



### **Joint Conference Underscores Efforts of the Bar, Courts**

On April 26 judges and lawyers from across Washington, D.C., converged for the 2012 District of Columbia Judicial and Bar Conference Honoring the 40th Anniversary of the Bar, held at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

Chief Judge Eric T. Washington of the D.C. Court of Appeals opened the joint conference with a state of the judiciary address, emphasizing that despite some budget challenges, the D.C. Courts remain poised to continue improving the District's court system.

Washington and Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield of the D.C. Superior Court spoke about the different initiatives implemented to increase the function of the courts. The courts have surveyed stakeholders to increase communication efforts, redesigned the Web site, renovated facilities, launched the Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll, and created partnerships to support civics education, among many other improvements.

"With a foundation of the new strategic plan, a sound infrastructure, creative outreach, and effective partnerships with the D.C. Bar, I am confident that the D.C. Courts will continue to meet its fundamental mission to protect rights, liberties, and provide justice in the District of Columbia," Washington said.

In its sixth year as a joint event, the conference also honored the 40th anniversary of the D.C. Bar. Attendees received a limited edition of *Legends in the Law* commemorative publication, which features interviews with 57 of the Bar's most notable leaders.

D.C. Bar President Darrell G. Mottley took the audience through a brief history of the organization, going back to its first meeting on April 1, 1972. In 40 years the Bar has seen its membership increase by greater than 900 percent, growing to nearly 100,000 members today.

The Bar's expansion can be seen across the board, Mottley noted. In 2011 over 10,000 lawyers participated in more than 141 Continuing Legal Education Program courses. The Bar also boasts 20 sections, specializing in a variety of practice areas. In addition, last year the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program served more than 20,000 individuals with limited means who sought help navigating the judicial system.

"Happy birthday to the D.C. Bar," Mottley said. "Our wish is to have continued success in serving our members, the courts, and the community for the next 40 years."

Following lunch, speakers Bruce MacEwen, president of Adam Smith, Esq. LLC, and former D.C. Bar president Jamie Gorelick, a partner at WilmerHale LLP, discussed the globalization of the legal industry and the implications for the future.

"On September 15, 2008, Lehman [Brothers] went down," MacEwen said. "It was an incredibly powerful event in economic history." The investment bank's collapse affected industries across the board. The legal industry was not immune; firms cut staff and some even closed. The era of profitability for the majority of law firms had ended, according to MacEwen.

"The market is starting to differentiate between firms, and strategy is more important than ever," he added. Business models need to change and law firms need to learn to take risks. "The worst thing you can do is nothing." The District, he said, needs to take the lead in the legal industry and advance the profession.

Gorelick addressed the ethical implications of a more global legal industry, including issues relating to virtual law practices, partnerships with international attorneys, and partnerships with those who are not attorneys. Who should regulate and who has jurisdiction over an industry where the borders are becoming blurrier? These are all issues with which the American Bar Association Commission on Ethics 20/20 continues to grapple, according to Gorelick, who serves as commission cochair. The commission is slowly releasing proposed recommendations as it tries to figure out how best to approach the quickly changing law firm dynamics brought on by technology, Gorelick said.—*T.L.*