

The Bar Around The Corner: Westchester Black Bar Association



Name of Association:

Westchester Black Bar Association

Address / Phone:

333 Mamaroneck Ave, Suite 219, White Plains, New York 10605; 914-364-5914

Website:

www.wbbany.org

Founded:

Founded as the Association of Black Lawyers of Westchester County in 1973. Incorporated in 2005 as a 501(c)3 organization and renamed the Westchester Black Bar Association.

Number of Members: 150

Brief Association Vision: Our primary objective remains the furtherance of the public interest by contributing to and advancing jurisprudence.

Brief History: The WBBA has encouraged high ethical and professional standards for both the bench and bar and has a strong record of advocacy for a diverse and independent judiciary. The WBBA has fervently promoted the administration of justice and continues to establish programs that motivate and inspire students to pursue a career in law.

What is your association's favorite meeting location? Sofrito's Restaurant, 175 Main Street, White Plains.

What is your association's most popular outing / social event? Our Spring Gala is extremely popular. The Brown sisters served as Gala keynotes when we celebrated the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The late Hon. Constance Baker Motley, the only woman on the NAACP's *Brown v. Board of Education* legal team, also

attended and presented the inaugural award named in her honor.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court is poised to hear arguments in the affirmative action case of *Fisher v. University of Texas*, the theme for this year's Spring Gala on May 4 was "Brown to Fisher: The Future of Affirmative Action." We honored the African-American justices of the New York State Appellate Division.

On July 30, we will host our first annual golf outing at the Elmwood Country Club. Tickets for the golf outing are available on our website at www.wbbany.org.

Each year we present a program or event to celebrate Black History month. In past years, we welcomed members of the community to the courthouse where local children portrayed people and events relevant to Black history. This year we celebrated with a networking reception honoring the legacy of Hon. Robert L. Carter, *Brown v. Board of Education* and those who continue to carry the torch. We honored NYSBA President-Elect Seymour W. James, Jr., Hon. Barry Cozier, Hon. Fern Fisher, Hon. Ann

Pfau and Theodore V. Wells.

What is your association's most pressing concern regarding the legal profession? Racial profiling is an ongoing concern which continues to affect the legal profession and our everyday lives. This was evidenced most recently in Florida, where Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African-American boy, was killed. The "Stand Your Ground" law used as justification for the killing requires urgent attention.

What is your association's goal for next month? Next year? Our immediate goal is to increase opportunities for our members, many of whom traditionally gravitate to family or criminal law. Our long-term goal is to provide our members with equal access to all areas of law through networking opportunities and by expanding our free CLE programming. ♦

The Bar Around The Corner is a project of the New York State Conference of Bar Leaders, www.nyscbl.org.