

CABA BRIEFS

CUBAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2003



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Board of Directors

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



For over 25 years, the Cuban American Bar Association has been the primary voice for the growing number of Cuban-American and Hispanic attorneys in this community.

Founded by pioneer Cuban-American lawyers who felt shut out of the existing legal establishment, CABA gave voice to their concerns regarding overt forms of discrimination against minority lawyers and provided a much needed forum for business networking and mutual support among the early pioneers of the Cuban-American legal community.

As the influence of Cuban-Americans in this community and nationally grew, so did CABA. Today, CABA is one of the most important and well respected voices for the Cuban American community both locally and nationally. With over 1500 members, CABA is also one of the strongest and fastest growing voluntary bar associations in this State.

CABA's success is a product of the clarity and effectiveness of our advocacy. This organization has a clear point of view cultivated by consensus which we will continue to pursue vigorously.

First and foremost, CABA stands for diversity in our profession. We will not tolerate and will fight to abolish any barriers to the full, fair and complete integration of the legal profession. And we will leave no one behind. CABA has and will continue to use our clout to promote not just qualified Cuban-Americans and Hispanic lawyers, but also women and African-American lawyers to positions of authority at all levels of the legal profession.

In this respect, CABA has been most vocal in calling and fighting for a diverse judiciary. In the past few years, CABA has achieved some of our long stated diversity goals. CABA members have been named to nearly a dozen new circuit and county judgeships; two lifetime federal court appointments, to the position of U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida; to our State's intermediate Courts of Appeal and, to the Florida Supreme Court. And you ain't seen nothing yet. CABA will not rest until the composition of our local judiciary closely parallels the diverse, ethnic, racial and gender make-up of our community.

CABA also will continue to rigorously defend the right of every citizen of this State to participate in the selection of our state court judiciary through direct judicial elections. While other

bar groups have given up on democracy and are advocating for various forms of elitist judicial screening and selection, CABA remains at the forefront of reforming the judicial election process through landmark campaign finance reform and better voter education. While others stand on the sidelines bemoaning the flaws of the current system, CABA will lead, continuing to set the agenda for judicial selection and election reform in this State.

In this respect, we will continue to recognize those individuals and organization and elected officials who support our mission and objectives. We have many powerful friends who have helped propel us to the forefront on issues of judicial selection and diversity. CABA will and must do a better job of acknowledging these allies and enlisting them in our on-going efforts.

With our growing influence also comes increased responsibility. We must strengthen and expand the CABA pro bono project—which offers free legal assistance in Spanish to thousands of needy persons. Our scholarship programs now established at three area law schools must be fully endowed and expanded. Our bi-monthly seminar program and quarterly newsletter should be institutionalized and made as relevant and interesting to our members as is possible.

Most importantly, we must continue to be the primary forum for promoting interaction and friendship between Cuban-American and Hispanic attorneys and anyone else interested in supporting our needs and concerns.

Finally, let us never forget that some day soon, CABA may also be called upon to restore the rule of law in a free Cuba. We must prepare ourselves and our community for this day. And we must never forget that helping to realize the exile dream of a free and democratic Cuba is also part of CABA's mission.

CABA members and friends, you should be very proud of what we have together accomplished. SOMOS CABA y CABA SEGUIRA TRIUNFANDO.

Victor Diaz, Esq



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By Elizabeth M. Hernandez

We are pleased to bring you the first issue of the 2003 Newsletter. CABA has accomplished many important objectives over the years. This year promises to be no different.

CABA has grown tremendously in size and influence in the community. With this growth comes new responsibilities and challenges as we strive to represent the interests of a diverse membership while effectuating the changes necessary to ensure that the Hispanic community is appropriately represented in positions of leadership in all branches of government.

CABA hopes to keep the membership informed about the organization's accomplishments and to communicate information about other matters of interest to lawyers, judges, legislators and professionals. This publication is made possible through the great generosity of distinguished members, law firms and institutions which include advertisements in our issues. We thank all our readers for their continued support and express our sincerest gratitude to the sponsors who make this publication possible.

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*KT&T congratulates our partner, Cori Lopez-Castro,
and all of the newly-elected CABA Board members recognized at the
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*Our firm supports CABA's efforts in the community,
and we look forward to another productive year of working with CABA.*

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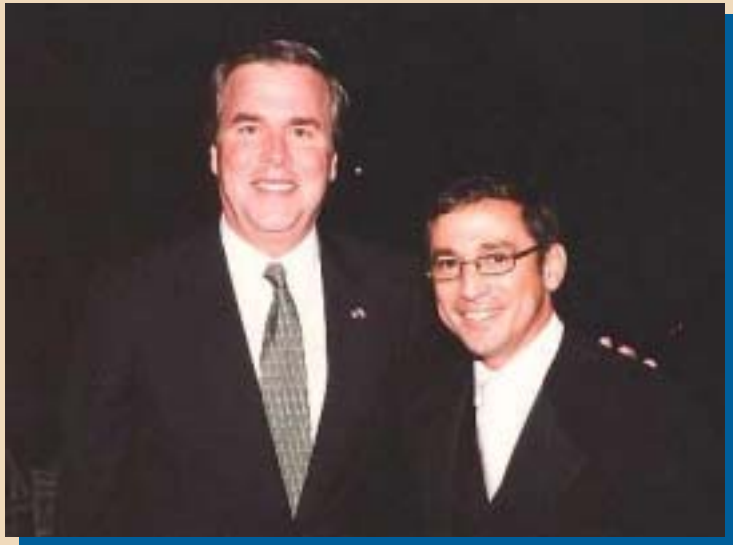
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ANNUAL INSTALLATION DINNER



This year's installation dinner included a historical perspective and library on the growth of the *Cuban American Bar Association*. We are fortunate to have many members willing to contribute to the collaboration and production of a wonderful videotape documenting the growth of the organization. In addition, the many sponsors and contributors made the evening a success.

CABA Thanks:

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and more pictures of the event!



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2003





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SURVEY

I. PROFESSIONAL/PERSONAL INFORMATION

A. What is your age?

20-30 _____ 51-60 _____
31-40 _____ 60 + _____
41-50 _____

B. How many years have you been practicing?

1-5 _____ 16-20 _____
6-10 _____ 21 + _____
11-15 _____

C. Are you:

Male _____ Female _____

D. What is your ethnic orientation?

1. Hispanic _____
2. White/Non-Hispanic _____
3. Black/Non-Hispanic _____
4. Other _____

E. Where do you practice?

Government Employment _____
Private Practice _____

F. What areas of practice do you perform in?

G. Are you board-certified?

Yes _____
No _____

H. If not, do you ever intend to become board-certified?

Yes _____
No _____

I. Do you have internet access at work?

Yes _____

No _____

J. How many attorneys are there in your firm?

1 _____ 10-20 _____

2-5 _____ 20-50 _____

6-10 _____ 50 + _____

II. CLE AND MEMBER SERVICES

A. Have you ever attended any of the following programs and, if so, how would you rate them?

1. Annual Trips

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

2. Luncheons

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

3. CLE's

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

4. Networking Opportunities and Receptions

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

5. Judicial Luncheons and Judicial Survey

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

B. What other areas or topics or events would you like to see covered?

C. Would you be willing to speak on a topic?

D. If yes, which one(s)?

III. PUBLICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

A. Do you read or use any of the following and how would you rate them?

1. Web-page

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

2. Newsletter

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

3. E-mail Distributor

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

B. Do you have any ideas for articles or information you would like to see addressed? How would you like to see it enhanced?

1. Web-page _____

2. News-letter _____

3. E-mail Distributor _____

C. Please rate the Annual/Election meeting

Yes _____

No _____

Outstanding _____

Very Good _____

Good _____

Does not meet my needs _____

S

U

R

D. Please rate the CABA Pro Bono Project.

Yes _____ Outstanding _____
No _____ Very Good _____
Good _____
Does not meet my needs _____

Are you willing to contribute or volunteer?

Yes _____
No _____

E. What suggestions do you have for a new or improved member services?

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

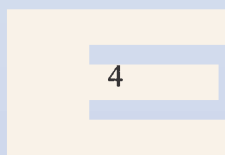
A. How would you rate the Installation Dinner? _____

B. How would you improve the Installation Dinner? _____

C. Do you believe that CABA adequately represents your interests? Please explain your answer- _____

D. Do you believe that the efforts of CABA advance “diversity” on the bench? Please –explain your answer- _____

E. Do you believe that CABA should have a voting seat on the Florida Bar Board of Governors? Please explain your answer- _____





Congratulations C.A.B.A.!

Mellon salutes the Cuban American Bar Association, its new President, Victor M. Diaz Jr., and the 2003 Board of Directors. We are very proud of our long-standing and valued relationship with C.A.B.A., and we were honored to have been the presenting sponsor of the Annual Installation Dinner at the Key Biscayne Ritz-Carlton.



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¡ Que siga la tradición !

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