

WELCOME TO THE EIGHTH ISSUE OF *QUAE VIDE*,
MURTHA CULLINA'S DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2012



We at Murtha Cullina value all people and recognize that diversity within Murtha Cullina strengthens our firm and enhances the services we provide to our clients. We appreciate that meeting our diversity goals better enables us to participate in the communities where we practice law, work and live, as well as enhancing our overall experience as a member of the larger legal community. To that end, we welcome all people, without regard to race, national origin, color, ethnicity, religion or religious practices, gender, citizenship, marital status, age, mental or physical ability or disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Our lunch guest at the New Haven Legal Assistance Association (NHLAA) had been vilified in the press and criticized by liberals and academics. An African-American man, who came of age in the late 1960s and who didn't meet his father until the age of nine, our guest had publicly self-confessed his inner anger and frustration from those times. He experienced the privilege of entering Yale Law School, but never considered himself "of Yale." While in New Haven, he found employment with the NHLAA in 1971, learning to provide direct legal services to clients who were without financial resources and unable to help themselves. He worked with NHLAA throughout law school, finding that time spent much more satisfying than the time spent on the Socratic legal education of that period. Returning to the South after law school, his expectation was to replicate the New Haven Legal Assistance experience in private practice, which he tried to do after a stint as a Missouri Assistant Attorney General. He took an in-house job at Monsanto, but the call of public service that had been instilled in him in New Haven compelled him to find a more rewarding position. As he tells the story, "I had some government positions, and then was hired by the EEOC and then ... I got this job, which I have had for 20 years now."

The lunch guest was Associate U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. The second African American to serve on the Supreme Court, Thomas was nominated by President George H.W. Bush to Thurgood Marshall's seat on the Court in 1991. His nomination hearings were among the most bitter in the history of our nation. Since then, Justice Thomas has been known as one of the most conservative members of the Court and for his six years of silence during oral arguments. What then should one expect of *this* lunch guest who had willingly agreed to dine with approximately 40 members of the bench and bar, mostly from New Haven and mostly more inclined to watch and agree with MSNBC than Fox News.

To almost everyone's surprise and delight, Justice Thomas was warm, friendly and extremely congenial. Guests were instructed to arrive at 11:30 a.m. so that we would all be there when the Justice arrived at noon. Well, Justice Thomas then moved up his own schedule to be at the restaurant before 11:30 so that

he could personally greet every guest and have his photograph taken with each of us. When I was introduced to him as the past co-chair of the Board of Friends of New Haven Legal Assistance, he took my hand and shook it enthusiastically, thanking me for all that I did for NHLAA. Clarence Thomas the man sure wasn't Clarence Thomas as he had been portrayed for 20 years in the mainstream media. At lunch, I had the privilege of sitting across from Connecticut Superior Court Judge John Silbert, who had worked at NHLAA in the 70's. Judge Silbert shared his own views with us that summed up the experience so well:

"...I was delighted, as I think you were, to have my preconceptions thus demolished. It all just reconfirms that despite having serious, and even extreme philosophical differences, good people can have good conversations and good times together. And the importance of NHLAA as a transforming life experience for so many of us has once again been established."

In contrast to his silence on the bench, Justice Thomas took the microphone and enthusiastically shared with us his memories of working with NHLAA, and some touching anecdotes about his life. For instance, he claimed that he had originally intended to become a priest. Justice Thomas has genuine nostalgia for the time he worked with NHLAA, the clients he served and the lawyers and staff he worked with. The Justice spoke highly of his fellow members of the Court, including those whose views stand in marked contrast to his, at least as expressed in written opinions. After more than two hours of greeting us, dining with us and speaking and taking questions from the audience, Justice Thomas excused himself to attend an event at Yale Law School, not having been back there since he had been

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seated on the Court. He said he was going “over there” to “make amends” and “eat humble pie.” There wasn’t one of us at lunch who didn’t feel like we had just eaten some of our own “humble pie” in prejudging a very nice man.

Burt Cohen

Burt Cohen

Diversity Committee Chairperson



The author, Burt Cohen, with Justice Thomas

JENNIFER MORGAN DELMONICO FETED BY NEW HAVEN CHAMBER

Jennifer Morgan DelMonico was recently honored by the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce at its 2011 Annual Awards Celebration. Jennifer is a trial lawyer, practicing in complex commercial litigation and representing defendants in tort and products liability action. Having been through the Chamber’s *Leadership Greater New Haven* program in 2002, she was honored as the Alumna of the Year of the Leadership Center. She currently serves as the Secretary and General Counsel of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce. In addition, she also serves as the Secretary of the Easter Seals Goodwill Industries, Inc. and as a director of the New Haven Bar Foundation. Previously, Attorney DelMonico has received the MS Corporate Achiever Award, has been named one of the Connecticut Law Tribune’s “Women in the Law High Achievers” and one of the New Haven Business Times “Forty Under 40.”

TARUNA GARG PRESENTS AT WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW “COLOR OF LAW ROUNDTABLE”

Murtha Attorney Taruna Garg was the sole presenter for the Color of Law Roundtable at the spring semester of Western New England University School of Law. A bankruptcy attorney, Ms. Garg lauded the opportunities afforded to students while in law school. She encouraged law students to take advantage of exploring as many aspects of the law as possible while in school. The realities of private practice, she explained, typically dictate the areas where lawyers focus after admission to the bar.

MURTHA CULLINA SUPPORTS THE GEORGE W. CRAWFORD BLACK BAR ASSOCIATION

The George W. Crawford Black Bar Association is a volunteer, state-wide organization consisting primarily of judges, law professors, attorneys and law students in the State of Connecticut. It provides professional development programs and networking opportunities for members. Crawford actively undertakes various student mentoring and outreach efforts. It provides informative programming about entering the legal profession, hosts exam writing and bar prep workshops at area law schools and offers annual scholarships to law students for their academic achievement and community involvement. Crawford has also established a scholarship fund at the University of Connecticut School of Law. The stated purpose of Crawford is

“...to work aggressively for the enhancement of the role of Black people in the legal profession, and to increase their numbers in the state; focus attention on the legal issues which affect members of the Black community and to address those issues as a unified body; provide a vehicle for interaction between members of the Association and Black businesses, professional and other organizations in the State; establish lines of communication and to affiliate with local and national organizations within the legal profession, in order to better achieve the purposes of the Association; and undertake such programs, activities and projects in the promotion of the goals of the Association as are legally permissible under the laws of the State of Connecticut.”

In addition to our sponsorship of the Crawford annual awards dinner, two Murtha Cullina attorneys participate actively on the Crawford Board and its committees. Both Attorneys Geneva O. Bell and Cherie Gabrielle Phoenix serve as members of the Board of Directors. Attorney Phoenix also co-chairs the Membership and Public Relations Committees, while Attorney Bell co-chairs the Professional Development and Entrepreneurship and Meeting Programming Committees. Murtha Cullina is very proud to support Crawford, as well as the active roles played by its attorneys.

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE HONORS IRWIN J. HAUSMAN WITH THE DANIEL R. GINSBERG HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Murtha Cullina Attorney Irwin J. Hausman was recently honored with the Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) prestigious Daniel R. Ginsberg Humanitarian Award.

The ADL’s Connecticut Regional Office hosts the annual Daniel R. Ginsberg Humanitarian Reception to honor those who have committed themselves to serving the Lower Fairfield County community and who have devoted themselves to humanitarian causes. Irwin Hausman, his wife Eva, and daughter Kim Hausman Athan were each honored and received the Daniel R. Ginsberg Humanitarian Award for their work as long-standing ADL lay leaders.

The reception further brought together leading citizens from Lower Fairfield County to recognize the ADL’s vital efforts to combat bigotry and discrimination and to celebrate those dedicated to service and helping others.



**WOMEN EXPANDING BUSINESS (“WEB”) WELCOMES
BACK MURTHA ALUMNAE**

On November 10, 2011, approximately 40 current women attorneys and government affairs professionals and alumnae reconnected at the Women Expanding Business (“WEB”) alumnae reception at our Hartford office. The goal of WEB, Murtha Cullina’s women’s initiative, is to encourage, promote and support the professional development of women within the firm and in the legal community. Future events will focus on practice and client development, marketing, and the retention and promotion of women professionals. In addition to catching up with colleagues, the women who attended the alumnae event were introduced to WEB and its mission. All of those who attended were excited about this new initiative; we hope to involve alumnae in future WEB events that support its mission.

MURTHA CULLINA ATTORNEYS GETTING INVOLVED

On June 21, **Burt Cohen, Genea O. Bell, Cherie Gabrielle Phoenix** attended the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity (LCD) - Building Careers: Developing the Next Generation of Legal Leaders (for attorneys of color with 10 years of experience or less).

On October 4, **Thomas S. Vangel, Frank M. Capezzer, Kathleen E. Connolly, Ryan M. MacDonald, and Loring A. Cook, III**, attended the Boston Lawyers Group (BLG) - Honoring Justices of Color event.

On October 25, **Paul E. Knag** attended the kick-off symposium of the Connecticut Hospital Association’s Diversity Collaborative.

On November 9, **Michael E. McDonough, Cherie Gabrielle Phoenix** and **Genea O. Bell** attended the South Asian Bar Association Fifth Annual Awards Dinner.

On November 3, **Cherie Gabrielle Phoenix** attended the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association (CHBA) 18th Annual Awards Celebration.

On November 17, **Colleen O’Neill, Jonathan S. Heinlein,** and **Francis J. Brady** attended the LCD Reception Celebrating the Work and Achievements of Judges of Color.

**Connecticut Member, Lex Mundi A Global
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This newsletter is one of a series of publications by Murtha Cullina LLP and should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstances. The contents are intended for general information purposes only, and you are urged to consult your own lawyer concerning your own situation and any specific legal questions you may have.

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