

NEWS



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MASS BAR ACCESS TO JUSTICE LUNCHEON TO HONOR EXTRAORDINARY PRO BONO AND VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

BOSTON— The Massachusetts Bar Association will hold its Access to Justice Awards luncheon on Friday, March 24 at 12:15 p.m. as part of the MBA's Annual Conference 2006 (March 23-25) at Marriott Copley Place. The annual luncheon recognizes outstanding members of the legal community who have made significant contributions through their volunteer and pro bono efforts. In addition to the awards ceremony, a keynote address by James Braude, Esq. of New England Cable News and WTKK-FM, will be part of the luncheon.

The 2006 Legal Services Award will be presented to **Susan F. Cole** and **James R. Pingeon**. The award is given to an attorney(s) employed by a public or non-profit agency to provide civil legal services to low-income clients, and who has made a particularly significant contribution to the provision of low-income legal services beyond the requirements or his or her position. Cole is a senior project director at Massachusetts Advocates for Children and has been instrumental in steering the statewide children's legal agenda since 1992. Pingeon is the litigation director for the Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services (MCLS) and is widely recognized as a valued mentor for any lawyer in Massachusetts litigating prison cases. Pingeon has worked as a prisoners' civil rights attorney since 1985 and was formerly employed by The Center for Public Representation.

The MBA's Pro Bono Award is bestowed upon a law firm comprised of two or more attorneys that has notably provided pro bono work within Massachusetts. **Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP** has been selected as the 2006 Pro Bono Awardee. The firm continues its generous, long-term support for programs supporting its attorneys to represent indigent clients in the most dire of circumstances. Some of which include the firm's work on behalf of Guantanamo detainees and with the *Rosie D. v. Swift* case concerning adequate mental health treatment for children with emotional and psychiatric conditions.

The MBA's Pro Bono Publico Award is given to an attorney who has been instrumental in implementing and supporting a significant pro bono program. The 2006 awardee is **Lawrence E. Cohen**, an attorney specializing in bankruptcy law with practice concentrated in western Massachusetts. Cohen's pro bono efforts are exemplary. Specifically, he served as the co-chair of the Worcester County Bar Association's Committee on the Services to the Poor and Homeless, participates in the Volunteer Lawyer Service and serves as a mentor to other attorneys by providing advice and knowledge in handling bankruptcy matters. In addition, he coordinates clothing drives for various shelters and provides legal assistance to homeless individuals at the Jeremiah Inn through the Harry Zarrow Homeless Advocacy Project.

MBA's Defender Award recognizes an attorney who has made a meaningful, standout contribution in providing criminal legal services to low-income clients that goes beyond the requirements of his or her position. **Nona E. Walker** has been chosen as the 2006 recipient. Walker is the deputy chief of the Appellate Division of CPCS, where she has served for 23 years. As an appellate attorney, she has tried many cases that have resulted in landmark judicial decisions, including *Commonwealth v. Belvine* (2003). As related to her caseload, Walker tireless work has ensured state payments for DNA testing in certain cases and she regularly provides interpreter services for her and her colleagues' Spanish-speaking clients.

The MBA's Prosecutor Award is given to a state or federal prosecutor who has distinguished him or herself in public service and whose commitment to his or her own community is particularly praiseworthy. **Mark Tan Lee** is the chief of the Senior Trail Unit at Suffolk County District Attorney's Office. He has distinguished himself as a prosecutor and has successfully tried several high profile cases including *Commonwealth v. Lopes*. Tan is a well-respected prosecutor who has volunteered his time to the MBA by writing and lecturing on criminal law topics, as well as contributing to his own community.

For more detailed information on the MBA's AC06 full program, visit www.MassBar.org or call 617-338-0530.

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.