



South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston

www.sabagb.org

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SABA GB AND AFFINITY BAR ASSOCIATIONS CONFRONT DIVERSITY ISSUES DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

On May 19, 2009, the South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston (“SABA GB”) joined other affinity bar associations in continuing the dialogue from last year’s well-received panel discussion entitled “Let’s Get Real About Diversity.” Affinity bar organizations co-hosted this second annual event entitled “Moving Diversity Forward in the Face of Economic Challenges” to discuss of the relevance of diversity during the current financial crisis and the measures can be taken to push the diversity agenda forward during challenging times. With nearly 100 attendees, the event was spearheaded by the South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston (“SABA GB”), and organized by the Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts (“AALAM”), the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Bar Association (“MLGBA”), the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association (“MBLA”), and the Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys (“MAHA”). The event took place at Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP, which hosted a reception during which attendees had an opportunity to continue the discussion with the panelists and each other.

Panelists included Alope Chakravarty, Assistant U.S. Attorney, Criminal Division, Anti-Terrorism and National Security Unit; Geoffrey Why, General Counsel of the Department of Telecommunications & Cable; Robert Cooper, Vice President/Senior Counsel of OneUnited Bank; Carlos Perez-Albuerne, Partner at Choate, Hall & Stewart; and Bernadette Harrigan, Assistant Vice President & Counsel with Mass Mutual Financial Group. The event was moderated by Taruna Garg, an associate of Murtha Cullina LLP and Clerk of SABA GB. Ms. Garg invited the panelists to weigh in on how their diverse backgrounds contributed to their professional success and the ways in which minority attorneys can best position themselves to succeed in today’s turbulent economy. The evening sparked a spirited discussion about the importance of diversity in the profession, as well as whether private and public sector employers pay only lip service to diversity initiatives in this tough economic climate.

“The attendance and enthusiasm for this event demonstrated the commitment of the legal community as a whole towards improving diversity within the legal profession. SABA GB hopes to continue its efforts at bringing together members of the legal community to discuss sensitive issues in an open and candid way,” said Samia Kirmani, President of SABA GB.

SABA GB is a chapter of the North American South Asian Bar Association and is an organization dedicated to supporting and promoting the advancement of attorneys and law students of South Asian heritage and serving the legal needs of the South Asian community at large. For additional information please visit www.sabagb.org or contact Samia Kirmani, President, South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston, at kirmanis@jacksonlewis.com.