



People, Perspectives and Press

A Diversity Committee Quarterly Publication | Winter 2010

Alumni Spotlight: Aravind Swaminathan

Now a criminal prosecutor in his role as Assistant United States Attorney, Aravind Swaminathan discusses the impact of his work, his evolution into his current position, and the mentors at WilmerHale he credits with helping him get to where he is today. [Read More...](#)

Lessons in Leadership

By [Melanie Goins](#)

Boston Associate [Melanie Goins](#) shares the new perspectives she gained about leadership development, and herself, during her year in The Partnership Fellows program. [Read More...](#)

News and Highlights

Conference Update and Committee Event

Safe from impending blizzards and white-out conditions, the Northern California Chapter of the [Iranian American Bar Association](#) hosted its Third Annual Dinner in Palo Alto. Back on the East Coast, DC Senior Associate [Caroline Nguyen](#) and Co-Managing Partner [Bill Lee](#) served as panelists at the 21st annual [NAPABA](#) convention. [Read More...](#)

Our New Diversity Co-Chair

We are happy to announce that [Andre Owens](#) is the new co-chair of the DC Diversity Committee with [Ron Machen](#)'s appointment as the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia. Andre joins [Yoon-Young Lee](#) in leading this Committee in the Washington office. [Read More...](#)

Hispanic Bar Association Award

WilmerHale can now add one more accolade to what has become an impressive [collection of honors](#) related to its diversity programs and policies. [Read More...](#)

Talent Diversity Function

WilmerHale's commitment to diversity continues and is in part reflected in the firm's investment in a director level position within the new Talent department. Kenneth Imo, Director, Talent Diversity will lead the team in its support of our firm-wide diversity initiatives and those of our local Diversity Committees for both lawyers and staff. [Read More...](#)

Meet Our New Faces

Please join us in extending a very warm WilmerHale welcome to the new associates who recently joined us. [Read More...](#)

For more information, visit the [Diversity Committee](#) on WHweb.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[View Full Event List...](#)

March 4; New York, NY

New York Diversity Committee Associates [Imran Javaid](#), [Drew Kovacs](#) and [Emily Meyers](#) will be meeting with leaders of minority student organizations at NYU to discuss what minority students look for when choosing a law firm. [Read More...](#)

March 11; New York, NY

New York Securities Counsel [Pedro Medrano](#) is hosting a cocktail reception to welcome new diverse associates to the firm. [Read More...](#)

March 17; New York, NY

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation is hosting its Sixth Annual Workplace Equality Awards and Reception to honor businesses that have excelled in LGBT inclusion in the workplace in 2010. [Read More...](#)

March 23; Boston, MA

The Boston Lawyers Group will host a Kick-Off Reception for its Mentoring Program at Goodwin Proctor from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. [Read More...](#)

March 24; Washington, DC

The DC Diversity Committee is hosting a panel discussion and reception for Diversity Committee members, new associates and local diverse law students. [Read More...](#)

March 24; Washington, DC

The George Washington University Law School (GW) Chapter of Lambda Law will be hosting its Fourth Annual GLBT and Affiliated Law Student Networking Reception. [Read More...](#)

April 2-3; Boston, MA

Harvard LAMBDA is currently planning its 5th Annual Harvard Lambda Legal Advocacy (HaLLA) Conference. [Read More...](#)

April 15; Boston, MA

The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition is hosting a cocktail party in support of a worthy cause. [Read More...](#)

Spring: All Offices

This spring, the Women's Leadership Initiative ("WLI") will be hosting welcome events in all U.S. offices for the new women associates. [Read More...](#)

Feature Story

Diverse Alumni Spotlight: Aravind Swaminathan



Aravind Swaminathan

In September, Assistant United States Attorney Aravind Swaminathan made his first television appearance—which happened to be on NBC’s *The Today Show*—representing the Seattle-based US Attorney’s Office in a report on an identity theft case that culminated in the indictment of five people.

But before he became part of a headline-making team charged with taking down criminals, Swaminathan began his career as a litigation associate in WilmerHale’s

Boston office, where he worked from 2002 through 2004. There, he focused on general commercial, intellectual property and securities litigation. Swaminathan then left WilmerHale and the East Coast for a clerkship with Ninth Circuit Court Judge Richard Tallman in Seattle. With his wife already established in Seattle, the two settled there, and Swaminathan spent the next two-and-a-half years at the law firm Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, where he once again turned his focus to commercial, IP and securities litigation, before joining the US Attorney’s Office in March 2008.

Now, Swaminathan focuses on complex crimes, including wire fraud, mail fraud, bank fraud, and computer and Internet crimes. He also serves as the co-coordinator for the office’s identity theft initiative, coordinating all prosecutions in his district, including the case of *US v. Burrage, et al.*

The *Burrage* case centered on an identity theft ring in Seattle in which five people were charged in US District Court for bank fraud, aggravated ID theft and misuse of Social Security numbers. Though Swaminathan’s office was ultimately responsible for the take-down, they received help from an unlikely source: a citizen-turned-detective. In a strange twist, one of the 39 victims of this particular ID theft ring—a local JCPenney cashier—came face-to-face with one of the accused, who was attempting to use the cashier’s identity to open a store credit card. The cashier quickly had the store’s cameras turned on the woman, and the rest is history. To date, three of the five accused have pleaded guilty.

After *The Seattle Times* published an article on the case, it was picked up nationally, much to Swaminathan’s excitement. “From our perspective, there were really good lessons that consumers and law enforcement could learn from this case, including what they can do to help us help them. *The Today Show* picked up on that concept, and the human interest angle. It was a way to get our message to the masses.”

And getting their message out to the public seems more important now than ever. Swaminathan says that on a national scale, there has been a rise in identity theft cases. “It has become easier for anybody with a laptop computer and printing equipment to manufacture identification documents,” he says. “High-powered computers have made it easier for people to commit these crimes, and harder to catch them. We look for cases where federal

[Read More...](#) | [Back to Main Page...](#)



Feature Story

Diverse Alumni Spotlight: Aravind Swaminathan (continued from page 2)

prosecution will make an impact, and where our resources can be deployed in a useful way. As part of our identity theft initiative, we're developing a core group of federal and local law enforcement agents that focus on identity theft by pooling resources."

For every criminal prosecuted, Swaminathan admits there are others that are not caught. "We can take big gouges out of identity theft crime, but we're never going to catch and prosecute everyone," he says. "In the bad economy, crime is worse. As much as we impact the community, there will still be crime. Educating the public on how they can protect themselves is a critical component of reducing identity theft, and this case proves that point."

Despite these challenges, Swaminathan remains dedicated to seeking out and prosecuting criminals, and credits his WilmerHale mentors—including Litigation Partner [Jack Fabiano](#); IP Partner [Wayne Kennard](#); Transactional Partner [Wendell Taylor](#); Co-Managing Partner [Bill Lee](#); Securities Partner [Jeffrey Rudman](#); and Litigation Partner [Steve Oleskey](#)—with preparing him for his current role. "They were great mentors and a large part of why I can do what I do today," he says.

Though ID theft and other similar crimes remain pervasive on a national scale, Swaminathan reports that Washington has seen a drop in the number of related complaints filed with the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection, thanks in part to the work of the US Attorney's Office.

"What I do makes a difference," says Swaminathan. "It's great to go home every day knowing I've done something to make the community safer. I truly love my job."

[Back to Main Page...](#)



Feature Story

Lessons in Leadership

By *Melanie Goins*

“[B]eing a leader is neither a birth-right nor predicted by a multiple choice test. Rather, leadership is achieved through self-awareness, hard work, and a commitment to taking on such a role within one’s community.”

personality and leadership potential that are often the basis of professional development sessions.

With this mindset, I both looked forward to and was a bit incredulous of my firm-sponsored yearlong participation in the Fellows program of *The Partnership*, a leadership development program for Boston-area professionals of color. The program began with a two-day retreat where, sure enough, we took several self-diagnostic tests. Just as my skepticism began to increase, however, the speakers began to analyze the results in ways I had never heard before. Rather than looking at these test results as outcome determinative, they were viewed instead as input descriptive.

I am at turns intrigued by, and skeptical of, leadership diagnostics and education. Are all ENTJs (the Extraversion, iNtuition, Thinking and Judgment personality assessment by Myers-Briggs) absolutely destined for success? If you are a “blue-type,” will you never be able to work with your “green-type” colleagues? Despite such questions, I have always enjoyed taking these tests and learning the easy-to-digest schema about

In short, the results were presented as tools for increasing self-awareness, and, consequently, for developing the skills and attributes found in effective leaders.

I learned, for example, that the common shorthand descriptions of Myers-Briggs categories can be quite misleading. When asked about the extrovert-introvert distinction in the first seminar, most people described it as the difference between being outgoing and shy. But as one colleague noted, being an introvert—one who gets energy from reflecting on events—is not the same as being shy. We learned that the preferences that are exposed by tests like Myers-Briggs are not necessarily indications of the behaviors often attributed to those types. Having strong public speaking, presentation and networking skills is not impossible simply because someone has a preference for thinking through issues in quieter times; in fact, one’s ability to present good ideas is often aided by taking time to think and reflect. Thus, from early on in the program, I was challenged to rethink what I thought I already knew about myself.

As the year progressed, we moved beyond self-analysis to discuss various levels of leadership development: teamwork, mentorship, creating a personal brand and making significant contributions to our workplaces and communities. I enjoyed having the opportunity to spend time with others who had committed to staying in Boston and in doing so made

[Read More...](#) | [Back to Main Page...](#)



Feature Story

Lessons in Leadership (continued from page 4)

By *Melanie Goins*

it a welcoming environment for professionals of color. The staff of The Partnership works tirelessly to ensure that a sense of community develops, principally among the participants in the program, but also within the larger community of minority business leaders. Speakers from Blue Cross Blue Shield, Wellington Management, State Street Bank and other institutions participated in lectures and panel discussions, and we were invited to network with them and seek them out individually for advice.

We were also encouraged to not simply learn from leaders, but to proactively step into leadership opportunities ourselves. Just as my year in The Partnership was ending, Anne Bowie, Public Service Manager in the Boston office, passed along an opening on the board of directors of **Breakthrough Cambridge**, an academic program focused on preparing middle and high school students for college. Coincidentally, The Partnership session that month had been about non-profit board membership. While the panel discussion provided several practical pointers about board membership, the most important takeaway from my time in The Partnership was that being a leader is neither a birth-right nor predicted by a multiple choice test. Rather, leadership is achieved through self-awareness, hard work, and a commitment to taking on such a role within one's community. I

plan to implement this definition of leadership both here at WilmerHale and in the greater community. For starters, I have joined the Board of Breakthrough Cambridge, confident that my contributions will help the organization fulfill its goals. I am very grateful that the firm supports The Partnership and those of us who have had the opportunity to participate in its programs.

[Back to Main Page...](#)



News and Highlights

NAPABA Conference



*Bill Lee and Caroline Nguyen
at the NAPABA Conference*

The **National Asian Pacific American Bar Association** (NAPABA) is comprised of Asian Pacific American (APA) attorneys, judges, law professors and law students who represent the interests of more than 40,000 attorneys and 60 local APA bar associations and advocate for the legal needs and interests of the Asian Pacific American community. In November 2009, the association

held its 21st annual convention, "NAPABA at 21: The Revolution Continues," in Boston. WilmerHale is proud to have been a sponsor of the convention since 2006.

"WilmerHale, and its well-established Asian American attorneys, are highly regarded within the community," says **Caroline Nguyen**, co-chair of the Legislative Committee of NAPABA and a panel chair at the convention.

"Therefore, its support of, and involvement in, both organizations is invaluable to the community."

The convention was a networking and learning opportunity for both leading attorneys and the next generation of APA lawyers. It attracted more than 1,000 judges, general counsel, law firm partners, public interest lawyers

and government officials.

Co-Managing Partner **Bill Lee**, who, with substantial assistance from Nguyen, participated in a mock trial presented by NAPABA, was encouraged by the number of Asian American law students and attorneys at the convention.

"It was great to see the growing number of aspiring Asian American law students in attendance," he says. "And it was equally great to see them interacting and exchanging ideas with the established Asian American attorneys and other legal professionals who were on hand. This certainly bodes well for the future of the legal industry."

[Read More News and Highlights...](#) | [Back to Main Page...](#)



News and Highlights

IABA Annual Dinner



*Nader Mousavi
Speaks at the IABA
Third Annual Dinner
in Palo Alto, CA*

On Friday, February 5, safe from the impending blizzards and white-out conditions on the East Coast, the Northern California Chapter of the **Iranian American Bar Association** hosted its Third Annual Dinner in Palo Alto, California. Organized by Senior Associate **Niki Moore**, the dinner was attended by more than 70 members of the IABA and Bay Area legal communities, and hailed as a major success by all in attendance. Fellow WilmerHale colleagues **Evelyn Mak**, **Michael Mugmon**, **Mehdi Ansari** and **Melissa Henley** were among the crowd in attendance, receiving a front row seat to the featured presentation:

two distinguished keynote speakers, The Honorable Susan Etezadi, California Superior Court Judge, and the Honorable James Ware, United States District Court Judge for the Northern District of California. With a warm welcome by Niki, the Founding President of the IABA chapter, and glowing introductions by **Nader Mousavi**, a member of the IABA Advisory Board, Judge Etezadi and Judge Ware spoke about their experiences on the bench, their opinions on the past, their thoughts and predictions for the future, and provided guidance and inspiration to the IABA members. A common theme throughout the evening was the importance of giving back to one's community, a theme best illustrated by a Farsi poem written by Saadi, as read by Niki during her welcome speech:

*Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.*

Our New Diversity Co-Chair



Andre Owens

We are happy to announce that **Andre Owens**, a broker-dealer partner in our Securities Department, will replace Ron Machen as co-chair of the DC Diversity Committee. He will join **Yoon-Young Lee** in leading this Committee in the Washington office.

Andre joined the firm in 2003 after practicing at the SEC and another law firm. He is an avid fan of the Boston Celtics and New York Giants – a true representative of all the East Coast offices.

Andre has been a member of the Diversity Committee for many years, and he is a member of the Hiring and Senior Associates Committees. We are confident that with Andre's and Yoon-Young's leadership, the Diversity Committee will continue to support and further our efforts in fostering a more diverse and inclusive environment both locally in DC and across all offices.

Please join us in congratulating Andre.

[Read More News and Highlights...](#) | [Back to Main Page...](#)



News and Highlights

Hispanic Bar Association Award

WilmerHale was awarded the 2009 Employer Diversity Award by the **Hispanic Bar Association of DC** (HBA-DC). The firm was selected among 58 law firms and government agencies based on its diversity practices and “success in integrating Latino attorneys at all levels of leadership.” To be considered for this honor, WilmerHale participated in a HBA-DC survey that focused on measuring progress toward the goal of ensuring a diverse legal workforce and recognizing positive results with regard to advancement and opportunity for the Latino community. The HBA-DC cited the firm’s commitment to a “meaningful minority mentorship program, a Hispanic affinity group, and an established pro bono program that benefits several Hispanic organizations.” It was also noted that WilmerHale also participates in minority recruitment fairs and encourages attorneys to engage with the various minority bar associations including the HBA-DC.

“We know that our continued success serving our clients depends on our ability to field a diverse array of talented lawyers who bring a range of experience and perspectives to our practice,” said **Carol Clayton**, Assistant Managing Partner and Partner-In-Charge of the firm’s Washington DC office. “Commitment to diversity at WilmerHale starts at the top and courses through the firm at every level. We maintain a culture of inclusion and respect in which all of our colleagues can reach their full potential.”

Update on Diversity Function within Talent

WilmerHale established a diversity team responsible for helping the Diversity Committee Chairs create firm-wide and office-specific initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion. Kenneth Imo, based in our Washington office, is the Director of Talent Diversity. He will work closely with the Chairs and members of the team in other offices in facilitating the firm’s diversity program. The other team members are Vanea Norris in Boston, Shumi Brody and Kristin Hagestad in New York, Martinelle Cole on the West Coast, and Mary Ann Alderton and Tanya Massey in Washington.

Meet Our New Faces

We extend a very warm WilmerHale welcome to the new associates who recently joined us. If you are interested in finding out more about our Diversity Committee, please contact Kenneth Imo at kenneth.imo@wilmerhale.com. For more information about the Women’s Leadership Initiative (WLI), please contact Jennifer Saniuk at jennifer.saniuk@wilmerhale.com.

[Back to Main Page...](#)



Upcoming Events

March 4; New York, NY

New York Diversity Committee Associates **Imran Javaid**, **Drew Kovacs** and **Emily Meyers** will be meeting with leaders of minority student organizations at NYU to discuss what minority students look for when choosing a law firm. For more information about this dinner, please contact Shumi Brody at moushumi.brody@wilmerhale.com.

March 11; New York, NY

New York Securities Counsel Pedro Medrano is hosting a cocktail reception to welcome new diverse associates to the firm. The reception will be held at Third Floor Cafe in Koreatown from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. For more information about this event, please contact Shumi Brody at moushumi.brody@wilmerhale.com.

March 17; New York, NY

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation is hosting its Sixth Annual Workplace Equality Awards and Reception to honor businesses that have excelled in LGBT inclusion in the workplace in 2010. This year, 305 businesses earned a 100% ranking on the Corporate Equality Index and will be honored as Best Places to Work for LGBT equality. WilmerHale is proud to be a part of this group. Partner **Elizabeth Derbes** and Associate **Emily Meyers** of the New York office Diversity Committee will attend on the firm's behalf. For more information about this event, please visit the [HRC website](#).

March 23; Boston, MA

The Boston Lawyers Group will host a Kick-Off Reception for its Mentoring Program at Goodwin Proctor from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The Mentor Program provides an opportunity for students to develop a one-on-one relationship with an attorney from one of the BLG member organizations and expand their networking contacts in Boston's legal community. Students are introduced to their mentor at the Kick-Off Reception. For more information, please visit the [BLG website](#).

March 24; Washington, DC

The DC Diversity Committee is hosting a panel discussion and reception for Diversity Committee members, new associates and local diverse law students. The event will be held in the Multipurpose Room of the DC office from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The panelists will discuss what entry level associates can

If you are interested in finding out more information about a conference that WilmerHale is attending or if you have an interest in a particular conference, please contact the Talent Personnel Manager in your office.

expect in the current legal market as well as answer questions from attendees. For more information and to RSVP, please contact Kimberly Deal at kimberly.deal@wilmerhale.com.

March 24; Washington, DC

The George Washington University Law School (GW) Chapter of Lambda Law will be hosting its Fourth Annual GLBT and Affiliated Law Student Networking Reception in the One Washington Circle Hotel from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. An invitation to this event is extended to all area law schools' GLBT students and affiliates. More than 100 law students attended last year's reception, and GW anticipates a great turnout again this year. For more information about this event, please contact Kimberly Deal at kimberly.deal@wilmerhale.com.

April 2-3; Boston, MA

Harvard LAMBDA is currently planning its 5th Annual Harvard Lambda Legal Advocacy (HaLLA) Conference. This year's conference will focus on GLBT legal issues from an international perspective. The two-day conference will be held at Austin Hall on the Harvard Law School Campus. To learn more about this event, please visit the [HLS LAMBDA website](#).

April 15; Boston, MA

The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition is hosting a cocktail party in support of a worthy cause. *Lawyers for Transgender Rights* will bring together lawyers, law students, law firms, legal organizations, bar associations and law schools to network and support MTPC's work on behalf of the transgender community. The event will be held at the Club Café in Boston and will begin at 5:30 p.m. For more information, please visit the [MTPC website](#).

Spring: All Offices

This spring, the Women's Leadership Initiative ("WLI") will be hosting welcome events in all U.S. offices for the new women associates. In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about the WLI, please visit the WLI webpage on the Firm Committees page of WHweb. If you are interested in joining a WLI committee, please contact Alicia Kappers at alicia.kappers@wilmerhale.com or Jen Saniuk at jennifer.saniuk@wilmerhale.com

[Back to Main Page...](#)

