legal Education Opportunity to expand opportunities for minority and low-income students to attend law school. Today, CLEO remains one of the most comprehensive resources for diverse students interested in law and for legal employers seeking the superb quality of CLEO alumni.

As many of you know, CLEO's success hinges on the collaborative power of working with law schools, colleges, constituent organizations and bar groups, as well

as literally thousands of CLEO alumni. Interestingly, in all my years and various leadership positions in the ABA and other bar associations, the only congressional testimony I've ever given was related to CLEO, requesting a subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee to increase funding for the Thurgood Marshall Legal Education Opportunity Program. At that time I was serving as Chair of the ABA's House of Delegates, and was honored to have been asked to present this testimony by then ABA President Dennis Archer, the first African-American elected as President of the ABA.

Some of you here this evening are very familiar with another ABA pipeline diversity initiative. The ABA's Presidential Advisory Council on Diversity, in collaboration with the Law School Admission Council, sponsored a major conference titled "Collaborating to Expand the Pipeline." Since this national multidisciplinary event was held nearly two years ago, the Advisory Council and its collaborative partners have

produced a substantive pipeline diversity report and held several regional conferences.

Working closely with LSAC, we also developed the online pipeline diversity directory—a searchable database of initiatives from across the country that encourage and equip diverse students to pursue legal careers. **[NOTE:** We can have handout about the directory available for distribution on site, if needed]. If you haven't already done so, I invite you to enter your pipeline programs into the directory. You can easily submit your entry online. It's free, and it's a great way to publicize your programs to potential participants, collaborators, and funders.

The pipeline conference produced another significant outcome that can have a far-reaching ripple-effect. Based on the clear message from the pipeline conference, at last year's Annual Meeting, the ABA House of Delegates adopted official pipeline diversity policy. It urges all bar associations to collaborate with groups across the full range of the educational spectrum—from elementary

school through law school and bar examiners—to address pipeline diversity issues.

But, this strategic move was much more powerful than mere pontification on a policy that will only sit on a shelf. In an unprecedented effort, the ABA Advisory Council on Diversity secured over 70 co-sponsors for this policy. This meant that the topic of pipeline diversity graced meeting agendas for each one of the bar associations, internal ABA groups, or affiliated legal organizations that co-sponsored the policy. In short, we got their attention and got them talking about it. And, because it is now ABA-approved policy, our officers and others leaders can speak on behalf of more than 413,000 ABA members to proclaim the Association's support of collaboration to diversify the pipeline into the profession.

It's good to see representatives of the ABA Presidential Advisory Council on Diversity in the Profession with us at Wingspread: Ruthe Ashley, our chair, as well as council members Sarah Redfield and the

LSAC's Kent Lollis. (OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE?) I'm also glad to be with Cie Armstead from the ABA's Office of the President, who is a leader in the ABA's diversity efforts.

The ABA and its member groups have many other successful diversity pipeline programs and projects. Let me highlight one in particular that I know very well. The ABA's Section of Litigation conducts an annual Judicial Intern Opportunity Program. This full-time, summer internship is open to all first- or second-year minority or financially disadvantaged law students who want to do legal research and writing for state or federal judges in several cities. In the program's first year, 2000, it placed 14 students with judges in two states. The 2007 program placed more than 200 students with judges in seven states, including Texas.

Yes, the ABA, the Wingspread Consortium, and many other groups affiliated with the legal profession can claim some measure of success on increasing diversity in

the pipeline. Yet we also regrettably acknowledge that palpable progress has too often seemed to move at glacier speed—or even regressed in some areas. The diversity and educational challenges and setbacks we face spill over into almost daily news reports and courtrooms across the country.

We all know—and have undoubtedly experienced—myriad obstacles in pursuit of pipeline diversity progress. But, we will not allow them to stymie our efforts or weaken our resolve. We will not allow ourselves to get stuck in debilitating debate and contentious discourse. We will move forward with alacrity into actions that will make a difference—one student at a time, if needed. We achieve this forward movement best through collaboration. Working together, we spotlight and support existing projects. Empowered and encouraged by each other, we replicate and build upon successful pipeline diversity initiatives. Through partnerships, we broaden our reach and compound our outcomes.

Let us continue to work together—and with other professions that also recognize the profound value of diversity in the educational pipeline. Our sustained efforts will not only benefit the diverse students and the professions that receive them. Equipping more American students—from every corner of our country—to better compete in this global society benefits us all.



ABA/LSAC Pipeline Diversity Directory

Your one-stop shop on the Web for finding projects, programs and initiatives from across the country that enhance diversity in the educational pipeline to the legal profession

The **American Bar Association** and the **Law School Admission Council** created the Pipeline Diversity Directory (www.abanet.org/op/pipelndir/home.html) as an ever-growing online searchable database of projects, programs and initiatives nationwide that encourage students of color to pursue careers in the legal profession.

This free service presents key information on programs from across the country in an easily accessible, succinct format. It includes a wide-range of programs that promote law careers for racially and ethnically diverse students. Law schools, educational groups, law firms, in-house counsel, bar associations, community organizations, and other collaborations have their pipeline programs featured in the Directory.

Is YOUR Pipeline Diversity Program Included?

The ABA and LSAC invite all interested parties to have their pipeline diversity programs posted in the Directory. Your submission to this national directory offers an excellent way to publicize your initiatives to potential participants, funders, collaborators, and supporters. Your participation will also ensure that the Directory has a broad and diverse representation of viable practices that address the critical issue of improving diversity in the legal profession's pipeline—from pre-kindergarten through bar passage.

Benefits of Using the Pipeline Directory

We encourage groups and individuals to learn about, adapt, and replicate the programs featured in the Directory, thus extending the impact and reach of these programs. The Directory will also serve as a comprehensive source for students to find programs in their area that will assist them in preparing for a legal career. Anyone who wants to help improve diversity in the pipeline to the legal profession will benefit from frequent use of the Directory.

Connect Today!

www.abanet.org/op/pipelndir/home.html