

## Legal Beat

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and ACC Value Challenge steering committee members. Winners will be announced in spring 2012. To access the nomination form or for more information, visit [www.acc.com/valuechallenge/valuechamps/](http://www.acc.com/valuechallenge/valuechamps/).—*T.L.*

### Superior Court Celebrates 25th Annual Adoption Day

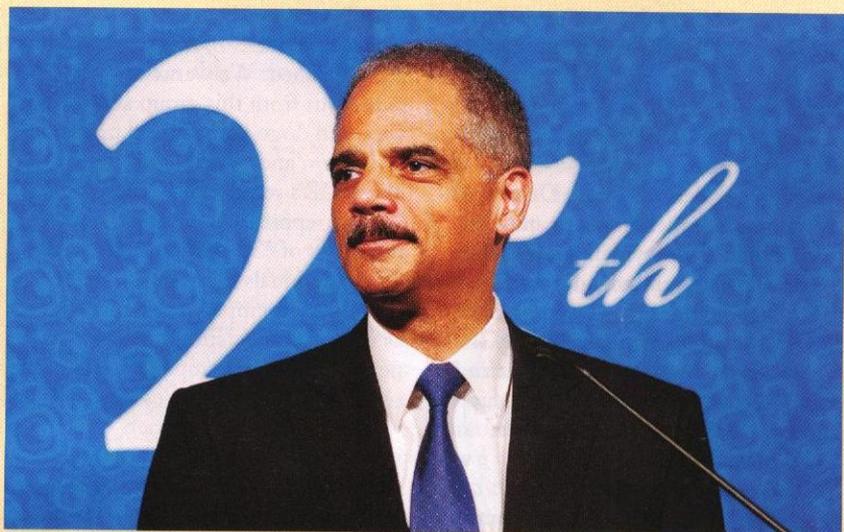
With children excitedly tugging on their own balloons and families happily scrambling for their seats in the atrium, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia commemorated its 25th Annual Adoption Day on November 19.

The event celebrated the finalization of 29 adoptions, as well as encouraged others to open their hearts and families to adopting or fostering a child in the city's public child welfare system.

"Let me express my appreciation for the children and families for inviting myself and others to participate in their celebration," said Debra Porchia-Usher, interim director of the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency. "This is a demonstration of their commitment to each other for a lifetime. They have agreed to participate in this journey together as they begin to reconfigure their families, as they begin to learn how to love each other, as they begin to learn how to help each other grow."

Adoption Day 2011 began with speeches from D.C. Superior Court judges, including Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield, family court presiding Judge Zoe Bush, Associate Judge Juliet J. McKenna, and Senior Judge Bruce S. Mencher. The crowd also heard from the District's

## RAISING AWARENESS AND FUNDS



Steven E. Purcell

Equal Justice Works held its 25th Anniversary Gala, featuring guest speakers U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. (pictured), NBC's *Meet the Press* moderator David Gregory, and Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick. The gala raised a record \$2.7 million to support the creation of public interest opportunities for law students and lawyers.—*K.A.*

deputy mayor for Health and Human Services, Beatriz Otero, and Renette Oklewicz of the Freddie Mac Foundation.

The ceremony featured musical acts from local children that brought some in the audience to tears while others quietly sang along. "There can't be a happier place in the city right now," said Oklewicz, who later presented a video montage of adoption at the court over the past 25 years.

Barbara Harrison, NBC4 news anchor and a regular to Adoption Day, emceed the ceremony as judges signed the adoption decrees. Harrison spoke about each family and the child who had found his or her "forever family." To complete the

adoption, the families were joined by the judge who oversaw their case, as well as their social worker.

"The family is society's most fundamental unit for human happiness. Every child deserves to be a member of a loving and nurturing family," said Judge Mencher, who helped develop the Superior Court's first Adoption Day in 1987. "For many children, this becomes possible only in an adoptive family. Adoption brings to both children and parents joy beyond measure."—*T.L.*

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