

# Briefs

■ PRO BONO ■ WORKFORCE TRENDS ■ JOB MARKET ■ NECROLOGY ■

## Firms report increases in pro bono hours

**T**he country's top 200 largest law firms increased the number of pro bono hours contributed last year, according to a survey by *The American Lawyer* magazine. Philadelphia-based Morgan, Lewis & Bockius reported the largest jump in pro bono hours to 67.1 per attorney, a 112 percent increase over 2005. The boost in participation shot the firm up 94 places in the pro bono rankings.

Overall, Covington & Burling, based in Washington, D.C., took the lead spot with 74 percent of attorneys contributing twenty or more pro bono hours last year. The firmwide average was 157 hours per attorney.

"The increase in pro bono work is real and a tribute both to strong traditions at some firms and strong leadership at others," the magazine's editor in chief, Aric Press, said. "It will be interesting to see if the profession's laggards improve their performance."

More than half of the lawyers from twenty-four of the top twenty-five pro bono firms logged at least twenty hours of pro bono work in 2006. Only fifteen of the top twenty-five met that goal just five years ago.

The magazine's survey measures pro bono hours worked by attorneys in firms' U.S. offices, defining pro bono work as "legal services provided to those who could not otherwise afford them." The survey ranks pro bono contributions based on the percentage of attorneys in the firm contributing at least twenty pro bono hours and the average number of pro bono hours per attorney reported by the firm.



Photo by Jeff Lyons

## Job placement for law grads jumps to more than 90 percent

**F**or the second year in a row, employment rates for new law school graduates increased, continuing a strong and stable trend for this market segment, according to a recent NALP report.

For graduates whose employment status was known, 90.7 percent were employed eight months after graduating. The report surveyed 182 ABA-accredited law schools and received employment information on ninety-two percent of last year's graduating class.

Despite recently publicized first-year salaries of \$135,000 and \$145,000, nearly

half of the graduates surveyed were making \$55,000 or less. Only fourteen percent of graduates started at the top salaries for big law firms. More than seventy percent of the employed graduates went to work for small firms of fifty or fewer attorneys or in non-firm jobs.

More than fifty-five percent of graduates tracked went into private practice at a law firm, while almost 26.9 percent took jobs in public service and 5.4 percent accepted positions with public interest organizations.

Most graduates reported that they obtained jobs through on-campus interviews

during the fall semester or by sending a letter or "self-initiated" contact with a potential employer.

About two-thirds of graduates received their job offers before graduation, and most of these positions were likely to be jobs in the military, state or federal judicial clerkships, or at large law firms.

About fourteen percent of employed graduates also reported they were seeking other jobs, and the most likely groups to be doing so were graduates who had attended part-time programs, older graduates and minority graduates.