



## Message from the President



Dear Members,

HLAI participated in the attorney admission ceremony on Thursday, November 4th. The ceremony took place at McCormick Place West. HLA I congratulates all the newly admitted attorneys.

The end of the year is just around the corner. HLA I would like to remind you to renew your dues. Please encourage your friends and colleagues to join HLA I.

HLAI is hosting a Holiday Party on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. HLA I will also have its annual food drive on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Please consider joining us in these activities, your presence will make these events a success.

If you have any programs you would like to see HLA I offer. Please contact me at [rosasilva73@hotmail.com](mailto:rosasilva73@hotmail.com)

The Board looks forward to working with our membership.

Saludos,

Rosa Maria Silva

## Announcements

Congratulations to **Claudia Castro** who will be teaching three night classes at Maccormac College in their paralegal program.



"No matter what the obstacle – whether it's financial, immigration or something else – you can do it," she said. "If you really work hard, you can get what you want."

Claudia Castro is currently a Cook County Assistant State's Attorney, she currently is assigned to the Child Protection Division. Claudia is currently on the Board of HLA I and the National Hispanic Prosecutors Association. Last Year Claudia was featured in the Thomas L. Cooley Law School Magazine Benchmark. The Article was entitled ***Overcoming Life's Obstacles***. Below is an excerpt of the article which is truly inspirational.

Claudia Castro is living out her childhood dream of practicing law despite numerous obstacles and challenges along the way. The oldest of four children of divorced parents, Castro learned to grow up quickly in her Chicago area neighborhood. At 17, she became pregnant. Yet, to the surprise of her family and friends, the potential setback only made her more determined to explore career options beyond high school.

"I still had aspirations of doing something with my life when others wanted to write me off," she said. "I had seen others drop out (with a pregnancy), but I had always wanted to go to college."

Castro yearned for role models representing her educational and career aspiration. She soon found a full-time position at a Chicago area law firm working as a mail/file clerk and receptionist. With the support of her family, Castro began attending community college in the evenings while maintaining a full-time job during the day. "I didn't have a fresh mind; I was always exhausted," she recalls. Castro eventually earned an associates degree in paralegal studies, but the experience only whet her appetite to continue a legal education.

In 1998 she applied and was accepted to Loyola University Chicago. For the next three years, Castro continued a near burnt-out pace as an administrative assistant with the Cook County's State's Attorney's Office and evening college classes. While Castro's work environment served up the surrogate family of educational and career role models she had been seeking, her grueling schedule left little time to spend with her daughter, Krystyna.



"I had to be everything, the mom and the breadwinner while I tried to make a better life for us," she said. Castro clung to each and every moment she could have with Krystyna.

She persevered and graduated from Loyola in 2002, earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. The hectic schedule did not deter Castro's quest to reach her ultimate goal of attending law school. "[I thought] I've gone this far; I can go further," she said. That's when she learned of the Thomas M. Cooley Law School, one of the only law schools in the country to offer flexible weekend and evening studies.

It was a perfect fit for Castro, despite the extraordinary commitment she would make for the next three years, including the 400+-mile round-trip commutes from her Chicago home to Lansing each weekend. "There were so many times that I would pull over to the side of the road and cry," she said.

With her family at her side, Castro proudly graduated from Cooley in January 2007. Her long-time employer, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, offered her an assistant state's attorney position with its First Municipal Division handling misdemeanor cases. Approximately 18 months later, Castro was promoted to a position with the Mental Health court. Most recently, she has been assigned to the Child Protection Division/Abuse and Neglect unit, where she serves today. In addition to her legal duties, Castro volunteers as a crisis line advocate for Sarah's Inn, a Chicago-area domestic violence center.

Reflecting on her challenging journey, Castro admits the difficulties she encountered have made her professional success all the more rewarding. "I am doing what I want to do and am so happy doing it," she said. "My family is very proud of me." Castro's daughter, Krystyna, now 18 and a college student, is also beginning to comprehend her mother's resilience. Krystyna has also learned some invaluable personal lessons, including the magnitude of her mother's determination. "I didn't realize I had it in me," Castro said. "I am stronger than I thought I was." Looking ahead, Castro would like to devote more time to mentoring minority attorneys as well as encouraging youth within the Hispanic community to pursue a college education.

Congratulations to **Mildred Herrera, Edmundo Cuevas, Hugo Ortiz, Nubia Willman, Erika Tovar, Nate Hernandez, Michael Roman, Andrea Belard, Leonardo Morales, Emiliano Perez, Yacoub Meah, Alexa Cubas, Erin Bybee, Alexandra Martinez, Yvette Lopez, Olivia Villegas, Maria Bocanegra, Cynthia Lopez, Carlos Ocampo Torres, Rocio Alcantar, Pedro Israel Fernandez, Sally Valazquez & Lydia Colunga-Merchant** for being admitted to practice law in the State of Illinois.

**Rosa Maria Silva**, an Assistant Public Defender was quoted in the Chicago Sun-Times on a jury trial she worked on. [http://www.suntimes.com/news/24-7/2876250.teague-trial-hendricks-slaying-110810.article#Comments\\_Container](http://www.suntimes.com/news/24-7/2876250.teague-trial-hendricks-slaying-110810.article#Comments_Container)

**\*\*\*HLAI invites notices of member's achievements. Please submit them to Claudia Castro at [cecklc2003@yahoo.com](mailto:cecklc2003@yahoo.com)\*\*\***

## November Overview

HLAI participated in the attorney admission ceremony on Thursday, November 4th. The ceremony took place at McCormick Place West. HLAI congratulates all newly admitted attorneys

## Upcoming Events/Save the Dates! December Events

Please join us for our annual Food Drive on **18 DEC 2010**. We need volunteers for one or both phases outlined below.

### **PHASE 1: Aldi Foods - 1767 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622**

We will meet at 8:30 am at the Aldi Food store located at 1767 North Milwaukee Ave. Coffee and donuts will be served. We will then purchase food items and load them into the vans and trucks for transportation to the St. Aloysius food pantry located at 1406 W. Washtenaw.

### **PHASE 2: St. Aloysius Food Pantry - 1406 N. Washtenaw, Chicago, IL 60622**

Once food items are delivered, at approximately 9:30 am, from Aldi Foods help will be needed to carry the food into the pantry. The food items will be unloaded and packed into the food pantry where the food basket will then be assembled.

If you would like to participate all you need to do is show up and look for the crowd. If you have any questions please call David Herrera at (773) 490-4848 [dcherrera@hotmail.com](mailto:dcherrera@hotmail.com) or Rosa Maria Silva (312) 399-1142 [rosasilva73@hotmail.com](mailto:rosasilva73@hotmail.com). All and any help is welcome. Additional food items and/or cash donations for additional food purchases are welcome.



Latino Professionals  
Holiday Mixer

Thursday, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>  
6pm – 9pm

@ Excalibur  
632 N. Dearborn

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**\$10**  
Members of any of the Sponsoring Organizations: ALPFA, HACE, HLAI, NSH MBA, NHSN, PRBA, SHPE

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**\$20**  
Non-Members

CLICK ON FLIER TO RSVP

*Portion of Proceeds to benefit First Book*

First Book provides new books to children in need, addressing one of the most important factors affecting literacy – access to books. Part of event proceeds will be donated to First Book.

[www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org)

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*Fundraising Raffle to Take Place!*

**The Latino/a Law Student Association at the University of Illinois** will hold a networking reception for its Latino/a Scholarship Initiative on January 12, 2011 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at The Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd, in Chicago. Tickets to the reception are \$50 and may be reserved by sending a check, made payable to “U of I/LLSA” by January 5th, 2011 to Latino/a Law Student Organization, c/o College of Law, 504 E. Pennsylvania, Champaign, IL, 61820. If you are unable to attend and/or would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the scholarship fund, please do so by mailing a check to LLSA, made payable to the University of Illinois Foundation (or UIF) and make a note in the memo line: “LLSA Scholarship”. Suggested sponsorship levels are below, but any contribution is greatly appreciated!

- Platinum - \$2,000
- Gold - \$1,000
- Silver - \$500
- Bronze - \$250

For more information, please contact Norma Manjarrez, LLSA Scholarship Chair at [manjarr2@law.illinois.edu](mailto:manjarr2@law.illinois.edu) or Jason Han, LLSA 1L Representative at [jchan19@law.illinois.edu](mailto:jchan19@law.illinois.edu)

**HLAI Law School Committee** is planning an inter-LLSA event to honor Latino Law School Professors. Details to follow.

## Volunteer/Misc. Opportunities



NIJC is in need of pro bono attorneys if you are interested please visit their website for opportunities.  
<http://www.immigrantjustice.org/>

The **Junior Leadership Council's newly-merged Advocacy and Mentorship Committee** will host a "Know Your Rights" visit to the Kenosha Detention Facility on Friday, December 10. We are seeking volunteers to conduct intake interviews with detainees to determine the circumstances surrounding their detention and assess whether any potential claims may exist. This event provides a valuable opportunity for volunteers to have a first-hand view of detention facilities in the Midwest, while helping the NIJC to identify individuals who may need pro bono representation.

Volunteers do not have to have a law degree, but a background in the law is helpful. **Volunteers who are competent in foreign languages, especially Spanish, are strongly encouraged to attend.**

The NIJC will provide a short training session for volunteers on Friday, December 3, at noon, in Chicago.

HLAI will have its Holiday Party on December 2, 2010. The cost for members is 10.00 and this will include appetizers and a cash bar. Non- members is 20.00. Please sign up--follow the link below.

<http://www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaaid=212476>.

### An Illinois Judges Foundation Reception Honoring the Newest Member of the Illinois Supreme Court

Justice Mary Jane Theis  
Thursday, December 2, 2010 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Allegro Hotel  
171 West Randolph Street  
Walnut Room

\$75 per person in advance, \$100 at the door  
Register Online  
or  
by PHONE: (312) 554-2008  
or EMAIL: [jif@chicagobar.org](mailto:jif@chicagobar.org)

## January Events

**HLAI Charities**, will be hosting a Noche de Risas fundraiser at the Chicago Center of Performing Arts. Details to follow.



If you are able to attend, please sign up by emailing [karabruce@gmail.com](mailto:karabruce@gmail.com). Please indicate when you respond whether (a) you would need a ride, (b) you would be willing to drive others, and (c) if you have any foreign-language skills.



Would you like to connect with other Latina lawyers/law students? If yes please contact the Latina Lawyers Committee at [latina.lawyers@yahoo.com](mailto:latina.lawyers@yahoo.com)

## Employment Opportunities

**The Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender is accepting applications for Assistant Public Defender I, 00061208** Job Posting, Oct 4, 2010, Closing Date Dec 27, 2010 Posting Salary: 1,886.08, bi-weekly. Job Description: Under supervision, functions as an attorney performing beginning level legal work and related tasks, as assigned, in representing clients and matters accepted by or assigned to the Public Defender; participates in and assumes progressively increasing responsibility for cases and matters of minor to moderate difficulty and complexity, particularly with respect to appeals, misdemeanors, delinquency petitions, abuse and neglect cases, habeas corpus, preliminary hearings and minor felonies; assumes responsibility in the various divisions, including Legal Resources, Municipal, Juvenile and Civil.

### Minimum Qualifications:

Graduation from an accredited law school.  
Must be admitted to practice law in Illinois within **six (6) months** of application filing.  
No previous experience as a practicing attorney is required, but prior experience in criminal or juvenile law is preferred

### Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Other Characteristics:

Must be able to clearly, logically and effectively express verbal and written thoughts and opinions and possess a thorough and accurate knowledge of basic legal principles, concepts and vernacular. Ability to effectively communicate and interact with diverse cultures and low income persons in consultations, interviews and investigations. Ability to probe into sensitive social issues involving family, (i.e. sexual abuse, child abuse, substance abuse and domestic violence). Ability to conduct excellent trial advocacy work, interviews and investigations. Ability to consult with social workers, probation officers, medical experts, legal associates and others to assess the options available to the defense and to advise clients of the same.

To apply please go to <https://cookcountyil.taleo.net/careersection/100/unavailable requisition.ftl>

You will need to click return to homepage and then enter a search for public defender.

**Interpreters /Translators for CPS law dept.** \$14.00 hr.  
The Chicago Board of Education Law Department is seeking part time Clerks to serve as Spanish to English/English to Spanish translators during statutorily mandated student expulsion hearings. This individual must be able to speak formal English and Spanish fluently, with an understanding and ability to translate legal terms. The individual will be working directly under the supervision of Board attorneys, and will be assigned additional administrative or clerical duties as needed. The ideal candidate will be available from Monday thru Friday from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Candidates must be flexible with their time, possess a professional demeanor, and must be prompt. Candidates will also be expected to translate written documents as well. The position pays \$14/hr. All applicants will be subject to a criminal background check, confidentiality agreements, and drug testing.\* Interested candidates can submit their resume and cover letter to: Assistant General Counsel Luis Rodriguez\* at: [larodriguez6@cps.k12.il.us](mailto:larodriguez6@cps.k12.il.us)

### **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation**

Announcement Number: 2010-HQD-2080  
Vacancy Description: Equal Employment Specialist, CG-0260-12  
Open Period: 11/22/2010 - 12/07/2010  
Series/Grade: CG-0260-12  
Salary: \$79,047.00 TO \$127,314.00  
Promotion Potential: CG-12  
Duty Locations: 1 vacancy in Arlington, VA  
For more information, Contact: Alphonso R. Danner, 703-562-2652 [aldanner@fdic.gov](mailto:aldanner@fdic.gov)

Additional Information Who May Apply: All US Citizens  
Applicants with federal status should apply to the "Public Status Positions" announcement 2010-HQ-2334 for this same vacancy. Merit Promotion referrals will not include applicants to this announcement.

### Job Summary:

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is one of the most respected forces in America's financial community. Our mission is to maintain stability of and public confidence in the nation's financial system by insuring deposits, examining and supervising financial institutions, and managing receiverships.

FDIC ranks first among federal employers for pay, benefits, and a family-friendly work culture.

This position is located in the Office of Diversity and Economic Opportunity, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and provides support in the areas of Special Programs Branch, Affirmation Employment Section. For more information please go to

[http://www.fdic.gov/about/jobs/jobs\\_ctap\\_ictap.html](http://www.fdic.gov/about/jobs/jobs_ctap_ictap.html)



## Scholarship/Student Opportunities

The U.S. Department of State is now accepting applications for the **2011 Summer Clerical Program**. Please click here (<http://careers.state.gov/students/programs.html#SCP>) to read about the program's eligibility requirements and to start the Gateway to State online application.

**The deadline to submit completed applications is January 03, 2011.**

Applicants must be a U.S. citizen aged 16 or older at time of appointment and a currently enrolled student. Please read the entire vacancy announcement for all qualifications and requirements.

We appreciate your interest in a career with the U.S. Department of State.

## Membership Benefits

**HLAI is participating in the American Airlines Business ExtrAA Travel Awards Program** to earn travel rewards for travel to the HNBE Conference and other professional events as designated by the board.

By designating HLA I as your business, **YOU and HLA I, BOTH, can earn travel rewards toward future travel. Please include HLA I during your summer air travel on AA!!**

**Business Name:** HLA I Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois

**Business ExtrAA Account Number:** 787505

To earn Business ExtrAA travel rewards, all you need to do is ensure the HLA I Business ExtrAA account number appears on all your tickets with American Airlines, American Eagle® or AmericanConnection®.