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# MARSHALL'S LAW

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## President's Corner

*Third Year Reflection*

**Tamara Walker '00**

*BLSA President*

As both my tenure as President and my law school career quickly draw to a close, I am reflective on what BLSA has meant to me in terms of my Notre Dame experience. Thinking back, I remember that part of the reason that I chose Notre Dame was the sense of "family" that seemed to exist between the BLSA members I met when I visited the school. When law school started, I quickly realized the importance of BLSA as a support mechanism and as an organization that was committed to addressing my needs as a student. But as the school year wore on, it became apparent to me that the true strength of BLSA, like with any effective "family," is that our commitment to this organization is more important than any individual conflicts that may arise between members.

This year, I was very fortunate to have a hard working and devoted membership that consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to this organization, regardless of any challenges to that commitment. We have accomplished a tremendous amount this year and we are still working towards making the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual BLSA Alumni Weekend a success. This

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## Impacting the Community

*Updates on BLSA's New Community Service Programs*

**Alison Howard '02**

*Community Outreach Chair*

As well as sponsoring speakers, preparing for BLSA weekend, and luring prospective law students, the Black Law Students' Association reaches out to the community. This year, we have several activities taking place or in the planning stages. Two of those activities include tutoring for the Triple "A" Educational Program and bowling for the Big Brothers Big Sisters Organization.

BLSA students currently interact with the South Bend community by tutoring for the Triple "A" Educational Program. This program, directed by Rosalind M. Ellison and coordinated by Mark Steinmetz, was designed to help kids living in shelters develop better academic and social skills. Every Monday through Thursday evening at 6 p.m., a bus picks up children from the various homeless centers and battered women's shelter and brings them to the Jefferson Elementary School on Eddy Street. Tutors hailing from high schools around South Bend and from the University of Notre Dame await the kid's arrival. The kids and tutors pair off and spend the first half an hour of the evening on an academic pursuit. A tutor will either help the child with homework, listen to the child read a book, test math skills with flashcards, or spend time aiding with some other academically stimulating activity. The next half an hour is devoted to a social activity. On Wednesdays, a speaker visits the kids to talk about socially relevant issues like self-respect, tolerance of others, crime, drugs, and responsibility. One evening, a veteran police officer spoke about responsibility and self-respect and then wowed the kids with his badge, which he passed around. On every other day, tutors spend the social half-hour playing boardgames with the kids. The final fifteen minutes of the

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year's theme of ***Self Help: Empowering Ourselves With a New Attitude*** is particularly appropriate given the fact that one of my goals as President was to work with the administration to increase recruitment efforts and enrollment of African-American students.

Towards that end, at the beginning of the academic year, we approached the administration about providing for the travel expenses and accommodations for accepted black students for a visit to our campus during BLSA Weekend. Initially, the administration agreed to our proposal and while the administration remains supportive of the idea as an excellent way to increase enrollment, to date, the administration has not provided the funding necessary to make this goal a reality.

With BLSA Weekend less than a month away, I am reminded that inclusion in the BLSA "family" does not end upon graduation. As alumni, you are in a unique position to address the administration about the lack of African Americans at this school and I encourage you to do so. The Master of Business program as well as the college portions of Notre Dame invite accepted African American students to our campus for the weekend in an attempt to increase minority enrollment and both programs have been quite successful. We are simply asking the law school administration to use some of the same recruitment tools used by other departments within this University.

## HISPANIC LAW STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION PLAN ALUMNI SYMPOSIUM

**Qiana Lillard '01**

**BLSA Secretary**

The First Annual Alumni Symposium for HLSA Alumni will be held in conjunction with the presentation of the Graciela Olivarez Award (in honor of the first female and Latina to attend Notre Dame Law School). Similar to BLSA weekend **The HLSA Alumni Symposium** will be an opportunity for alumni to return to their Notre Dame and relive memories of the NDLS experience. In addition, alumni will have the opportunity to earn CLE credit s by attending the two seminars offered during the weekend.

The first seminar, on Criminal Law, will be presented by Professor and former Academic Dean Jimmy Gurulé. He will be discussing *Miranda* warnings in light of the Supreme Court's recent granting of certiorari to United States v. Dickerson from the Fourth Circuit.

The Second seminar, on Law and Ethics, will be presented by Peter J. Agostino who is a Notre Dame Law School alumnus and partner at the firm of Hunt Suedhoff, LLP in South Bend. Mr. Agostino will address contemporary ethical issues and will provide insight beyond the Model Rules of Professional Conduct.

The weekend will conclude with the award to this year's recipient of the Olivarez Award. This year's nomination has not yet been confirmed. However, past recipients have included federal appellate judges, trial lawyers, and other prominent members of the legal community.

The dates of the Symposium are March 31<sup>st</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>. HLSA is very excited about this upcoming event and HLSA President Felipe Merino says, "Please feel free to join us for any or all of our activities. Our alumni would love to meet current students". If you have any further questions, please contact Felipe Merino, HLSA President at (219) 232-8783 or at [merino.1@nd.edu](mailto:merino.1@nd.edu).

## BUILDING COMMUNITY BEYOND THE GOLDEN DOME

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Continuing a long-standing tradition, BLSA again showed its commitment to building community *beyond the Golden Dome*. On December 18, 1999 members of BLSA participated in its **Annual Christmas Project**.

Each year BLSA sponsors deserving African-American families in the greater South Bend area and provides monetary and/or material gifts to minimize financial strain and to exhibit the "spirit of giving" during the Holiday season. This year, BLSA provided two families, one consisting of five members including four children and the other consisting of nine members including seven children, with a combination of both. BLSA members presented each family with a single cash gift and each family member with a shopping mall gift certificate.

BLSA members left the confines of the law school and delivered the gifts to each family in its home. Both families were pleased to be a part of BLSA's efforts to interact with its extended community and to foster its commitment to serving African Americans *beyond the Golden Dome*.

evening are spent winding down with a snack. Kids participate in the Triple "A" Educational Program for as long as they remain at a shelter, which may be anywhere from a day to months or longer. They gain valuable academic and social skills. And, the tutors gain an invaluable interactive experience.

BLSA members are also presently planning to participate in the Bowl For Kids Sake event sponsored by the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest and largest provider of youth mentoring services in the United States. The organization hopes that having a mentor will help kids avoid drug and alcohol abuse, perform better in school, and develop better social skills. Bowl For Kids' Sake was designed to help match kids with a volunteer mentor by raising money for the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. The event requires five people to form a bowling team and to gather pledge money from sponsors. All of the proceeds go to the local Big Brother Big Sister agency to help match local youths with mentors. Individuals and teams have a chance at winning various prizes for raising certain amounts of money. The bowler with the highest pledge amount over \$500 receives a 32-inch screen television. Other prizes include restaurant gift certificates, tickets to a Silver Hawks game, and t-shirts. The Bowl For Kids' Sake event will take place at Beacon Bowl on Saturday, April 15 or Sunday, April 16. BLSA will form one or two bowling teams. Future BLSA community outreach activities may include volunteering in a soup kitchen at a local church or sponsoring a buffet for the Center for the Homeless



