

FACETS

SKADDEN'S
DIVERSITY PUBLICATION
FALL '09



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To Our Readers | December '09

Welcome to the latest issue of *Facets*. Since our last writing, there have been a few changes at our firm. In April, **Eric Friedman** assumed the role of Skadden's Executive Partner, succeeding **Bob Sheehan**. We are all grateful to Bob, not only for his leadership of the firm for the past 15 years, but also for his dedication to Skadden's diversity initiatives. Given Eric's own commitment to these issues, we are thrilled to continue to have such strong support from the firm's senior leadership. We are also pleased to announce that tax partner **Kirk Wallace** has joined us as our new Diversity Committee Co-Chair, along with **Kayalyn Marafiotti** and **Vaughn Williams**. Kirk, a longstanding member of our Hiring and Diversity Committees, brings invaluable energy and dedication to the firm's diversity efforts, particularly with respect to LGBT equality. We are fortunate to have his involvement in the firm's efforts in this new capacity.

As you've read in recent issues of *Facets*, our firm and The City College of New York have partnered to create The Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom Honors Program in Legal Studies at CCNY. The 10-year commitment will provide students from diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to gain the education and experience needed to succeed in law school and, ultimately, the legal profession. We're pleased to announce that the Honors Program is under way, and a complete update can be found on the opposite page.

At Skadden, we believe the ideas, perspectives and experiences of our diverse group of professionals greatly enhance our culture and commitment to providing excellent client service. We recently welcomed our 2009/2010 international visiting attorneys (IVA), who hail from six different countries around the world. Brief profiles of each IVA begin on page 4. Litigation of counsel **Judge Judith Kaye** was the featured guest at the first installment of Skadden's Women's Leadership Series this past summer. Judge Kaye's insights on advocating for changes in the legal profession form this issue's Career Development feature. Our *Facets* Interview, with National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) Executive Director **Kate Kendell** and Legal Director **Shannon Minter**, focuses on their role in the battle over California's Proposition 8 and related NCLR efforts. As usual, we also include recent news and events, including an update on the Skadden Women Attorneys Network and related initiatives.

Your Thoughts? We welcome your feedback about this issue of *Facets*. E-mail us at facets@skadden.com.



Former litigation partners **Preeta Bansal** (left) and **Tina Tohen** (also a former Diversity Committee Co-Chair) were featured in the most recent *Alumni Update*, along with former antitrust partner **Cyrus Amir-Mokri**, for their new roles in the Obama administration.



Skadden Scholars at CCNY Begin Life in the 'Pipeline'

The Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom Honors Program in Legal Studies is now under way, as the students, the school and the firm all work together to allow students from a wide variety of backgrounds to gain the education and experience necessary to enter and succeed in competitive law schools.

The first class of 26 students was chosen in April 2009, on the basis of written applications and interviews conducted by Skadden partners **Sheldon Adler, Armando Gomez, Kayalyn Marafioti, Ann Beth Stebbins** and **Vaughn Williams**, along with members of CCNY's faculty. The students selected represent approximately half of the number of applicants and had an average GPA of 3.56. Their majors run the gamut from political science and pre-law to English and biology. A kick-off event for the program was held at Skadden's New York office in June.

The real work for the scholars started over the summer. That's when the Summer Law Institute began — the new scholars' first real exposure to the program. During the four-week institute, Skadden attorneys had conversations with the students about their practice areas. Vaughn, a New York litigation partner, explained the legal aspects of a *pro bono* case with which he has been involved, and two attorneys — *pro bono* associate **Brenna Devaney** and white collar crime associate **Katrina James** — spoke to the students about life as a lawyer. An afternoon at Skadden involved even more presentations about different practice areas, from M&A to sports-related intellectual property. Speakers included partners **Sheldon Adler, Anthony Dreyer, Warren Feldman, Patricia Moran** and **Larry Spiegel**; and associates **Peter Cohen, Brenna Devaney, Kim Harris, Andrew McClure, Becca Silberberg** and **Khalilah Walters**.

"The most consistent theme we heard from the students following the presentations was that they could've lasted longer," says Skadden diversity manager **Melique Jones**. "We took this as a very positive sign of the students' engagement and of the direction of our collaboration with CCNY."

Through the program, the students have had the opportunity to witness trials in criminal court, visit legal aid organizations to observe their processes and take part in mock trials. Best of all, Melique says, the group is engaged, intellectually curious and supportive of one another as they work toward their goals. The students are now in their junior year at CCNY, continuing their regular studies while taking a special Skadden Honors Program seminar.

As the program evolves, the enrollment eventually may grow to as many as 100 students. CCNY freshmen and sophomores will be eligible to enroll in a pre-honors sequence, which will help them determine their degree of interest in legal studies and identify some of the most talented students for the program. Other program elements include the creation of an endowed professorship and the Skadden, Arps Legal Honors Center on the CCNY campus, as well as dormitory space for students from outside New York state.

In recognition of Skadden's ongoing commitment to CCNY, including the founding of the Honors Program, the firm was named to CCNY's President's Circle, an exclusive group comprising those individuals and organizations that have contributed the most to the Campaign for The City College of New York. Senior partner and CCNY alumnus **Joe Flom** was named to the President's Circle in 2007.

To learn about or become more involved with the program, contact us at facets@skadden.com. 



Global Reach International Visiting Attorney Program Enters 20th Year

Skadden recently welcomed the 2009/2010 class of International Visiting Attorneys (IVA) to our New York office.

Now in its 20th year, the IVA program invites lawyers employed by international law firms or companies to train for approximately nine months at a Skadden U.S. office before returning to their home countries. Each of the lawyers is assigned a Skadden partner or counsel who serves as a mentor. New York partner Randall Doud oversees the IVA, along with New York manager of immigration and visiting attorney programs, Zabella Hassan.

The 2009/2010 IVA class includes attorneys who hail from six different countries. *Facets* spoke with the visiting attorneys to get their thoughts about working at Skadden and how their own professional or cultural backgrounds provide a different view of practicing law.



Flavia Azevedo

Company/Firm: Veirano Advogados | Brazil
Practice Area: Employment Law/Corporate

What are you most looking forward to about your year in the United States?

Working in a leading global firm and learning from some of the most preeminent lawyers. People at Skadden assist clients with a high level of competence, speed and a multicultural background that allows them to understand and

connect with their clients' businesses worldwide. As a fellow from the Columbia University *Pro Bono* Program, I am looking forward to working on Skadden *pro bono* cases. Skadden is a law firm committed to *pro bono*, and I expect to be able to learn the best of its *pro bono* culture and apply it when I am back to Brazil.

In what ways does your background give you a different view of the law from your U.S. counterparts?

Being a Brazilian lawyer, I believe I can add a lot in terms of knowledge, experience and understanding of the South American business culture and the political and regulatory environments of one of world's fastest growing economies.



Jose Berrueta

Company/Firm: Ritch Mueller, S.C. | Mexico
Practice Area: M&A and Corporate Finance

What are you most looking forward to about your year in the U.S.?

I look forward to learning how U.S. attorneys practice corporate and finance law to have a better understanding of the common law system as compared to the civil law practice in Latin America. This will allow me to better understand

U.S. clients' needs whenever I become involved in a future transnational transaction. I also look forward to establishing relationships with people from different backgrounds, industries and institutions.

In what ways does your background give you a different view of the law from your U.S. counterparts?

International transactions involve coordination with several counsels in different jurisdictions. I have practiced in a country where the civil law system works differently, and the exposure to working in the U.S. will provide me with the tools to better navigate the processes and principles of different jurisdictions and traditions.



Tim Cruickshank

Company/Firm: Freehills | Australia
Practice Area: Corporate Finance

What are you most looking forward to about your year in the U.S.?

Most of the transactions I have worked on in the past have had some form of a U.S. component, but we obviously don't see much of the underlying work done by the U.S. lawyers. I am looking forward to observing transactions from the U.S. side.

In what ways does your background give you a different view of the law from your U.S. counterparts?

Australia has a very similar system to the U.S., but we tend to reach the same outcome in slightly different ways.



Felipe de Freitas Ramos

Company/Firm: Barbosa, Mussnich & Aragao Advogados | Brazil
Practice Area: M&A

What are you most looking forward to about your year in the U.S.?

I think this is a unique opportunity to learn how a law firm like Skadden works. I'm looking forward to working

with the firm's attorneys.

In what ways does your background give you a different view of the law from your U.S. counterparts?

I've developed a good background in Brazilian corporate law and have been involved in several M&A transactions in the past few years. Brazilian and U.S. laws are different, and I believe my experience and background can provide my U.S. counterparts with the necessary support where applicable.



Jaedong Shin

Company/Firm: SK Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd. | South Korea
Practice Area: Construction

What are you most looking forward to about your year in the U.S.?

This is my next phase of studying in the United States — I recently completed my LL.M. program at Northwestern in

Chicago. I would like to expand my understanding of U.S. law and how law firms here work. I think this experience will benefit my future business with U.S. law firms when I return to my company.

In what ways does your background give you a different view of the law from your U.S. counterparts?

In Korea, there is a tendency to believe that the law should be the last resort in solving conflicts. When conflicts or disputes arise, people try to solve it relying on customs, relationships or compromises rather than going to court or pulling out a contract. While this may sound unusual, it can sometimes resolve issues without hurting the long-term relationship between the conflicting parties.



Shivani Retnam

Company/Firm: Drew & Napier LLC | Singapore
Practice Area: Litigation and Dispute Resolution

What are you most looking forward to about your year in the U.S.?

I have spent almost my entire legal career as a litigator in Singapore, and

after more than five years, I felt that the time was ripe for a change. I have been fascinated by the corporate world, and the dynamics and negotiation strategies involved in deal-making. I hope to make the most of my year in the U.S. by gaining as much exposure and experience as possible in transactions.

In what ways does your background give you a different view of the law from your U.S. counterparts?

The Singapore legal system (like the U.K. and U.S. legal systems) is based on common law principles. However, these principles are applied differently in Singapore as a result of a very different social and political construct. Considering Singapore is a regional hub, my exposure to various Asian cultures and clients can be helpful.



Edward van Geuns

Company/Firm: De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek | The Netherlands
Practice Area: Arbitration

What are you most looking forward to about your year in the U.S.?

It is exciting to have the opportunity to learn how Skadden's international litigation and arbitration team operates. They

have a great reputation in the world of international arbitration, and I am certain that this experience will be of immense value for me when I return home.

In what ways does your background give you a different view of the law from your U.S. counterparts?

That's what I want to find out. The legal systems are obviously very different, but does this create different types of lawyers? For now, I will assume that we are more alike than we sometimes think. ■

"I have been happily involved with the IVA program from the beginning, having served as a mentor to one of the first visiting attorneys, and it is my pleasure to have the latest class with us. Since 1989, the program has welcomed nearly 250 visiting associates from approximately 40 countries, with all inhabited continents represented. And with our first visiting attorney ever from Singapore, we are still adding to the list of countries."

— Randall Doud | Partner | New York

This summer saw the launch of Skadden’s Women’s Leadership Series with a breakfast in the New York office featuring litigation of counsel **Judge Judith Kaye** on July 16. The series is designed as an ongoing dialogue with our senior women leaders, alumnae and others to provide our attorneys with the opportunity to experience various paths to leadership. Subsequent Women’s Leadership Series events have included exempt organizations of counsel **Helene Kaplan** on September 17 and M&A partner **Nancy Lieberman** on November 2. Various Skadden offices will take turns hosting the program, and more on the series will be shared in the next newsletter. *Facets* sat in on the inaugural event with Judge Kaye as she shared her story of a remarkable career in the law.

The first female chief judge of the New York Court of Appeals didn’t set out to be a trailblazer in the legal profession — initially she wasn’t even interested in becoming a lawyer. But, attracted to what was “unattainable” throughout the “zigs and zags” of her career as she calls them, **Judge Judith Kaye** eventually assumed the highest judicial post in the state of New York where she served for 15 years, reforming the jury system and establishing an extraordinary record along the way.

The Judge Kaye breakfast, which also was attended by summer associates, was introduced by M&A of counsel **Peggy Wolff** and moderated by litigation partner **Lauren Aguiar**. During the question-and-answer discussion, Judge Kaye offered insights into positive leadership while detailing some of the obstacles she faced as a woman entering the legal profession in the early 1960s.

After graduating from Monticello High School in rural upstate New York, Judge Kaye entered Barnard College to pursue journalism — an aspiration, she jokes, that was intended “largely to upset my parents.”

“I call them the zigs and zags of life,” Judge Kaye said. “Back then, women would go off track in their career because their path was not attainable. So they had to go elsewhere, and it came at a price. Nonetheless, there was never any question I would pursue work I loved. What you do should be meaningful. What’s the point otherwise?”

At Barnard she majored in Latin American civilizations to prepare for a career reporting on revolutions in South America. But upon graduating in 1958, she found that as a woman she was virtually unemployable in the news field. After traveling the entire East Coast in search of work, Judge Kaye finally was hired as a social reporter for a small newspaper in Union City, N.J., a job that she describes as “horrible.” After a short time there, Judge Kaye decided to enroll in the night program at New York University School of Law.

“I never intended to be a lawyer,” she said. “I just wanted to get off the social reporting page, and I figured a year or so of law school would help.”

After one year of night school, she found the classes more interesting than her journalism job and transferred to the full-time program. When she graduated in 1962, Judge Kaye tried to find work in the litigation department of a major New York City firm, which was nearly impossible at that time. She was told by numerous law firms

that their quota of women was already full. But once again, she was drawn to her goal because it seemed out of reach.

Then, she recalls receiving offers from two firms on the same day. One of the offers she described as “very offensive” because it included a salary much lower than what male attorneys were receiving. The second came from Sullivan & Cromwell, and the salary matched that of the men at the firm. Judge Kaye took the offer and eventually met her husband while working there.

Judge Kaye left Sullivan & Cromwell in 1964 to work in the corporate sector, but she says the company forced her to leave shortly thereafter because she was seven months pregnant with her first child. She then spent three years working for the dean of the NYU Law School before deciding to return to work at a law firm. During her stint at NYU, she also had two more children.

In 1969, she joined midsize firm Olwine, Connelly, Chase, O’Donnell & Weyher, where she became the firm’s first female partner. Lauren asked Judge Kaye if she found it difficult, with a family, to have energy left to channel into her professional life. The judge described how she felt it was important for her to take time for vacations with her family, something that no one else really did then.

“I wrote an article in favor of the ‘mommy track’ back then and got lambasted,” she said. “But it’s important that you make known what your needs and limitations are, or you’ll be wrecked personally.”

After 15 years at Olwine, Connelly, she was appointed an associate judge for the New York Court of Appeals, a position she held for 10 years before becoming chief judge. Last year, after a 15-year tenure as chief judge, she reached the mandatory retirement age and joined Skadden.

Reflecting on the moment in her career when she thought about being a leader in the profession, Judge Kaye said, “for me it came with jury reform. Here I am the chief judge, so I should figure out what needs to be done and do it instead of looking at the obstacles and saying it’s impossible. I now realize in retrospect that it was, but you can’t go in with that attitude or everything stays the same.”

Judge Kaye’s work with jury reform took shape when she decided to revamp the state’s antiquated system. Countless meetings with legislators, public officials and bar associations paid off. Through

her successful Jury Project, the state did away with automatic exemptions for hundreds of thousands of prospective jurors, cutting down the time each juror had to serve.

“The amazing thing was the mountain moved a millimeter,” she said. “When you see that change, it’s intoxicating, and you see there are no limits.”

During her time as chief judge, she also took on many initiatives relating to how families could be better served by the courts, particularly the “problem-solving courts,” which include drug, family, mental health and domestic violence courts. She created community courts that deal with nonviolent crimes and provide counseling, treatment and even job training for the offenders. Judge Kaye said she was able to act as a leader and take on the reform she wanted to see in the courts by not standing around and waiting for someone else to do it.

“If you stand back and look at the bad it’s immobilizing. It’s a waste of time. There is always something you can do. Address the discontent.”

‘When you see change, it’s intoxicating ... you see there are no limits.’

Asked by an audience member how as a leader she was able to gain followers, Judge Kaye said when she started her jury reform project, she formed a commission but made sure to include people who were not supportive of her ideas originally, and then kept building support around her.

“Think about what you want to accomplish, bring in your outspoken objectors and surround them with the people who will give support,” she said. “Build thoughtfully and not heedlessly, but always keep doing it.”

When Lauren asked Judge Kaye to summarize her leadership style she said simply: “Never admit defeat.”

“I didn’t consciously look to be a leader,” Judge Kaye said. “But success doesn’t always mean changing the world totally, it means making some small, meaningful change and pursuing it again and again.” **F**





Kate Kendell | NCLR Executive Director

For this edition of the Facets interview, we spoke with the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) Executive Director **Kate Kendell** and Legal Director **Shannon Minter**. Mr. Minter argued the recently decided challenge to California's Proposition 8 before the California Supreme Court, in which the court upheld the voter-passed initiative that eliminated the rights of same-sex couples to marry in California but also ruled to honor the more than 18,000 marriages performed between June 16-Nov. 4, 2008. Prop 8 was placed on the November 2008 ballot in California following the May 2008 California Supreme Court ruling that initially granted same-sex couples the right to marry. Ms. Kendell and Mr. Minter spoke to us in late March and early April, respectively, after the Proposition 8 case had been argued but before the California Supreme Court issued its decision.

Can you describe your recent experience working for marriage equality in California?

KK It was a quintessential best of times and worst of times compressed into less than 12 months. Last May (2008), everyone here experienced a moment of pure elation. To have the court rule as it did, not only eliminating the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage but holding that sexual orientation is a suspect class, was the culmination of decades of work here at NCLR and in our lives. We almost couldn't imagine that kind of victory. And before we even had a chance to celebrate it, we were fighting to keep it.

SM Starting when we filed the first marriage case at the trial level, I've been on a roller coaster. The litigation and legislative activity started moving at a quicker pace. I'm stunned by how the last eight years have flown by. It's been so much fun; it's been such a privilege and at times it's been heart-breaking. But I feel good about what we've done in our state and where we'll end up.

The Proposition 8 battle was bruising and toxic for our state. I hated the way it became so polarized and the way the "Yes on 8"

camp took it to the lowest level. I was — perhaps naively — surprised that they were so willing to lie about Proposition 8 and appeal to people's worst fears about what it would do to schools and churches. It was really upsetting to see the ugliness of that kind of discourse unleashed in our state. The propaganda stirred up a lot of homophobia and gave people permission to voice it in ways they hadn't in a while.

What lessons do you take from the Prop 8 campaign?

KK There is a lot we have to learn from what worked and, more importantly, what didn't work. If there is any silver lining, it is a recognition in the community that this is not going to be an easy fight and no one can sit on the sidelines. We won't win the next one without everyone being engaged and involved.

Clearly one of the issues probed the most is the messaging, which has been criticized for misrepresenting the lives of LGBT people. That is an issue that will have to be addressed, and there always will be tension between the reality of our lives and what polls tell you voters are swayed by. It's difficult when the data tells you something completely



Photos of Kate Kendall and Shannon Minter provided by the National Center for Lesbian Rights



Shannon Minter | NCLR Legal Director

inconsistent with what you think in your gut the messaging should be. But there has been a shift since the loss on Prop 8.

The data is not going to be different in a future campaign. If people are undecided on this issue, it's because they have a problem with gay people. We have to begin now — when we are not in a campaign — with the same urgency people had a month before the election. The only way out of the paradox is to begin talking to undecided voters now with authentic, real messaging so that fewer are undecided next time.

SM A lot of people were shocked by the vote, and people who hadn't put significant energy or time into the campaign are getting involved. We were staggered by the level of support for our Prop 8 challenge. We asked for expedited litigation. I was amazed by how short the amicus filing period was, but we ended up having more briefs in support of our Proposition 8 challenge than the first marriage case, from every mainstream civil rights group in our state and nationally, including for the first time the NAACP. [Skadden filed two amicus briefs on behalf of organizations challenging to Proposition 8.]

In March, same-sex couples in Massachusetts filed a lawsuit in federal court that challenges the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). What are your thoughts on how this issue will play out at the federal level, including possibly before the U.S. Supreme Court?

SM Our colleagues at GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders) have prepared that case for years. They've done a great job setting the case up with a narrow set of issues, which have a good chance. I'd be concerned about others rushing to bring broader challenges. It's a conservative court, and they are hostile to our interests. We should be careful before we put our heads on the block with this court. On marriage, we need to shore up the political side of our fight, and we're making progress.

KK The lawsuit challenging DOMA, particularly the part that provides that the federal government will not recognize marriage, is enormously important. It comes at a time when we have an administration that's willing to work with Congress to repeal DOMA and when there's a growing opinion to recognize same-sex relationships in some way. In Massachusetts you have couples who have been married for several years and have

suffered enormously because of the lack of federal protection. In terms of the broader national fight, we are at a point where the repeal of DOMA is likely to happen.

As a candidate, President Obama promised many improvements for the LGBT community. What have you seen so far from the Obama administration? What do you hope to see? And are there any areas that concern you?

KK There's no doubt the Obama administration has their hands full. Between very pressing international issues and a collapsing economy, we have not had [LGBT] issues get the attention yet that is going to be necessary for either DOMA or Don't Ask Don't Tell to be repealed. And yet, the President has made public statements about Don't Ask Don't Tell, and his Web site and his staff have made similar statements about DOMA. I think they are signaling to us that it's time to work with Congress so that hopefully in the next year to 18 months, the administration can take some bold action on this front.

SM Nationally, we're beaten down after eight years of the Bush administration. We need a new mindset to take advantage of the new

(Continued on back cover)

Black History Month Celebrations

In honor of Black History Month, we hosted acclaimed journalist **Gwen Ifill** for an informal lunch and book signing on Feb. 26 in the Washington, D.C. office. Managing editor of *Washington Week* and senior correspondent of *The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer*, Ms. Ifill discussed her book *The Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama*, which details the obstacles faced by African-American politicians and includes her thoughts on Barack Obama’s presidential campaign and its importance in our nation’s history. In addition to more than 50 attendees in Washington, D.C., attorneys and staff from the New York office participated via videoconference.

Skadden held an essay contest for students from The Bronx Institute at Lehman College of the City University of New York. Funded by the United States Department of Education, the Bronx Institute provides enhanced educational opportunities to more than 5,000 low-income students.

The contestants were invited to the firm’s New York office for an ice cream social, where they discussed the essays they wrote describing the legislation they would introduce to Congress — if they were President Obama — to address a significant issue black communities face. First, second and third place winners of the essay contest were announced at the event.

Mock Settlements for Legal Outreach

This summer, Skadden hosted seven middle school students from Legal Outreach in a weeklong seminar that introduced them to the settlement process. Legal Outreach provides legal and educational programs as tools for developing skills and enhancing confidence for students from underserved communities in New York to help them matriculate at college and law schools.

The students were divided into two teams — representing the plaintiff and defendant — and were presented with a mock trademark infringement case. Each team met with its “client” to determine what the client hoped to achieve through the settlement and then discussed the best strategies for representation. Later in the week, the teams presented their sides to the partners in charge of the case before discussing the settlement with each other.

Sixth Annual Mock Trial Day Held

On May 8, Skadden’s New York office hosted 96 eighth graders from the Clinton School for Artists and Writers at P.S. 11 for their sixth-



Winning artwork from the Work & Family Art Contest is displayed in the New York Office

annual mock trial day. The three trials were the culmination of a year-long program taught by complex mass torts and insurance litigation counsel **Richard Bernardo**, staff attorney **Benjamin Suksonnil** and legal assistant **Jessica Jaffe** on behalf of the New York Civil Rights Coalition. The students tried a fictional case involving claims of racially based housing discrimination. Presiding was Skadden’s **Judge Bentley Kassal**.

Work & Family Art Contest

In recognition of National Work and Family Month in October, Skadden’s Work/Life Program held an art contest open to children (ages 3-11) related to firm personnel. Daughters, sons, nieces, nephews, siblings, grandchildren and extended relatives were encouraged to participate. Per the contest’s rules, the drawing or painting depicted the child’s vision of what his or her Skadden relative does at work each day. More than 40 entries were received and put on display in the firm’s New York cafeteria. After a difficult deliberation, a total of nine prizes were awarded to young family members of five attorneys and four staff members on Oct. 23.

Film Screening on Human Rights Abuses in North Korea

In July, Skadden’s Asian/Asian American attorney affinity group hosted a screening of *Yodok Stories*, a documentary about North Korean concentration camps, in the New York office. The executive director of the U.S.

Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, **Chuck Downs**, attended the event and also held a discussion about the movie, which was screened at the 2009 Tribeca Film Festival in New York.

Skadden Women Attorneys Network and Related Initiatives

SWAN’s European efforts (*see sidebar*) are echoed by similar initiatives in other firm offices. On Sept. 18, our Hong Kong office presented a new Skadden Women in Asia initiative, which addresses the challenges women face in Asian workplaces. Tokyo office leader and real estate partner **Audrey Sokoloff** and Hong Kong corporate partner **Julie Gao** co-hosted the event, which was held as an afternoon tea.

Skadden Is China’s ‘Employer of Choice’

The firm has been selected first among international law firms as “Employer of Choice for China 2009” in the *Asia Legal Business Survey* announced March 12. The survey is based on 20,000 questionnaires across the region, with 15 percent of those surveyed working in China. In addition to the opportunity to do challenging work and the reputation of the employer law firms, factors included work-life balance.

Legal Momentum Honors Skadden With Diversity Award

Legal Momentum, an organization working on behalf of women and girls, recognized Skadden and then-Executive Partner **Bob Sheehan**

Photo by Brian Fountain

with the Champion for Diversity Award at the organization's Equal Opportunity Awards dinner last November. Skadden was honored for its success in attracting, retaining and promoting women to partner and making the firm more family-friendly. Litigation partners **Harriet Posner** in Los Angeles and **Lauren Aguiar** in New York were particularly noted for their "extraordinary personal commitments" to Legal Momentum, which focuses on stopping violence against women and obtaining equal pay for equal work.

Toni Cook Bush Named to FCC Diversity Committee

In April, Washington, D.C. communications partner **Toni Cook Bush** was named to the Federal Communications Commission's advisory committee on diversity for communications in the digital age. The committee's mission is to make recommendations to the FCC regarding policies and practices that will further enhance the ability of minorities and women to participate in telecommunications and related industries.

Skadden Claims Second Lawyer's Cup Hockey Fundraiser Win

On March 5, the second-annual Lawyer's Cup fundraiser for Ice Hockey in Harlem (IHH) was held at Chelsea Piers Sky Rink, with Skadden's ice hockey team defending its championship title against Proskauer Rose. New York corporate restructuring partner **Greg Milmo**, the team leader, was among those who took to the rink. About 250 fans cheered the team, and NHL Commissioner **Gary Bettman** visited again this year to drop the puck. Skadden claimed a repeat victory with a 4-0 win, and the coveted Lawyer's Cup trophy remains at the firm for at least one more year.

Michael Lawson Named 'Attorney of the Year'

Los Angeles employee benefits and executive compensation partner **Michael Lawson** was honored as the "Attorney of the Year" by the John M. Langston Bar Association at a dinner in February. Michael was honored both for his busy, high-profile practice and his active role on the National Finance Committee for President Barack Obama. The John M. Langston Bar Association is the largest African-American bar association in Los Angeles. It provides a source of networks, support and mentorship for African-American attorneys. Each year,

the organization sponsors various workshops to address the needs of African-American attorneys and provides scholarships to qualified law students and bar grants for law school graduates.

Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta Speaks at Skadden Series for Women

Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, president of the International Center for Research for Women (ICRW) spoke at the firm as part of the Skadden Series for Women this past winter. Dr. Gupta has more than 20 years' experience in women's health and development issues. Corporate finance partner **Matt Mallow** introduced Dr. Gupta at the event. He mentioned that her presentation was "particularly timely, as her years of advocacy appear to be finding a more receptive set of ears in Washington." Dr. Gupta spoke to the audience on the importance of direct investment in women in developing countries. She has said, "When you invest in women, it benefits whole families and communities — the very people we intend to reach." Dr. Gupta has held numerous positions with ICRW and is frequently consulted on issues related to AIDS prevention and women's vulnerability to HIV.

Lunar New Year Tea Tasting

On Jan. 26, the New York office held a tea tasting to celebrate the Lunar New Year, which is typically observed in China, Korea, Vietnam and other Asian countries. The tasting was hosted by Skadden's Asian/Asian American Attorney Affinity Group, and more than 50 attorneys and staff attended the event. Specialists from the Radiance Tea House & Books were on hand to describe teas from Asia. They explained the various flavors and aromas of teas, as well as the different regions from which they originate. A demonstration was given on how to properly brew tea in order to create the best flavor for each variety. Teas were served by color, with green teas such as Sencha, which is known for its "fresh-cut grass flavor," separated from black teas, including the popular Darjeeling. The favorite tea of the afternoon was a lesser known variety called Lapsang Souchong, which has a smoky, barbecue-like aftertaste. The Radiance Tea House specialists passed out cards that fully described each tea, as well as its proper brewing technique, and offered Skadden employees discounts on their next in-store tea purchase.

SKADDEN WOMEN ATTORNEYS NETWORK

In 2008, a Frankfurt corporate associate decided it would be a good idea to create a networking circle for herself and the other female attorneys resident in Frankfurt. With no women partners in the office and only 20 percent of the attorneys being women, the group decided to build an informal support system where they could meet to discuss a wide variety of matters important to female attorneys.

They started having breakfast meetings every month to discuss subjects pertaining to their careers and also to provide a casual environment for them to meet with the office's other women lawyers. In April 2008, the Frankfurt associates contacted London M&A partner **Michal Berkner** about expanding the group to include female attorneys in other European offices and also about becoming the group's mentor. Michal agreed and helped develop the group into a pan-European network.

In October 2008, the group held its first event, a Sunday afternoon walk followed by lunch, along the Seven Sisters coastal path in East Sussex, England. On this trip, the women came up with the name of the group - the Skadden Women Attorneys Network (SWAN). Since then, the members of the group — women associates, counsel and partners in Europe — have met both in-person and through monthly conference calls to discuss a range of topics, including mentoring, maternity and parental policies, flex-time, pressures in the work environment and professional challenges. Along with networking and business-focused events throughout Europe, SWAN also organizes social activities to help attorneys from different offices get to know other as well as to interact with outside women business leaders. This year, the women decided to expand their initiatives to include a newsletter.

"**Bruce Buck** and the heads of each of the firm's European offices have been very supportive of our group," Michal says.

London international litigation and arbitration associate **Lucinda Orr** says SWAN has been helpful in business development. "Some of our events include bringing in female general counsels from outside the firm," Lucinda says. "So it's great to see what opportunities are out there and which serve as a useful business networking prospect." Lucinda also added that she's "been able to meet other female attorneys from different practices whom,

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I normally would not interact with, and we also get to see what the offices are doing,”

In May 2009, Michal organized a luncheon that included 12 female in-house counsel from some of the firms’ clients and included guests from Morgan Stanley, Warnaco Inc. and Gucci Group, among others. Forty-five women lawyers from Skadden attended the lunch, and London corporate restructuring partner **Lynn Hiestand** spoke on the challenges presented by the credit crunch.

In July, International Private Equity and M&A partner **Linda Davies** organized a dinner for the female attorneys in Moscow, following the arrival of Linda and corporate associate **Lisa Giroux** in the Moscow office. The event was arranged to help the women get to know each other and also discuss various topics that affect women at Skadden. They plan to hold these dinners on a regular basis.



Ingrid Vandenborre | Partner | Brussels

Finally, in October, the Brussels office and European Union and International Competition partner **Ingrid Vandenborre** hosted the office’s first SWAN executive luncheon. Ingrid discussed recent developments in competition law. The guest speaker, **Diana Vanbrabant**, an executive coaching and communications expert, gave a presentation on the art of communication and persuasion techniques for women in business.

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LGBT Panel Discusses Gay Rights in the U.S.

As part of the Facets Lecture Series, Skadden, along with J.P. Morgan, hosted a panel discussion July 9 in celebration of Gay Pride Month. The panelists, **Rea Carey**, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; **Matt Coles**, director of the American Civil Liberties Union’s Gay Bisexual and Transgender and AIDS Project; and **Tobias Barrington Wolff**, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, discussed the current status of gay rights in the United States and fielded questions from the audience.

The trio shared their insights into current issues, such as same-sex marriage litigation and the potential repeal of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell, and evaluated the early efforts of the Obama administration on gay rights initiatives. They also discussed the balance between pushing for equality through litigation versus legislation and highlighted less high-profile issues of importance to the LGBT community, such as immigration and health care. ■

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administration, and it’s taking a little time to apply that. Obama can use the bully pulpit of the presidency to encourage respect of LGBT people, and we should push him relentlessly. I wouldn’t impose any artificial timetable, but we cannot be too aggressive. We’ve fallen behind our fellow democracies in the world in offering basic protections to LGBT people.

‘[The U.S.] has fallen behind fellow democracies in offering basic protections to LGBT people.’

KK We have been doing more on the federal level to help with the passage of hate crimes legislation and ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act). We will be part of the effort to repeal DOMA and Don’t Ask Don’t Tell. We will see something of a shift from litigation to policy advocacy, which always happens with a friendlier administration. We want to take advantage of the opportunity we may have to move things forward without resorting to litigation. We could see significant changes for LGBT folks no matter where they live because we have seen movement on the federal level.

Marriage equality has received the most media attention, but it’s only one of many issues an organization like NCLR handles. Can you talk about some of the work that’s being done by NCLR in other areas?

SM We have a number of family law cases across the country, including a recent victory where Florida will honor the full-faith and credit clause to respect adoptions from other

states, and whether many states will recognize rights for nonbiological same-sex parents.

KK In immigration, we have handled more than a dozen asylum cases for lesbians, gays and transgender persons from South America, Africa and Eastern Europe and we won every case. In some, we are talking about people who would not survive if they were sent back home. The juvenile justice system has enormous challenges, and LGBT needs are not being adequately addressed. We have worked with the Juvenile Justice Defenders Association to publish guidelines and make visible the presence of LGBT youth in the juvenile and foster system.

In sports, we have changed the landscape, working with the NCAA to have recognition of the issue of homophobia, recognition that scholarships are denied, that transgender people exist and have issues that aren’t being addressed. Nothing would be more transforming than for us to be able to name four or five openly gay athletes in pro sports. For us not to be able to name a single gay man — it’s not that he doesn’t exist, he can’t be out. That’s why we do the sports work.

SM One thing I love about NCLR, we’re very flexible but also very proactive about laying a foundation for issues that are coming, and developing programs early on. We’ve had our immigration program in place for 15 years. We have a youth project, an elder law project. We’re very proactive on transgender issues. One of the areas where we need a lot of support is for transgender-inclusive legislation. The right-wing has really put transgender people in their sights to try to stop legislation, and people should be aware of that. In addition to relationship-recognition, we need to encourage the support and inclusion of transgender people. ■