

### **Campaign Promotes Benchmark Giving to Aid Civil Legal Services**

Across the District of Columbia, residents are lining up at shelters in search of a warm place to stay and food to eat. Unemployment levels continue to rise at rates above the national average. Incidence of family violence is growing at alarming rates. The need for civil legal services has never been greater. To meet the demand, the D.C. Access to Justice Commission launched the Raising the Bar Campaign in December.

With the endorsement of the D.C. Bar and the D.C. Bar Foundation, the campaign aims to substantially raise the financial support to the District's legal services community by recognizing law firms that generously give at specific benchmark levels. The highest givers, those that donate at least .11 percent of their office revenue, reach the platinum level. The gold level signifies those that give .09 percent, and silver recognizes firms that donate .075 percent. Cash donations, donated attorneys' fees, and support for fellowships are included in the percentage.

Eight law firms have thrown their support behind the campaign by joining the Leadership Circle and pledging to donate funds at one of the three levels in 2011. Members of the Circle include Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Covington & Burling LLP, Crowell & Moring LLP, DLA Piper LLP, Jenner & Block LLP, Sidley Austin LLP, Steptoe & Johnson LLP, and Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP. In an open appeals letter, these eight firms also have urged their counterparts at other local firms to join the mission, stressing the importance of the private bar in providing legal services to the poor.

"This is an important and long overdue initiative," said Frank M. Cooper III, managing partner of DLA Piper. "Since 2001, the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative has provided guidance for firms in establishing pro bono hours targets. Until now, there has not been any comparable guidance for monetary donations."

While pro bono hours are critical, so are the financial donations. According to the commission, legal services funding dropped 25 percent in 2009 as the requests for services rose 20 percent. Legal services organizations had to make cuts, losing 12 percent of their lawyers and nearly 40 percent of their nonattorney staff.

R. Bruce McLean, chair of Akin Gump, added, "We are confident that

many firms will be moved by this campaign. As lawyers, we share a unique obligation to ensure equal access to justice. For most of us, this commitment is more than a matter of ethical obligation—it is a matter of principle."

For more information or to join the campaign, contact Jess Rosenbaum, executive director of the D.C. Access to Justice Commission, at 202-344-4441 or jess.rosenbaum@dcaccesstojustice.org.—*T.L.*

### **Former Bar President Keeney Joins Legal Aid Society**

Former D.C. Bar president Jack Keeney, a partner at Hogan Lovells, began work January 31 as director of the Barbara McDowell Appellate Advocacy Project at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia. The project aims to help the civil legal services community develop a poverty law reform agenda, bringing appellate litigation that may influence laws to help poor litigants living in the nation's capital.

"This is an incredible opportunity for me. It's an opportunity to be hands-on in writing the appellate briefs, doing the appellate arguments, but even more fundamentally, in helping to plan and develop the law reform strategy to help D.C.'s poor," Keeney said. "Hogan has been absolutely great in terms of the pro bono that I have done here in my 32 years. It's now time, in this time of crisis for legal aid providers, to be doing more of it."

His transition to Legal Aid received deep support from his colleagues at Hogan Lovells, which made an in-kind donation of certain administrative services to assist Legal Aid.

"While we will greatly miss Jack's leadership and substantial contributions to our practice and operations, it is hard to imagine a better fit for this vital work at Legal Aid," said J. Warren Gorrell Jr., co-chief executive officer of Hogan Lovells. "We all look forward to deepening our important relationship with Legal Aid as Jack becomes a leading voice in our appellate courts for those living in poverty in our city."

During his tenure at Hogan Lovells, Keeney focused his trial practice on complex litigation involving securities, fiduciary duties, legal malpractice, and federal election law. From 1989 to 1993, he served as partner-in-charge of the firm's community services department, which received the 1991 American Bar Association Pro Bono Publico Award for

outstanding law firm pro bono program. He joined the firm following a clerkship with Judge Alexander Harvey of the U.S. District Court for Maryland.

Keeney's commitment to both the D.C. community and legal field is apparent in his numerous affiliations. He served as chair of the Legal Needs Subcommittee of the D.C. Bar Public Service Activities Committee and served on the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Initiative Working Group.

The Appellate Advocacy Program was founded in 2004 and named in honor of its first director, Barbara McDowell, who died in 2009. "This is the project that, in addition to doing the briefs and oral arguments, helps to set the agenda in consultation and cooperation with many other players in the D.C. public interest community," Keeney said. "The idea that we can actually approach the problems of poverty in the District of Columbia, look for legal solutions, and then bring appropriate legal cases before the D.C. Court of Appeals to establish those rights—that is a very unique and exciting opportunity."—*T.L.*

### **Breyer Leads Talk on High Court's Role in Active Democracy**

A few floors above the Newseum's Walter and Leonore Annenberg Theater is a room filled with newspapers spanning the centuries and chronicling the history of the nation. Towering up front on the museum's facade are the carefully crafted words of the First Amendment.

The Newseum was a fitting venue for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer on January 20 when he spoke about the critical role the Court has played in making democracy work. Joined by Harold Hongju Koh, legal advisor for the U.S. Department of State, Breyer discussed how the Supreme Court intersects with freedom, democracy, and the law.

The forum, "Making Our Democracy Work: A Judge's View," also the title of Breyer's new book, was presented by the Supreme Court Fellows Program Alumni Association and the First Amendment Center.

The first part of the conversation centered on Breyer's view that the Supreme Court should interpret the U.S. Constitution in a way that would encourage citizen participation in government. Active liberty, he said, is crucial to a functioning society that aims to protect individual liberties.

"I can't tell you what kind of life you