

MBA NEWS

20 West Street, Boston, MA 02111-1204 • communications@massbar.org

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CONTACT:

Jennifer Rosinski (617) 338-0675

Tricia M. Oliver (617) 338-0677

MBA Tiered Community Mentoring Program to be honored by American Bar Association

BOSTON, Mass. — The Massachusetts Bar Association’s Tiered Community Mentoring Program will be honored with the 2011 ABA Partnership Award from the American Bar Association at an Aug. 5 awards luncheon held at the Fairmont Royal York in Toronto, Canada. The program was selected because of its commitment to diversity.

“The MBA is thrilled to be selected for such a prestigious honor that recognizes this unique program,” MBA President Denise Squillante said. “Tiered Community Mentoring aims to build a more diverse legal profession by empowering young people to consider careers in the law.”

The program—a collaboration among the MBA, Suffolk University Law School, Boston University Law School, Roxbury Community College, UMASS Boston and New Mission High School—aims to reach urban high school students by building a diverse mentoring network. The program matches tiered groups, comprised of a high school student, an undergraduate student, a law student and an attorney.

The program began in October 2009 and was the brainchild of Norfolk and Family Court First Justice Angela M. Ordoñez, who said the innovative mentoring structure creates opportunities that would not otherwise exist.

“Many students write themselves out of a career in law because they have never met a lawyer,” Ordoñez said. “This program not only acquaints students with lawyers, but it provides mentor relationships that open up the doors of possibility. Once these students learn the details of careers in the law, it becomes an attainable goal.”

The ABA Partnership Awards Program salutes bar association projects that seek to increase the participation and advancement of lawyers of color as well as other underrepresented constituents—attorneys with disabilities, women attorneys and those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered—and to attract students from these groups to the legal profession.

The MBA is one of three award honorees. The other recipients are the New Jersey State Bar Foundation and the Mecklenburg County Bar Association.

Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law. The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth.