

...news, events, cle courses, jobs, scholarships, etc...



# PRBA

## PUERTO RICAN BAR ASSOCIATION



"By mutual confidence and mutual aid, great deeds are done, and great discoveries made."

THE ILIAD • BOOK X • HOMER • 8TH CENTURY BC • GREEK EPIC POET

A New York Based Association Of Attorneys, Judges, Professors, Law Students & Qualified Paralegals.

Compiled and written by  
Antonio Seda, Esq. — V.P., PRBA

07 November 2007

### NEWS

#### Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education Fund Gala Event

PRLDEF's Gala Event will be held on November 12, 2007 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel at Grand Central, NYC. Help support an organization that has been invaluable and helped many of us through law school applications, LSAT prep, internships and more. Attorneys working in the public interest and government sectors may attend at a reduced rate. Contact **Salomé Galib**, Development Officer at PRLDEF, at (212) 739-7511 or go to [www.prldef.org](http://www.prldef.org)

#### November PRBA Gen'l Membership Meeting

The PRBA is holding a General Membership Meeting on **November 15, 2007** at 7 P.M. at John Jay College, 899 Tenth Ave. in Room 630 (b/w 58th and 59th streets). Light food and refreshments will be served. At this meeting, we are hosting a "meet and greet" as part of our programs for law students and young professionals in the legal community so that we can all get to know and help each other. RSVP [mmatoslaw@aol.com](mailto:mmatoslaw@aol.com) or [jorengo@lagcc.cuny.edu](mailto:jorengo@lagcc.cuny.edu)

## Legacy of Justice Gilbert Ramirez Honored at Cervantes Society Event

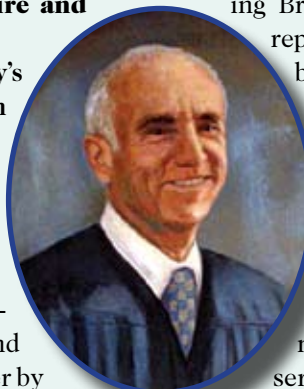
**S**ome say that there are two types of people— those who do and those who just think or talk about doing things. May Justice Gilbert Ramirez's example inspire and encourage us all.

The Cervantes Society's Hispanic Heritage Month Closing Ceremony Event paid tribute to and celebrated the legacy of the Honorable Gilbert Ramirez (1924-2000). As evinced by the many persons present who were inspired and helped in one way or another by Judge Ramirez, it is clear that his example and many contributions to our community will endure far into the future. The event was attended by a very diverse group of people showing that he touched many, irrespective of their station in life or national origin.

Judge Ramirez was a truly incredible person. *He did and attained more than most of us ever will, despite his blindness.* How? He simply did not accept any limitations on himself; he lived by doing and did not make or accept any excuses as to why he couldn't do something. He cared about others, fought against discrimination on the basis of race or disability, and was active and involved with our community.

Born in Puerto Rico, Justice Ramirez overcame the obstacles of racism and blindness and accomplished many

things. He earned his law degree at night from Brooklyn Law School, while working a full-time job. He was elected to the State Assembly in 1965, becoming Brooklyn's first Puerto Rican representative in the assembly. He was the first Puerto Rican elected as Justice of the Supreme Court, Kings County, where he served with distinction from 1975 until he retired in 1997. Justice Ramirez received numerous commendations and awards for service both on and off the bench. Upon his retirement, then Mayor Rudolph Giuliani proclaimed a "*Justice Gilbert Ramires Day.*"



Honorable  
Gilbert Ramirez

Justice Ramirez was an active member of many professional organizations, including the Puerto Rican Bar Association, but was also actively involved in the Williamsburg and Bushwick communities and served on the Board of Directors of various community organizations. He gave his time and expertise to the Brooklyn Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Guiding Eyes for the Blind, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Beautification Association, the Brooklyn Council of Boy Scouts, and many other entities.

The Cervantes Society presented Scholarship Awards in Justice Ramirez's name to two promising college students. ■

## October PRBA General Membership Meeting

The pathways to judgeships in New York and elsewhere have been the subject of considerable attention and outright deep scrutiny. As should be expected with any important issue such as this, differences of opinion vary widely and are passionately held and expressed. The opinions on this issue generally boil down to whether one believes that the various processes are fair or unfair and whether one believes that a particular process needs improvement, major overhaul or outright obliteration. The debate then continues as to the “best” alternative(s).

Against this backdrop, the **Lopez-Torres forum** participants gave presentations of the positions they advanced before the Supreme Court and thereafter fielded questions and comments. Given the varied experiences of our community, the high-stakes nature of this political issue, and the inherent power struggle taking place, the forum revealed **major differences of opinion within the PRBA membership** as the intense, complex, and multifaceted general controversy was echoed within and amongst our membership. Opinions of our members were strongly, freely and openly expressed, even if at times in a heated and blistering fashion. That said, the forum presentation obviously gave the turnout a lot to consider and think about and probably created even more controversy.

We sincerely thank **Daniel R. Alonso, Esq.** (from **Kaye Scholer**), **James Sample, Esq.** (from the **Brennan Center for Justice**) and **James P. Chou, Esq.** (from **Akin Gump**) for participating in the Lopez-Torres forum and generously sharing their time, knowledge and insights with us.

## New PRBA Member Benefit

President **Edward Flores** has finalized negotiations with the NYC Bar to add a new PRBA member benefit which is FREE of cost.

Members are now eligible to participate in the NYC Bar’s **Legal Referral Service** for FREE for one year, subject to certain terms and conditions such as possessing malpractice insurance. The NYC Bar advertises widely on radio and otherwise and receives numerous daily calls from people seeking Spanish-speaking attorneys. PRBA member **Walter Rivera, Esq.** participates in this referral program and strongly encourages other members to do so. Contact Pres. Flores and/or the NYC Bar [www.nycbar.org](http://www.nycbar.org) for additional info.

Please consider PRBA supporter **USI Bertholon-Rowland** for your malpractice and other insurance needs; contact **Jose Rivera**, Vice-President, Brokerage Operations, directly at 212-577-0100 for more info. and mention the PRBA.

## PRBA’s New Committees

The PRBA is proud to introduce two new committees: **The Young Lawyers Committee** and the **Paralegal Committee**. Both committees will sponsor networking, educational and career related programs to enhance professional and personal growth and achievement.



## Somos El Futuro Conference

PRBA to attend **The 2007 Annual Conference of the New York State**

**Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force** to be held in **San Juan, Puerto Rico** on **November 8-12, 2007**. Go to [www.somoselfuturo.org/home.htm](http://www.somoselfuturo.org/home.htm) for info regarding this conference as well as legislative reports and info.



## PRBA Reception in Puerto Rico

PRBA to co-host a reception in San Juan, P.R. on Saturday, **November 10, 2007** to cultivate relationships with members of the legal community in P.R. Contact [mmatoslaw@aol.com](mailto:mmatoslaw@aol.com) for more info. and/or to participate.

## Manuel Romero, Esq. Receives Community Achievement Award

**Manuel Romero, Esq.** was recently awarded the “**2007 Community Achievement Award**” by the **Cervantes Society** in recognition of his many achievements and the contributions he has made to our community. His law practice is located in the Hispanic neighborhood of **Sunset Park, Brooklyn**, and is centered on helping members of our community. In spite of the countless demands of running his own law practice and the challenges of being a trial lawyer, he nevertheless manages to make the time to be involved in many activities helping others.

He is the first Hispanic to be appointed chairperson of the **Grievance Committee** in the **Appellate Division, Second Department**, and the first Hispanic to be elected **President of the Brooklyn Bar Association**. In addition, he has been appointed to various judicial screening committees, he volunteers to help young students and participates in high-school moot court and other programs, and is an active member of various professional organizations, including the PRBA.

## Natalie Gomez-Velez, Esq.— CUNY Law School's New Associate Dean

The road to a career as a Law School Professor and Associate Dean was anything but easy for this PRBA member. "I hated my first semester as a student at NYU Law School and I almost quit. There was a lot of pressure to pursue a career in corporate law and I realized that my passion was not there. I was also struggling financially and my entire diet was peanut butter sandwiches" said **Dean Natalie Gomez-Velez**, CUNY Law School's new Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

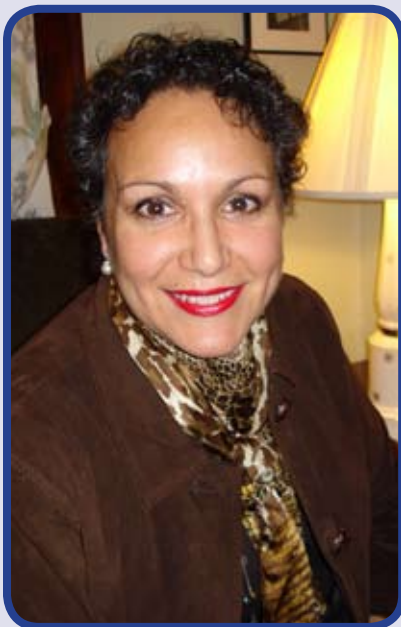
She decided to stick with law school thanks to the encouragement of her friends in the PRBA — she was tenacious, persevered and graduated from NYU Law in 1989. She has since held a series of prestigious positions in both the private and public sector, including: Associate at a Wall Street firm; General Counsel to the NYC Department of Youth Services; Attorney at the ACLU and NYU's Brennan Center for Justice; Assistant Deputy Attorney General for Public Advocacy for then Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, and Special Counsel to the Chief Administrative Judge of the Unified Court System.

Dean Gomez-Velez ultimately found her passion in teaching. She taught a Lawyering Seminar at NYU Law School where she found that she "loved teaching law students and discussing how the law can be used to achieve a social justice vision." Even as she enjoyed her work in the public service, she felt the importance of developing young lawyers for public interest work and providing access to the

legal profession for disenfranchised and underrepresented groups. She pursued her passion and found herself at CUNY Law School in 2004 as an Assistant Professor. She was soon promoted to Associate Professor and then tapped by Dean Michelle Anderson to serve as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

She is now helping to lead the law school in moving forward with its mission: "*law in the service of human needs.*" Dean Gomez-Velez notes that CUNY Law School is at a very important point in its history. A recognized leader in providing access to the profession for traditionally underrepresented groups and excellence in law teaching and clinical education, CUNY Law was recently lauded by the **Carnegie Foundation**. As noted in the Carnegie Report entitled *Educating Lawyers*, CUNY Law has been able to "form communities of learning in which the form of curriculum and pedagogy follows, or anticipates, their students' future professional functions. At CUNY, the effort has been to devise a means to equip students from groups underrepresented in the law to work effectively in a great cause: social justice and wider inclusion in U.S. society."

Kudos to Dean Gomez-Velez who now has a major role in our community by encouraging and helping students to pursue their dreams of becoming lawyers in the public interest. "The adversity that I faced in my first year of law school has helped me to become a better teacher and administrator and now I am better able to help shape our future leaders" said Dean Gomez-Velez. ■



**Natalie Gomez-Velez**  
Associate Dean  
CUNY Law School

### Hispanic Workers Win \$4.3M Settlement v. B&H Foto

On October 16, 2007 the U.S. EEOC in New York announced that it had promptly reached a \$4.3 Million Settlement with **B & H Foto and Electronics Corp. (B&H)** in a **Title VII National Origin Discrimination Case (EEOC v. B & H Foto and Electronics Corp., No. 07-CV-9241)**. B&H is one of the largest retail sellers of photographic, computer and electronic equipment in the New York metropolitan area.

This settlement was achieved on behalf of Hispanic employees who worked in B&H's warehouses who claimed that they were paid less than non-Hispanics and denied promotion and health benefits. B&H also agreed to comply with Title VII, equalize wages of Hispanic employees with their non-Hispanic co-workers, and work with the EEOC in a claims process to distribute \$4.3 million dollars in monetary relief. For the press release go to [www.eeoc.gov/press/10-16-07.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/press/10-16-07.html)

### Brooklyn Women's Bar Association is Collecting Cell Phones For Victims of Domestic Violence

Put your old cell phone to good use! **BWBA** is holding a **Cell Phone Drive for Victims of Domestic Violence**. Phones may be dropped off through November 16th at the front desk of the courthouse located at 360 Adams Street in Brooklyn or you may call BWBA President Pamela A. Elisofon, Esq. at (718) 852-1700 for alternate drop-off location(s).

### New York County Lawyers Association's Youth Law Manual

NYCLA recently published **The NYC Youth Law Manual** to help young people become informed citizens. This truly valuable manual has 23 chapters through which people can explore the law and see how it affects their lives. Click [http://nycla.org/siteFiles/News/News57\\_0.pdf](http://nycla.org/siteFiles/News/News57_0.pdf)

to explore the manual and [http://www.nycla.org/siteFiles/Publications/Publications1109\\_0.pdf](http://www.nycla.org/siteFiles/Publications/Publications1109_0.pdf) to learn more about NYCLA's Youth Law Conference which was attended by 200 NYC high school students.

### **PALS is Looking for Law Student Mentors – Volunteer!**

The Practicing Attorneys for Law Students Program (PALS) is looking for New York based attorneys to serve as mentors for minority law student members. This year, PALS has a high number of students requesting to be matched with a mentor. If you or any of your attorney colleagues are interested in becoming PALS mentors, PALS would love to have you! Attorneys interested in becoming mentors or being added to their mailing list can sign up at [www.palsprogram.org](http://www.palsprogram.org) by selecting the "Join" tab.

### **The Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice – Volunteer!**

This Brooklyn public high school is making a difference in the lives of young people interested in the law. Besides classroom studies, the school teaches through programs involving volunteer practicing lawyers and judges such as Law Day, Moot Court and Lunches with Lawyers. Volunteers at last year's Law Day included PRBA members **Manuel Romero** and **Antonio Seda** who discussed law topics with students. To see the article on the '07 Law Day which appeared in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle click [http://www.brooklynlyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category\\_id=4&id=12666](http://www.brooklynlyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=4&id=12666). For the article on the '07 Moot Court Program held at Cravath, Swaine & Moore, click [http://www.brooklynlyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category\\_id=4&id=12890](http://www.brooklynlyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=4&id=12890)

The school is looking for volunteers to assist with its programs. Contact **Joe Pinto**, Director of Partnerships & Development at [jpinto@sljhs.org](mailto:jpinto@sljhs.org) and check out the school's website at [www.sljhs.org/index.htm](http://www.sljhs.org/index.htm).

### **Other Resources & Items of Interest**

For more than 30 years, PRLDEF's Education Division has been helping students interested in pursuing careers in the law; indeed, it has helped many of us through its comprehensive array of educational support programs and scholarships. Go to [www.prldef.org/Education/education.htm](http://www.prldef.org/Education/education.htm) and/or contact [maritza.maldonado@prldef.org](mailto:maritza.maldonado@prldef.org) or [sonji\\_patrick@prldef.org](mailto:sonji_patrick@prldef.org)

The American Bar Association's website has a page full of information and resources which is specifically for minority law school students. Go to <http://www.abanet.org/minorities/links/students.html>

Mayor's Graduate Scholars Program — Scholarships for City Employees. See Scholarship info below.

Application deadlines loom; SEO, Credit Suisse and JPMorgan. See Scholarship info below.

### **EVENTS**

#### **November**

The 2007 Annual Conference of the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force will be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico on **November 8-12, 2007**. Go to <http://www.somoselfuturo.org/home.htm> for info.

The Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education Fund's Gala Event will be held on **November 12, 2007**. Contact Salomé Galib, Development Officer at PRLDEF, at (212) 739-7511 or go to [www.prldef.org](http://www.prldef.org)

The sponsoring firms of the NY Minority Attorney Networking Series host an event featuring the Honorable Arthur J. Gonzalez, United States Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of New York, on Monday **November 12**, from 6-8PM at the New York City Bar, 42 West 44th Street, NY, NY. RSVP to Arnold & Porter at [nyminorityseries@aporter.com](mailto:nyminorityseries@aporter.com) or 212-715-1384

PALS is sponsoring "What You Can Do With a Law Degree." This FREE career forum and networking

reception will discuss many career possibilities with panelists from a variety of different backgrounds. Wednesday, **November 14**, 6-8 PM. Hosted by **Goldman, Sachs & Co.**, 32 Old Slip (Between Hanover and Water St.), 2nd Floor Auditorium, NY, NY. For more info. and to RSVP go to [www.palsprogram.org](http://www.palsprogram.org) You must RSVP.

PALS is also sponsoring "Demonstrating Your Value During Performance Evaluations" on Thursday, **November 29**, 6:30-8:30 P.M. The FREE program is for junior attorneys of color and is hosted by **Proskauer Rose LLP** located at 1585 Broadway, NY, NY. For more info. and to RSVP go to [www.palsprogram.org](http://www.palsprogram.org) You must RSVP by **November 25**.

### **CLE COURSES**

#### **Elder Law and Article 81 (Mental Hygiene Law)**

FREE to PRBA Members and other participating bar association members 6 weekly sessions starting Thursday, October 4th (except October 18th) 6:30 — approx. 9:45 PM with networking break with coffee and snacks; held at First American Title Insurance Company; 633 Third Ave., 16th floor contact PRBA President Edward Flores at [eddie655@yahoo.com](mailto:eddie655@yahoo.com)

#### **NYC BAR**

[www.nycbar.org](http://www.nycbar.org)

#### **New York County Lawyers Association**

[www.nycla.org](http://www.nycla.org)

#### **Brooklyn Bar Association**

offers practical modestly priced courses [www.brooklynbar.org](http://www.brooklynbar.org)

#### **New York State Bar Association**

[www.nysba.org](http://www.nysba.org)



## EMPLOYMENT & SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### JOBS

Visit <http://www.hnba.com/jobs/default.asp> for listing and the list of the 2006 HNBA Job Fair Employers.

Visit [www.nycourts.gov](http://www.nycourts.gov) for listing

Visit [recruitment@oag.state.ny.us](mailto:recruitment@oag.state.ny.us) for listing

### SCHOLARSHIPS, INTERNSHIPS & JOBS

**Mayor's Graduate Scholars Program — Scholarships for City Employees.** This is an opportunity for full-time New York City government employees (employed by a City agency) with undergraduate degrees to study at accredited colleges/universities in the metropolitan area. The filing period for the 2008/09 academic year is now open. Deadline is November 19, 2007. [www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/html/resources/mgsp.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/html/resources/mgsp.shtml)

**PRLDEF ~ scholarships, internships, programs, etc.** at [www.prldef.org](http://www.prldef.org)

**Hispanic College Fund Programs & Scholarships —** Last year the Hispanic College Fund awarded \$2.4 million to over 600 students nationwide who not only benefit from funding, but also joined a powerful network of HCF Scholars, corporate executives and government leaders vested in developing the next generation of Hispanic professionals. Applications for the 2007-2008 school will reopen December 15, 2007. For more info, go to [www.hispanicfund.org/index.php](http://www.hispanicfund.org/index.php)



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**Hispanic Scholarship Directory** — sponsored by the National Association of Hispanic Publications Foundation. This directory is vast and can be searched by field of study, etc. The website also provides generally useful information for college students. To access these materials and the directory go to

[www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org/default.asp?id=1](http://www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org/default.asp?id=1)

**SEO, Credit Suisse and JPMorgan's** programs and scholarships were featured in our last e-newsletter obtainable on our website. Deadlines are fast approaching.

[www.seo-ny.org/default.asp](http://www.seo-ny.org/default.asp)

[www.credit-suisse.com/careers](http://www.credit-suisse.com/careers)

[www.jpmorgan.com/pages/jpmorgan/investbk/about/community/diversity](http://www.jpmorgan.com/pages/jpmorgan/investbk/about/community/diversity)

<http://launchingleaders.jpmorgan.com/home.ashx>

### How Can the PRBA Help You?



## PRBA

PUERTO RICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

A New York based association of attorneys, judges, professors, law students & qualified paralegals.

### THE PUERTO RICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, INC.

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**We Welcome Your Submission of Content that Promotes our Profession and Heritage**

Please submit newsletter information & content to Antonio Seda at:

[antonio.seda@gmail.com](mailto:antonio.seda@gmail.com)

EXPERIENCE

INTEGRITY

EXCELLENCE

**USI Bertholon-Rowland** offers competitive and comprehensive insurance. Our portfolio of products designed for today's legal professionals includes:

- Lawyers' Professional Liability
- Employment Practices Liability
- Business Owner Policy
- Workers' Compensation
- Life & Disability
- Long-Term Care
- Medical

To learn more please contact  
Jose Rivera at **917.551.8575**  
or [jrivera@brcorp.com](mailto:jrivera@brcorp.com).  
Or visit our website  
[www.brcorp.com](http://www.brcorp.com)



**ANNOUNCING**  
**USI BERTHOLON-ROWLAND**  
as the Puerto Rican Bar Association's  
Insurance Partner