

## 2009 Annual Meeting and Expo

By: Crystal L. Van Der Putten | Livingston Law Firm

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**A**t the Annual Awards Luncheon and Banquet NAMWOLF named Joseph K. West the winner of the 2009 Award for Outstanding Service by an Advisory Counsel Member and named American Airlines the winner of the 2009 Diversity Initiative Award.

The annual luncheon took place on October 7, 2009, at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers in Chicago, Illinois, and was the final event of the 2009 NAMWOLF Annual Meeting and Law Firm Expo. Robin Wofford of Wilson Turner Kosmo, LLP kicked off the luncheon with Micah Materre, co-anchor of WGN Midday News, acting as mistress of ceremonies.

The previous year's award winners presented the awards to this year's winners. Joel Stern, Deputy General Counsel and Director of Legal Services Americas for Accenture and the 2008 winner of the Award for Outstanding Service by an Advisory Counsel Member presented the award to Joseph K. West. Michelle DeShon, vice-president and senior counsel for Key-Bank, N.A., represented the 2008 winner of the Diversity Initiative Award and presented American Airlines with the 2009 Diversity Initiative Award.



Joseph K. West & Joel Stern

Joseph K. West, a 23-year veteran of the legal profession, joined Wal-Mart in 2007 and is the Associate General Counsel – Outside Counsel Management. Mr. West manages Wal-Mart's relationship with all of the external firms Wal-Mart uses for legal services. His goal is to increase and sustain the levels of business given to minority and/or women owned law firms. In the past year he has helped NAMWOLF connect with numerous corporate sponsors and prospective law firm members, co-chaired the Annual Meeting Committee and worked increase Wal-Mart's use of NAMWOLF firms.



Rebecca Kimura,  
Gary LaFayette & Iris Cooper

Mr. West also made a number of presentations in 2009 on diversity issues, including, but not limited to, the keynote addresses at the Chief Litigation Officer Summit in Jacksonville, Florida and the ABA Annual Meeting in Chicago. He also dedicates time to organizations such as the Leadership Council for Legal Diversity, Minority Corporate Counsel Association and the National Bar Association in an effort to further advance diversity.

American Airlines is a dedicated NAMWOLF Corporate Partner and Financial Contributor and has been since 2001 when NAMWOLF came into existence. American Airlines' Senior Employment Attorney, Andrea Clark-Smith, has served on the NAMWOLF Advisory Board for the last two years. American Airlines is a long time supporter of diversity and has had a Minority Counsel Program since the early 1990's. Further, over the last six years

(Continued on page 2)

## Message from the Chairman



Emery K. Harlan  
Chairman

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Fifth Annual Meeting of NAWMOLF. The 2009 Annual Meeting was a tremendous success and we could not have achieved that success without the participation from our Event Sponsors, Law Firm Members, Advisory Counsel, Corporate Partners, Panelists and Exhibitors. THANK YOU!

We are currently planning our March Business Meeting which will be held March 4 – 5, 2010 in

Washington DC. We will be launching an important new Initiative during this meeting, getting a jump start on the planning of the 2010 Annual Meeting and continuing our Cross Marketing Initiative among Law Firm Members.

The 2010 Annual Meeting will be held October 4 – 6, 2010 in Washington DC. We look forward to building on the success of last year's meeting. If you are interested in participating on the Annual Meeting Committee for 2010, please contact Jane Kalata, Operations and Events Manager, [jane\\_kalata@namwolf.org](mailto:jane_kalata@namwolf.org).

I look forward to seeing you in Washington DC and a successful 2010 for NAMWOLF!

## Welcome New NAMWOLF Members

New Law Firm Members:

**Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel, LLP** |  
Miami, FL

**Kelly & Berens, P.A.** |  
Minneapolis, MN

**Nukk– Freeman & Cerra, P.C.** |  
Short Hills, NY

**Sideman & Bancroft** |  
San Francisco, CA

**The Tucker Law Group** | Philadelphia, PA

New Corporate & Public Entity Partners **Jockey International, Inc.** and **Allied Barton Security Services**  
New Financial Contributor **Freddie Mac.**



Yolanda Coly  
Managing Director

## 2009 Annual Meeting and Expo

*(Continued from page 1)*

American Airlines has increased their spending on WMBE firms by over 100% - an impressive number on its own, but even more impressive when considering their overall legal budget has actually decreased during this same period. Last year American Airlines spent approximately 8% of its legal department outside counsel budget on certified minority and women-owned law firms.

The American Airlines Legal Department takes a three-pronged approach to diversity: Customers, Suppliers, Community. It also has an active relationship with a number of diversity driven legal organizations such as the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, the Texas Minority Counsel Program, various local Dallas minority bar associations and a number of state minority bar associations. American Airlines also supports minority communities in Dallas and Fort Worth through a strong Pro Bono program which includes the West Dallas Pro Bono Clinic and Texas Wesleyan University School of Law Mentoring program for minority student.

And American Airlines promotion of diversity is not limited to its Legal Department. Rather, it is a key tenet in the way the company does business. Each of its departments sets diversity goals in support of people, customers, suppliers and/or community. It also sponsors 16 employee affinity groups and two members from each group sit on an Employee Diversity Advisory Counsel which provides advice and counsel on corporate policy and diversity issues.

Following the awards, Susan Hackett, Senior Vice-President and General Counsel for the Association of Corporate Counsel, moderated the discussion "Diversifying Your Outside Counsel: How Leading Law Departments Do It." Panelists for the discussion were: Richard E. Meade, Vice President and Chief Legal Officer, International, The Prudential Insurance Company of America; James Wooten, Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary, Illinois Tool Works; Robert S. Marin, Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary, Panasonic Corporation of North America; and Beverly Burke, Vice President and General Counsel, WGL Holdings and Washington Gas.

With that, another annual meeting and law firm expo concluded. Congratulations to Joseph K. West and American Airlines for all of their hard work in promoting diversity and their continued efforts. Hopefully 2010 will bring even more successes and progression for diversity.

## Spotlight—Financial Contributor:

By: Janice P. Brown | Brown Law Group



**Karen Ripley**

What good fortune we had, those of us who saw Karen Ripley during her presentation at the luncheon seminar at NAMWOLF's annual meeting. Karen, Chief Legal Officer (CLO) at MillerCoors, offered us a unique perspective -- part inspirational, part practical -- on the organization's mission, "legal excellence knows no color or gender."

Karen congratulated NAMWOLF for its diversity efforts and assembly of fine legal talent from all over the country. Following the seminar, Ms. Ripley explained that a commitment to diversity is "second-nature" to her, and how fortunate she was to find an organization, MillerCoors, that has compatible values. She noted that because of MillerCoors corporate prominence and her position within that organization, she is asked often to contribute her time and expertise to a variety of legal organizations, but is choiceful in that participation. She emphasized her commitment to NAMWOLF's mission, but more importantly she noted the level of warmth at the annual meeting, terming it "remarkable."

Karen found her inspiration from her family, specifically her mother, who became the head of her family's household during a time when women were not typically in those roles. Her mother never complained about her circumstances that led her to support her family financially and spiritually, and taught her children the same work ethic devotion.

Karen provided NAMWOLF members with some practical advice about marketing. She strongly suggested that a law firm's web-site must mirror the level of excellent legal services the firm provides. "Often times," she stated, "a website is the only true sense of the depth and quality of your legal services." She added that it is important that we know what our individual law firms can do, emphasizing the specific focus and strengths of the firm. "If you have a multi-state presence, make that clear," she advised.

Karen strongly underscored that lawyers needed to "learn the business" of the corporations that they sought to serve. "At MillerCoors," she said, "there is obviously a 'passion for beer,' but our lawyers' knowledge of the organization must go beyond the obvious. Understanding the meaning of that passion is imperative if a firm hopes to provide us with trusted legal guidance."

A quick examination of the MillerCoors website illustrates the value of this understanding. The website notes that MillerCoors is the result of a recent joint venture between two great beer brands – Miller and Coors. Karen began her career at Miller Brewing Co. in 1990 as legal counsel. In 2008, she was appointed as CLO of the joint venture, where today she manages all of the legal issues for the company. This undertaking is monumental. MillerCoors is the second largest beer company in America, capturing nearly 30 percent of beer sales.

For NAMWOLF members, it is important to know that MillerCoors has 10 locations throughout the United States: Albany, GA, Chicago, IL, Chippewa Falls, WI, Eden, NC, Elkton, VA, Fort Worth, TX, Golden, CO, Irwindale, CA, Milwaukee, WI and Trenton, OH. Each of these sites employs hundreds of individuals. In many of these locations, MillerCoors is considered to be one of the largest employers in the region.

We at NAWMOLF are extremely grateful to Ms. Karen Ripley for her inspirational and practical insights. We look forward to the next annual meeting to demonstrate to Ms. Ripley our true "passion for beer."





**UPCOMING NAMWOLF EVENTS:**The graphic features the NAMWOLF logo on the left, which includes a stylized orange and blue swoosh, the text "The National Association of", "namwolf" in a large serif font, "Minority & Women Owned Law Firms" in a smaller font, and the tagline "Legal excellence knows no color or gender" at the bottom. The background of the logo area is a grayscale image of classical columns. To the right of the logo is a vertical orange bar containing event information. The top section of the bar says "BUSINESS MEETING" and "MARCH 4 - 5, 2010" in white. Below this is a white horizontal band with a green downward arrow icon and the text "WASHINGTON, DC" in blue. The bottom section of the bar says "FREE CONFERENCE FOR IN-HOUSE COUNSEL" and "REGISTRATION REQUIRED" in white, with a green upward arrow icon above the text.

**BUSINESS MEETING**  
**MARCH 4 - 5, 2010**

**WASHINGTON, DC**

**FREE CONFERENCE  
FOR IN-HOUSE COUNSEL**  
**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

NAMWOLF'S 2010 March Business Meeting will be held March March 4 - 5, 2010, in Washington, DC at the Dupont Hotel. The Business Meeting will feature the launch of an exciting new initiative, as well as sessions for in-house counsel and NAMWOLF law firm members. By attending NAMWOLF's Business Meeting, you will have the opportunity to participate in an informative session presented by Stephen Hanas, Senior Counsel, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; an In-House Best Practices Session presented by Jason Brown, PepsiAmericas, and Andrea Clark-Smith, American Airlines; annual meeting planning; and many networking opportunities.

Current registrants of the meeting include: Accenture, Time Warner Cable, PepsiAmericas, Prudential, American Airlines, FDIC, ALM Media, Choice Hotels, Ocwen Financial, Banco Popular, A. O. Smith, Amtrak and Sodexo.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Please contact Yolanda Coly, Managing Director, for more information: 414.277.1139 ext. 1158 or [ycoly@namwolf.org](mailto:ycoly@namwolf.org).

To take advantage of NAMWOLF's group rate at the Dupont Hotel please call the Reservations Department at (202) 483-6000 or (866) 534-6835 Monday - Friday 9am-5pm EST and referencing the event name "NAMWOLF Business Meeting". Please be sure to make your arrangements by February 15, in order to receive the NAMWOLF group rate.

**REGISTER ONLINE AT: [WWW.NAMWOLF.ORG](http://WWW.NAMWOLF.ORG)**

## NAMWOLF – “Where everyone knows your name”

By: Janice P. Brown | Brown Law Group



When a song gets it right, the melody and lyrics come together and make a statement that can last a lifetime. A great song transports us and, at its best, indelibly defines a time and place. For me, the 2009 NAMWOLF convention sang to me, and the melody sounded a lot like Gary Portnoy and Judy Hart Angelo's iconic Cheers' television theme song "Everybody Knows Your Name." The lyrics also aptly describe the sentiment of NAMWOLF's annual conference.

*Making your way in the world today  
Takes everything you've got  
Taking a break from all your worries  
It sure would help a lot  
Wouldn't you like to get away?*

*Sometimes you want to go  
Where everybody knows your name  
And they're always glad you came  
You want to be where you can see  
Our troubles are all the same.  
You want to be where everybody knows  
Your name*

As lawyers, as people, all we have is our reputation. NAMWOLF supports this notion and makes it an integral part of its mission to increase diversity in the legal profession through the retention and support of minority and women-owned law firms.

What makes the organization particularly effective is that, although we consist of many small groups, our ideas and collaborative nature operates with the mindset of a large, diverse group; we are progressive and visionary. In addition, we respect old-school values like honor, honesty and integrity. This was undisputedly reinforced by the corporate sponsors of our NAMWOLF 2009 conference who identified "integrity" as the essential trait needed in a potential business partner. Integrity is defined as trust and no client/attorney relationship can exist without it. Trust is the very cornerstone of our profession.

The concept of trust, the feeling of trust, was in full bloom at NAMWOLF's annual meeting held in October

2009 in Chicago. A powerful sense of camaraderie existed, the feeling of personal connection with colleagues that you trust. This is a precious gift that we must cherish.

The NAMWOLF conference placed us in an ideal scenario: Our clients need to trust their lawyers and NAMWOLF consists of trusted counsel; it is no wonder that we feel like family when we reconnect and promote our firms and relationships for the common good. It is no wonder corporate counsels are drawn to our organization. We recognize, of course, that diversity itself has appeal; but it is trust and integrity that keeps all of us coming back. In a group so small, we are compelled to honor our word. We expect and deliver at all times, even if no one else is looking.

That level of excellence and commitment to our clients' needs is why NAMWOLF is a leader in the legal profession, holding the vision for what lawyers have always promised we would be – trusted.

Let's continue to lead the profession in innovative ways to deliver exceptional legal services at a fair and honorable price, but more than anything, let's continue to lead our profession to deliver what our clients want – integrity. "You want to go where everybody knows your name."

Janice P. Brown is the founder of Brown Law Group, a leading San Diego business litigation boutique firm specializing in all aspects of employment law and business litigation. Janice can be reached at (619) 330-1700 or at [brown@brownlawgroup.com](mailto:brown@brownlawgroup.com).



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◆  
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## Spotlight—Member Firm



**F**ounded in 1990 and based in Miami, Florida, Concepción, Sexton & Martinez focuses on complex business litigation and arbitration, trial practice, product liability defense, intellectual property litigation, and international business litigation and transactions. Because we are located at the "Gateway of the Americas," we have many years of practical experience with business disputes in Latin America, and understand the multi-cultural and cross border nuances that are critical to understanding and solving the problems of our clients. Although we serve clients from varying industries, we are especially experienced in resolving disputes and trying cases involving a variety of banking and financial instruments and transnational litigation and arbitration issues involving parties and witnesses from multiple jurisdictions.

The firm's partners Carlos F. Concepción, Francis X. Sexton Jr., Elio F. Martinez, and Nelson Bellido, all enjoy an AV rating as reported by Martindale-Hubbell. They have distinguished leadership positions in the American Bar Association, the Florida Bar and have been recognized with multiple awards and served on numerous Boards. Our professional memberships include: Florida Trend's Legal Elite, The Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel, The Million Dollar Advocate Forum and Florida's Business Journal Best of Bar. In addition to the four partners, the firm currently has eight associate attorneys from various professional and personal backgrounds who are Florida Bar Certified in International Law, Anti-Money Laundering Specialist (ACAMS), Certified Public Accountant, and Certified in Financial Forensics.

### **Why is diversity important to Concepción, Sexton & Martinez?**

The firm's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in the legal profession is reflected through the recruitment and hiring of professionals from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We recognize the beneficial impact a successful diversity program has on our morale, productivity, strategies, and success. We believe diversity fosters a positive and creative environment that attracts talented and diverse individuals; encourages our attorneys and support staff to maximize their potential; enhances our ability to respond quickly with innovative solutions to the rapidly changing needs of our clients; and reflects the ever-increasing diversity of our international client base.

### **What are your firm's significant areas of practice?**

Our firm's principle practice areas are complex commercial litigation and arbitration, and international litigation in cross border and transnational business disputes. As part of our litigation practice area, we also service clients in intellectual property matters, and product liability defense. Although we practice in all Florida Courts, we are particularly experienced with Federal Court Practice. From an industry perspective, we have particular depth in litigation and investigation matters relating to the Financial Services and Securities markets. Specifically, we have substantial interdisciplinary professional experience in shareholder derivative claims, financial statement frauds, securities class actions, and related "Special Litigation Committee" representations. We currently represent the FDIC in these practice areas and in related matters involving claims against Directors & Officers, Third Party professionals, and Fidelity and Bond claims. As a natural outgrowth of this industry expertise, we recently formed Concepcion Consulting LLP which is a professional financial forensics and business valuation firm dedicated to delivering value to small and middle market clients in a variety of industries and stages of organizational development. Our consulting company draws upon members who are both JD's and CPA's and its Managing Member is a Certified Public Accountant, Accredited in Business Valuation, Certified in Financial Forensics, and a Certified Internal Auditor.

### **How did your firm come to know NAMWOLF? Why did you join?**

Mr. Concepcion met Jerry Gonzalez at an ABA Minority Counsel Program meeting in the fall of 2004. During this meeting, Jerry introduced Mr. Concepcion to NAMWOLF and explained that, unlike some other law firm diversity groups, NAMWOLF membership was limited strictly to minority owned law firms. After further discussions with Jerry and some of his partners, Mr. Concepcion became convinced that NAMWOLF represented a unique opportunity to open doors that would otherwise remain closed. After being a member of NAMWOLF for five years, and serving on its Board of Directors, we remain convinced that NAMWOLF represents a cost effective opportunity to gain access to Corporate America.

### **Please name some corporate clients of the firm.**

Bank of America, Wachovia Bank NA, Wells Fargo Bank NA, Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company (DuPont), Exxon Mobile Corporation, MetLife Insurance Co, Keybank NA, Pepsi Americas, and TIAA-CREF.



Carlos F Concepcion

**What are your thoughts on the annual meeting? And what tangible benefits has your firm received from the conference?**

The annual meeting is an ideal networking opportunity to meet with friends, colleagues and in house counsel. We encourage everyone to attend the annual meeting, especially those that are new to NAMWOLF, so that you can promote and experience the energy that makes NAMWOLF the leading organization of its type.

**Anything specific you loved about annual meeting . . . CLEs, afternoon panel, expo?**

The expo is the highlight of the annual meeting. It is particularly during this part of the annual meeting that “business gets done.”



Francis X Sexton Jr.

**Any recent victories, special recognition, awards?**

Carlos F Concepción – Mr. Concepción was recently appointed a member of the permanent Arbitration Panel for the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution (“CPR”). The CPR Institute is a nonprofit organization based in New York City. Its mission is to spearhead innovation and promote excellence in public and private dispute resolution, and to serve as a primary multinational resource for avoidance, management and resolution of business-related and other disputes.

Francis X Sexton Jr. – Mr. Sexton achieved a substantial victory in a multi-million dollar matter before the American Arbitration Association. We represented Claimants Duane J. Truitt and Royal Island, LLC. against Respondents Great Prairie Ventures, Inc. and Lake Forest Partners, LLC. The arbitration was held over a 10-day period and resulted in an Award that was entirely in our clients’ favor.



Elio F Martinez

Elio F. Martinez – Mr. Martinez was recently elected as the Director of the ABA General Practice Division. He was also appointed by the President of the ABA to the ABA’s Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services.

Nelson Bellido – Mr. Bellido was selected to 2009 Florida Trend Magazine’s Legal Elite for the 5th straight year. He was also re-elected to another term as a Director of the Cuban American Bar Association (CABA) Board of Directors.



Nelson C Bellido

Ricardo Puente – Mr. Puente recently won a summary judgment on behalf of the general contractor for the Ritz Carlton Hotel, James Johnson Construction Co., Inc., in a hotly contested construction liability case. One year prior to winning summary judgment, the Plaintiff demanded over five million dollars to settle the case.

**What are your firm’s long term goals?**

Our firm will continue to explore creative strategies designed to service our clients’ needs. In particular, we anticipate growing “from within” by developing and mentoring our attorneys who are the bedrock of our firm. If lateral opportunities arise, we will certainly consider this alternative for growth provided it is consistent with the firm’s vision of remaining a Minority Owned Law Firm with a passion for providing the highest caliber service to our clients in a cost effective manner.



Ricardo Puente

**Where do you see the future of NAMWOLF? What has been your involvement with NAMWOLF? For how long?**

Our firm has been a committed member of NAMWOLF for five years and Mr. Concepcion has served on its Board for two years. At every possible opportunity we have done our best to promote NAMWOLF and its principles, and collaborate with our member friends and colleagues. In our view, the 2009 annual meeting in Chicago represented the proverbial “tipping point” for NAMWOLF. It was during this particular event that NAMWOLF grew and matured far beyond the parameters of the event itself. We are confident that NAMWOLF will continue to develop exponentially, primarily because its mission represents an idea whose time has finally arrived. The future is bright!



## Law Firm News—Successes and Awards



**Kathy Bailey**

based upon excellence and accomplishment in litigation, both at the trial and appellate levels, and superior ethical reputation. In addition, Washington SmartCEO magazine published professional rankings based on a reader survey and Kathy was recognized as a go-to advisor on civil litigation, corporate law and business transactions. This was published in the Legal Elite Readers Poll 2009 section of the magazine.



Kathy Bailey, from Bailey Law Group, has recently been selected as a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America. The LCA is a trial lawyer honorary society composed of less than one-half of one percent of American lawyers. Fellowship in the LCA is highly selective and by invitation only. Fellows are selected



**Anne L. Meyers**

Mark McGrievy, chair of the Healthcare Practice Group of Meyers, Roman, Friedberg and Lewis, has been elected Assistant Managing Partner of the firm, Scott Lewis was elected Administrative Partner, Peter Brosse was elected chair of the Business Practice Group, and Ronald Friedberg is chair of the Construction Law Group. Brosse will continue to chair the firm's Green and Sustainability Practice Group. In addition, Anne L. Meyers, Managing Partner, is now chair of the Mediation Group.

Meyers, Roman, Friedberg & Lewis, is a 22-attorney eastside law firm founded in 1995 to serve the needs of individuals and smaller and medium-sized businesses.



**Stacy L. Fode**

Brown Law Group salutes the 2009 Women Who Mean Business honorees, including its own Stacy L. Fode. Stacy, a partner at Brown Law Group, was honored at the San Diego Business Journal's 16th Annual Women Who Mean Business Awards.

The October 27th event recognized dynamic women business leaders and role models, selected for their achievements and contributions to San Diego.

Brown Law Group, would like to announce that Adriana Cara has joined the firm. Ms. Cara's practice focuses on labor and employment law, advising management on federal and state employment law compliance. Ms. Cara also defends employers against claims brought against them for wrongful discharge, discrimination, sexual harassment, retaliation, and wage and hour disputes. In addition, Ms. Cara specializes in the preparation of employee handbooks and employment-related contracts, including arbitration, severance and compensation agreements. Ms. Cara's clients include public employers, non-profit corporations, and those in private sector industries.



**Adriana Cara**

Email your Law Firm News—Successes and Awards stories to Editor Stacy Fode, to be included in the next newsletter.  
E-mail: [fode@brownlawgroup.com](mailto:fode@brownlawgroup.com)





## Law Firm News—Successes and Awards

### BRUNE & RICHARD LLP

#### NAMWOLF Member, Brune & Richard LLP Wins in High-Profile Case Involving Prosecution of Ex-Bear Stearns Hedge Fund Executives



**Susan Brune**

The National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms congratulates Brune & Richard LLP on winning the highest profile case since the beginning of the financial crisis.

Susan Brune and Nina Beattie recently received a jury verdict of not guilty for their client, Matthew Tannin. Mr. Tannin, former Bear Stearns hedge fund manager was on trial for various fraud charges in relation to two mortgage based hedge funds that failed in 2007. The trial has been declared the highest profile prosecution since the financial crisis.

Brune & Richard LLP, an AV-Rated, certified women-owned law firm founded in 1998 has been a law firm member of The National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF) since 2004. "Brune & Richard is an



**Nina Beattie**

outstanding member of NAMWOLF and is a great example of the high caliber talent law firms that comprise our membership. We are hopeful that their successes will open doors for more qualified minority and women-owned law firms", said Managing Director, Yolanda Coly. "I am fortunate to work with such dedicated lawyers at our firm. It was so wonderful to be able to make a difference," said Susan Brune, the lead trial lawyer on the case.

#### About Brune & Richard LLP

Founded by two Harvard Law School classmates, Brune & Richard LLP provides representation in commercial litigation and in white-collar defense matters. The firm represents clients in state and federal court, and before government agencies.



### NEMETH BURWELL P.C.

*Attorneys & Counselors*

Detroit employment law firm Nemeth Burwell, P.C., announces it has been recognized by Michigan Lawyers Weekly magazine as a 21st Century Innovator for its application and modification of a legal software program for complex employment litigation cases. The legal trade publication honored 21 Michigan-based law firms for "innovative problem-solving strategies that have set them apart from the rest of Michigan's talented legal community." The firms were celebrated at the 2009 21st Century Innovators awards ceremony on Sept. 10, 2009 at the Troy Marriott.



**Patricia Nemeth**

Founding Partner Patricia Nemeth says the honor is meaningful because it highlights the need for innovation in and out of the courtroom.

"Law firms are in the solutions business and we apply that philosophy not only on behalf of our clients but on the operations side of our practice as well," explains Ms. Nemeth. "We are pleased to be recognized for our efforts along with our peer firms."

Nemeth Burwell also received a 21st Century Innovators Award in 2008 from Michigan Lawyers weekly for its successful recruiting efforts in attracting attorneys who want Michigan to be their home state for the foreseeable future.

About Nemeth Burwell, P.C.: Nemeth Burwell ([www.nemethburwell.com](http://www.nemethburwell.com)) specializes in employment litigation, traditional labor law and management consultation for private and public sector employers. It is the largest woman-owned law firm in Michigan to exclusively represent management in the prevention, resolution and litigation of labor and employment disputes. Since 2001, Nemeth Burwell has collaborated with the Wayne State University Law School Law Review to research and compile the Annual Survey of Michigan Employment and Labor Law, a summary and analysis of the important labor and employment decisions of the preceding year.

## THOUGHTS OF A FIRST TIME ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPO ATTENDEE

By: Crystal L. Van Der Putten | Livingston Law Firm

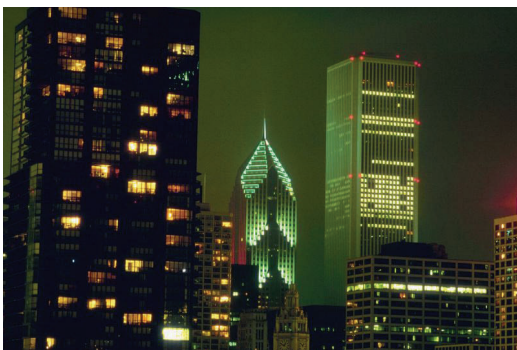


Although I have been practicing law for several years now, this year was the first time I attended the NAMWOLF Annual Meeting and Law Firm Expo. I traveled all the way from sunny northern California to the windy streets of Chicago for the annual meeting and expo, leaving behind my husband and two young sons to fend for themselves. And I am so glad I did.

Not only did I accrue several hours of continuing legal education credits, I was able to meet attorneys from all over the country. I even fit in an excellent steak dinner at Gibson's – which I have been told is the best steakhouse in Chicago – with several fine attorneys and a trip to a jazz club.

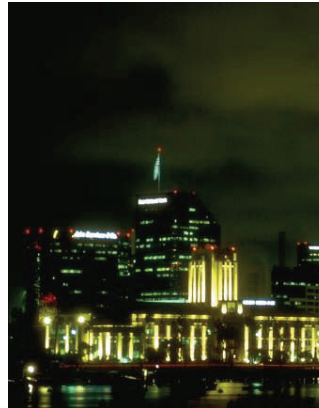
The first night of the meeting I attended the cocktail reception and dine around Chicago event. I met several fellow attorneys and heard some excellent stories about how they came to be NAMWOLF members. We painted the town pink – and I say pink instead of red because we were a bit too tame for red – that first night and had a great time discussing our practices and histories.

The next day was full of a variety of continuing legal education courses – and what attorney ever has enough of those? I thoroughly enjoyed the courses and enjoyed that many of the same people appeared in each course. It gave us a chance to get to know one another. These courses were followed by another cocktail reception at which I met several more attorneys and the steak dinner I mentioned above.



The final day was filled with preparation for the law firm expo. I lugged down a large box of items to the area where the expo was to take place. Only to open my box and find that all but one lone mug had survived

shipping (luckily we had other goodies to pass out). It was interesting seeing so many attorneys together and to really get a feel for what so many of the NAMWOLF firms do. The giveaways weren't bad either.



The final event, the annual awards luncheon, was a wonderful culmination to a wonderful three days. But it was not the events themselves that made this annual meeting and expo so exciting and wonderful. It was the attendees. The air of collegiality and common purpose permeated my three days in Chicago. I was warmly welcomed and taken into the NAMWOLF fold. I truly felt like NAMWOLF is the kind of group where the members take a genuine interest in one another and use the organization to help women and minority owned law firms succeed in the competitive arena that is the law. And next year, when I am not the newbie, I hope I can help some first time attendees feel the same way.

Crystal L. Van Der Putten is an associate with the Livingston Law Firm specializing in General civil litigation defense practice with an emphasis on products, premises, and general liability and commercial litigation matters. Crystal can be reached at 925.952.9880 or at [cvanderputten@livingstonlawyers.com](mailto:cvanderputten@livingstonlawyers.com)



Interested in submitting an article for future editions of the NAMWOLF newsletter?

Contact: Stacy Fode, Editor  
[fode@brownlawgroup.com](mailto:fode@brownlawgroup.com)





## 2009 NAMWOLF ANNUAL MEETING & EXPO



Carlos Rincon and Joe West



Accenture—Diamond Sponsor



Dan Fleming and Linda Wong



Richard Amador and Karen Giffen



Gonzalez Saggio Harlan



Jane Taber and Jessica Thorne



Melanie Okon, Jason Brown, Janet King and Dawn Estes



Kumar Pathak



Robin Wofford, Marie Wrighten and Claudette Wilson