

# The DC's Year End Review

By Vincent D. Howard, Diversity Committee Co-Chair



I am so proud of CAOC Diversity Committee and what we have achieved in our inaugural term. We have been very busy this year trying hard to accomplish all that we set out to achieve. Our goals were modest, but we accomplished them and set the tone for an even better 2013! Let me fill you in on what our beloved DC has been up to lately. As you all may or may not know, CAOC has been trying for some time to establish a diversity committee. Over the years we have come close but have always fallen short. Well, this year we finally did it! Our goals were simple; we wanted to develop a strategic plan and establish a presence.

With regard to our strategic plan, we worked behind the scenes early on and developed a strategic plan that could put us on the path of a more diverse organization that the board approved at our very first board meeting. That is really something to be excited about given the fact that over the years, the formation of this committee has been stymied by this very process.

The next step was to establish a presence in an attempt to broaden our organization's appeal to minority lawyers so that they would feel compelled to join our awesome organization. We decided that we could accomplish this goal by doing the following:

1. Create a web presence on CAOC's new website;

2. Let the membership know about the DC in CAOC's Forum magazine;
3. Plan a social event to introduce the DC to our members and to the legal community; and
4. Participate in forming the speaker panel at our 51st Annual Convention in November to ensure we had a diverse panel of speakers.

## Web Presence

CAOC developed an outstanding new website that is easy to navigate and very informative. The DC has a page on that website that tells anyone who visits the site about our new committee. Check it out if you haven't done so already at [www.caoc.org/CAOCDiversity](http://www.caoc.org/CAOCDiversity).

## Forum

We thought that a constant column in the News & Notes section of the Forum would be a great way to let our members know about what their DC was up to and to discuss issues regarding diversity. Micha and I tag-team writing these articles for the Forum. We enjoy doing it and it gets the word out about our organization.

## November Convention!

Rising stars, **Ronnie Whitehead** and **Chumahan Bowen**, played key roles in making sure our panel of speakers and moderators came from diverse backgrounds. And I must say they did a very good job! Kudos to them! Thanks to their efforts, our panel of speakers was the most diverse in the history of our organization. Featured at our signature event was a presentation entitled "Strategies for the Elimination of Bias in the Legal Profession," with Chris Holden, a Trustee with

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## CAOIE seminar report

By Greg Rizio, CAOIE President

The Inland Empire Chapter met on October 9 to celebrate an outstanding accomplishment of one of our own members. At our Masters Seminar "Overcoming the Tort Reform Juror in Today's Difficult Climate," a large crowd showed up to hear Greg Bentley share the ups and downs he experienced before

obtaining his amazing verdict against Caltrans. It was a riveting story that sounded like it could have been straight from a Grisham novel. A special thank you to our event sponsors – Brown & Lipinsky and Esquire Deposition Solutions – for providing the group with the tasty hors d'oeuvres and spirits. ■



Mandeep Rupal, Daren Lipinsky and Steve Brown

the California State Bar, offering ways to achieve diversity in the profession.

**Otis Lounge Social Event!**

Everyone loves a party! I know I do. Good food, drinks, friends and colleagues ... all getting together to network and socialize. What better way to meet new people? Well, we decided early on that we wanted to put on a really spectacular social event to introduce our committee to our members and the legal community. Co-Chair **Micha Star Liberty** and I joined the San Francisco based Minority Bar Coalition (“MBC”) on behalf of CAOC-DC. The MBC is made up of the presidents and chairs of the SF area minority bars. There is even a State Bar representative of the group. By joining, we were able to reach out to other specialty bars and let them know about CAOC. After a while, Micha proposed to the MBC to co-sponsor a social event where CAOC would finance

the event if the other organizations would help out by getting the word out to their members.

The event took place at Otis Lounge in San Francisco, and to say it was a success would be an understatement! If you didn’t attend, you missed a great event. We received more than the number of RSVP’s allowed and we gave away a free iPad2, courtesy of my law firm, Howard Law! Open bar, great food, good times! Our CAOC members in attendance were hard at work letting everyone know about CAOC and all the good that we do. As a result of us throwing that event, CAOC gained four new attorneys! All from diverse backgrounds and all eligible candidates for the NLD and the Women’s Caucus! I overheard one attorney tell Laurie Klimchock that she is a young consumer attorney that has been looking for an organization like ours for a while! Huge thanks go out to our sponsors who made the event possible: Arbogast Bowen LLP; DiMarco

| Araujo | Montevideo; Howard Law, PC; Khorrami LLP; and Liberty Law Office.

A special thanks goes out to **Laurie Klimchock** for making sure the event got organized and for making sure Micha and I are always doing what we need to do! In addition, she has been instrumental in making sure the DC is advancing forward. Finally, I want to thank our oversight, **John Montevideo**, and our president **Niall McCarthy** for their leadership, guidance, and support for this committee.

In summary, Micha and I are very proud of the work this committee has done and I hope you are too. This was our inaugural year and I, for one, think we did a pretty good job. We already have some great ideas for next year and are already planning next year’s strategy. We have new members who want to join the committee and we are planning to do joint projects with the NLD and Women’s Caucus.

I am excited about the year ahead! Onward and upward! ■



John Montevideo, Vincent Howard and Micha Liberty

**Diversity Mixer  
San Francisco  
September 27**



Alameda County Judge Charles Smiley, Judge Ioana Petrolu and Judge Delbert Gee



Joshua Hill and Haywood Gilliam



Lisa Knox and Andrew Houston



Elise Sanguinetti and Matt Sanguinetti



Rodney Villazor and Vince Howard