



South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston

## ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER CELEBRATES SABA GB SUCCESSES OF 2008

December 19, 2008

On December 4, 2008, the South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston ("SABA GB") held its 2008 Year-End Awards Dinner, an annual event to recognize the achievements of the past year and honor the SABA GB member and board member who have made extraordinary contributions to the organization. This year's dinner commenced with opening remarks from SABA GB President, Samia Kirmani, who invited the audience to share a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

Ms. Kirmani recounted SABA GB's many successes of the past year, including a reception to honor the appointments of Navjeet K. Bal and Sunila Thomas-George as the Commonwealth's first South Asian Commissioners of the Department of Revenue and Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, the first diversity panel discussion co-sponsored by all affinity bar associations and several mentorship events which paired South Asian attorneys with students from local law schools. Most prominently, Mr. Kirmani celebrated SABA GB's remarkable success in hosting the annual leadership retreat for the North American South Asian Bar Association ("NASABA"), which resulted in SABA GB winning the bid to host the 2010 National Convention, an event that attracts South Asian attorneys from all across the country.

Manisha Bhatt, last year's recipient of both Member of the Year and Board Member of the Year awards, presented the award for Board Member of the Year to Dhara S. Khanna, the co-chair of the South Asian Community Relations Committee. Ms. Bhatt applauded Ms. Khanna's contributions in collaborating with local South Asian community groups and organizing the "Be the Change" event for the Boston area, a national day of community service hosted by = South Asian Americans Leading Together ("SAALT") across the country in honor of Mahatma Gandhi's legacy of service. The Member of Year Award was given to Alope Chakravarty, an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Anti-Terrorism and National Security unit. Mr. Chakravarty was described as a "hero" for his involvement in bringing together law enforcement officials with members of the South Asian community in a cooperative forum to discuss critical legal issues relating to counterterrorism and the protection of civil liberties.

This year's dinner also featured a special award to honor Past President, Annapoorni Sankaran, who served as SABA GB's President from 2004 through 2007. In recognition of her unparalleled contributions to SABA GB during her tenure on the Board, Ms. Sankaran was presented with "The Annapoorni Sankaran Award for Excellence in Leadership and Dedication to Service," an enduring award created in her name to be given each year to the board member who most embodies Ms. Sankaran's legacy. "Anna not only created the machine that is SABA, she honed it so that it virtually hums along," said an emotional Ms. Kirmani in describing Ms. Sankaran's contributions. "She thoughtfully and carefully organized the Board so that roles are defined, Board members are empowered and the work gets done collaboratively...[Anna] represented SABA GB to the legal community in Massachusetts so that people come to us to have us represent on advisory boards, task forces and at legal community events."

The evening's keynote speaker was Warren Tolman, a former State Senator and first Clean Elections candidate for Governor of Massachusetts. Mr. Tolman acknowledged the significant strides made by the South Asian community in legal and political arenas and encouraged continued involvement and engagement in government processes to ensure that the community receives "a seat at the table" when it comes to issues that impact the community.

SABA GB is a chapter of the North American South Asian Bar Association. As part of its mission, SABA GB continues to support and encourage the advancement of South Asians to leadership positions within the legal community and the community at large. For additional information please visit [www.sabagb.org](http://www.sabagb.org) or contact Samia Kirmani, President, South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston, at [kirmanis@jacksonlewis.com](mailto:kirmanis@jacksonlewis.com).