

# Mosaic

CARLTON  
FIELDS  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

September 2006 | Issue 1

*This newsletter describes our ongoing diversity efforts with our clients, in our communities, and at our law firm. We believe that as we continue a dialogue we will create greater opportunities for advancement of diversity.*

The winner of the Diversity Newsletter naming contest:

## Mosaic

Thanks to the following individuals who submitted this winning name: **Li Wang, David Luck, and Kenn Carpenter.**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Diversity Profiles . . . . .	2-4
Pro Bono Efforts . . . . .	5-6
Rankings and Awards . . . . .	6
Achievements . . . . .	7-8
New Minority Shareholders . . . . .	9
New Minority Associates . . . . .	10
Embracing Diversity . . . . .	11
Diversity Committee . . . . .	12

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

As Carlton Fields' new President and CEO, I am very pleased to inform you of the many efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in our communities and in our law firm. Carlton Fields has always been a leader in diversity, not a follower. The firm's Strategic Plan renews our law firm's long-standing commitment to diversity. In our Plan, we talk about making efforts to reflect this commitment in everything we do at the firm. This is an important goal for us to keep in mind and to continue to work towards. This is not only the right thing to do, but our commitment to diversity has helped make Carlton Fields the great firm it is, and it will help us become an even greater firm in the future.



Gary L. Sasso  
President and CEO

Our Diversity Committee, the Minority Lawyer Network, and the Women's Initiative Network (WIN) work diligently to advance our efforts in recruitment, mentoring and training, retention, and promotion of our minority and women attorneys. Their work also includes active participation in our communities and assuming leadership roles in Bar and civic activities.

Our commitment to education prompted our collaboration with Stetson University College of Law to create the Carlton Fields Diversity Fellowship Program. Recognizing the importance of providing access to the practice of law within a large firm environment for students who may have experienced socioeconomic or cultural barriers to legal education, we employ a Fellow at the law firm each semester.

We are pleased with our recent rankings and honors for our diversity efforts. Each day we strive to make Carlton Fields a better place for members of our team and to provide extraordinary service to our clients. We invite your feedback and look forward to working with you to advance these initiatives.

## DIVERSITY PROFILE

### A WOMAN PIONEER

By Henry G. Gyden

One of the core values of Carlton Fields is its appreciation of diversity. As a member of the firm's Diversity Committee, I have seen firsthand the efforts the firm has made and continues to make to ensure that it "encourages and rewards exceptional performance and hard work without favoritism or prejudice based on family relationships, gender, ethnic background, or the like." A shining example of Carlton Fields' commitment to diversity and a driving force behind that initiative is **Sylvia H. Walbolt**.

Her list of accomplishments is legendary and spans a period of over forty years in the legal profession. Sylvia graduated first at the University of Florida in 1963. She was the only female student in her class. She was hired by Carlton Fields in 1963, at a time when there were very few women attorneys in the Tampa Bay area. Sylvia quickly rose within the firm's ranks and became the firm's first female partner and later its first female chair of the Board of Directors.

Her accomplishments outside the firm are no less impressive. She has been the president of several organizations, including the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers and The Florida Bar Foundation. She has also chaired numerous committees, including The Florida Bar Antitrust Committee, Supreme Court of Florida Committee on Standard Jury Instructions in Civil Cases, and American Bar Association Health Care Committee. Sylvia has appeared as counsel in more than 290 published opinions and frequently publishes and lectures on appellate practice, procedure, and advocacy. She has received several awards, including the 2005 James C. Adkins Award, which is presented to a member of The Florida Bar who has made significant contributions in the field of appellate practice in Florida.



Walbolt

Although Sylvia has accomplished a great deal in her career, there were obstacles that she had to overcome. One major issue she faced early in her career was the male-only policy at downtown Tampa's University Club. "I was not permitted to go to lunch, which precluded me from participating in lunch meetings and activities that today are essential to lawyers progressing in their careers," she said. Sylvia described the experience as "very demeaning." Fortunately, several local attorneys, including Carlton Fields' attorney

**Reece Smith**, were successful in getting that policy changed.

Often serving as a mentor for young women, Sylvia recognizes certain problems still exist for women attorneys today. One of those problems is the difficulty women face in balancing the needs of family with the demanding schedule of a practicing attorney. "I think that is the single most daunting problem of today that we have to figure out: How do you ever get away from the office to focus on your family responsibilities?" she said. She advises that women should become comfortable that they can take a few years to spend more time with their young children. "There is plenty of time later to work at a faster pace and do all the things that one needs to do to advance," she said.

Sylvia also advises that women need to have a networking operation. While she would never send another woman business simply because she was a woman, as women move into positions of authority and power, they should help each other develop business and move ahead in the profession.

**"I met the  
President  
in my pajamas."**

In 1963, law firms recruited men. But Sylvia Walbolt graduated first in her class, and we sought her out – and paid her the same as the men. She wanted to work part-time while she was pregnant on bed rest. So we installed a phone line in her bedroom – as she became the nation's first "telecommuting" lawyer.

Running a multi-million-dollar antitrust action from her bedroom, she held a meeting with the President of Florida Power – in her pajamas. Sylvia later became one of the first women to appear in the Florida Supreme Court and then chaired Carlton Fields's board of directors for seven consecutive terms.

**CARLTON  
FIELDS**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
[www.carltonfields.com](http://www.carltonfields.com)

Atlanta | Miami | Orlando | St. Petersburg | Tallahassee | Tampa | West Palm Beach

## DIVERSITY PROFILE

### COURAGE, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND COMMITMENT: AN INTERVIEW WITH GARY L. SASSO

By Fentrice D. Driskell

Carlton Fields' President and CEO Gary L. Sasso knows the importance of diversity all too well. The son of an Ecuadorian father, Gary overcame numerous childhood obstacles and societal constraints to become a prominent litigator and the leader of a major southeastern law firm. Now as he leads Carlton Fields towards a vision of "national prominence" and "regional dominance," Gary is just as committed as ever to ensuring that Carlton Fields remains an industry leader when it comes to promoting diversity in the workplace.

#### Humble Beginnings

Gary Sasso grew up in a working-class family in Miami, Florida. Gary's natural father, Julio Mena from Ecuador, started his own import/export business in Miami. He also taught Spanish classes at night, which is where he met his future wife, Gary's mother, Frances Marie Farro. Unfortunately, Gary's father died when Gary was very young. Gary and his mother moved to Pennsylvania so that he could live with an aunt and uncle near Uniontown while his mother worked in Pittsburgh. "Childhood was a difficult time," Gary recalls. Eventually, Gary and his mother were able to move back to Miami, where his mother later married Gary's adoptive father, Barney Sasso.

When asked whether he grew up conscious of his ethnicity and heritage, Gary notes that he "always felt a little different. I was aware that I looked different." For Gary, becoming a lawyer was something that did not feel obtainable as a child. Socially, he did not feel like his "class allowed him the option." In high

school, Gary "felt different ethnically." Gary's high school years were a time when ethnicity was becoming a more frequent topic of discussion. Because Gary grew up without his natural father, Gary did not have the "cultural continuity" that his father could have provided him. Gary remembers that in high school, "everyone was trying to fit in, not emphasize distinctions." Although he does not recall being subjected to discrimination because of his ethnicity, Gary felt "estranged" from his roots and that he simply did not fit in. More than that, Gary was acutely aware of the limitations that society placed on working-class families like his own. The odds were stacked against him, but Gary knew the one thing he had going for him was that he was a good student.

*Gary believes that working towards our goals for diversity compels us to "pull together for the overall benefit of the firm," ultimately contributing to an environment where people of every background feel like they "fit in."*

In his junior year, a counselor encouraged Gary to apply to the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Even then, Gary was unsure that becoming a lawyer was a goal he should reach for. In his senior year, Gary sought out a different counselor to ask for advice. The counselor told him that it was. Gary went on to graduate *magna cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania, both as an undergraduate and as a law student.

In fact, in law school Gary graduated with the highest grades in his class and served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Law Review*. Perhaps more importantly, Gary was the first person in his family to receive a higher education.

Later, at Carlton Fields, Gary would work on a case that would take him to Ecuador. For Gary, being in Ecuador felt like home. "Everyone looked like me," he smilingly reminisces. Finally, Gary felt like he fit in. Gary believes that working

*continued on page 4*

## DIVERSITY PROFILE

---

### COURAGE, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND COMMITMENT: AN INTERVIEW WITH GARY L. SASSO

towards our goals for diversity compels us to “pull together for the overall benefit of the firm,” ultimately contributing to an environment where people of every background feel like they “fit in.”

#### **A Courageous, Conscious Commitment to Diversity**

Gary believes that law firms are “more conscious today than even ten years ago, and significantly more so than 20 years ago” when it comes to addressing issues of diversity. The *Brown v. Board of Education* cases were watershed events and the Civil Rights Movement brought promises of stamping out discrimination. However, the Supreme Court’s edict that schools desegregate “with all deliberate speed” did not result in the progress that most expected. “Many thought the social issues would be resolved more quickly,” says Gary.

Now, the dialogue has shifted from “ending discrimination to embracing diversity.” While there is still a great deal of debate among law firms surrounding the best ways of dealing with diversity, Gary notes that Carlton Fields has been successful, foremost, because of its courage. “Before it was fashionable, Carlton Fields made gutsy moves in the area of diversity.” Gary believes that this is because Carlton Fields had a strong commitment to “doing the right thing.” Gary also notes that because the firm has long valued diversity, “we have been able to build on past successes,” which not only benefits present and future generations of lawyers, but also ensures that “we practice what we preach.”

#### **Where Do We Go From Here?**

Gary believes that the biggest hurdle for any organization is “overcoming the kind of decisions that may hinder diversity”—not

decisions that are made in bad faith, but decisions that fail to “take advantage of opportunities to create more diverse groups.” One tangible result of Carlton Fields’ commitment to diversity has been an increase in the number of minority attorneys and staff over time. While Gary is pleased to see an increase, his hope is for the firm to “get past numbers, on a firm-wide basis.”

“The more you mix people together, the more it becomes natural.”

Gary recalls discussing the role of women attorneys ten years ago with sophisticated lawyers in the Northeast. The others seemed to be struggling with gender issues in their legal practice. By contrast, Gary reflected that he was working with women lawyers at Carlton Fields who played key roles in every matter he had. For a firm in a southern city to achieve a level of gender diversity that was almost as natural as breathing was very impressive.

Gary hopes that the firm reaches a point where it is just as expected and natural to work with attorneys and staff of diverse ethnic backgrounds as it was for him to look around and see women lawyers in positions of leadership. Instead of looking to see if we are quantitatively diverse, Gary believes we must ask ourselves whether we can do a better job at reflecting diversity in everything we do. Diversity should be so much a part of our

lives that it is reflected throughout our practice groups, our client teams, law firm committees, CLE programs, in-house training programs, and other law firm endeavors. Additionally, we must continue to reflect diversity in staff and staff leadership.

Gary says that he does not know “if our efforts at Carlton Fields will benefit society at large, but those efforts will contribute. We’ll continue to do the right thing. And the more people who do the right thing, the better.”

“Before it was fashionable, Carlton Fields made gutsy moves in the area of diversity.”

## PRO BONO EFFORTS

### CHALLENGE TO CITY OF AVON PARK ORDINANCE DEALING WITH ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IS SUCCESSFUL

By Cristina Alonso

This summer, members of the Minority Lawyer Network joined with other members of the firm, across practice groups and offices, in a *pro bono* effort to challenge an ordinance proposed in the City of Avon Park that was based upon unsubstantiated and highly discriminatory allegations regarding the purported negative impact of illegal aliens and illegal immigration on the City. The stated purpose of the Ordinance was to resolve a variety of problems confronting the City, both real and imagined. However, the manner proposed to resolve the issues would have gone far beyond eliminating illegal immigration in the City, a job reserved for the federal government in the first instance, and opened the door for unlawful discrimination, whether intended or not, based on national origin.

To address these unsubstantiated allegations, the Ordinance would have prevented city officials from licensing any business that “aids and abets illegal aliens or illegal immigration” anywhere in the United States “for a period no less than five years from its last offense.” It also provided for “aggressively prohibiting and punishing the acts, policies, people, and businesses that aid and abet illegal aliens,” including fines of no less than \$1,000 on people or companies that knowingly rented or leased property to illegal immigrants. Finally, the ordinance called for establishing English as the city’s official language and barred conducting any municipal business in any other language. The controversial Ordinance generated national media attention, led to protest rallies and caused a divide between its supporters, led by Mayor Tom Macklin, and those who vehemently opposed it, the City’s Hispanic community, the Avon Park Chamber of Commerce and many local companies

with a substantial Hispanic workforce or customer base, including citrus growers. Challenging the Ordinance, the Carlton Fields team submitted a letter to the City Council on behalf of Graciela and Amador Islas, residents of Avon Park, who own rental property which was, until proposal of the Ordinance, rented to migrant farm workers. The Islas believed their renters vacated the premises as a result of the proposed Ordinance. In the letter, Carlton Fields urged the City Council to reject the Ordinance on the basis that it was unconstitutional and may result in discriminatory practices based upon national origin which would preclude lawful residents from obtaining adequate dwelling accommodations and inhibit the development and use of farm worker housing in violation of Florida law and the City’s ordinances, among many other grounds. The letter emphasized that by passing the Ordinance, the City would overstep its delegated authority, in that, illegal immigration is an issue that should be handled by the federal government.



Ciampa

In a terse and conclusory fashion, the Ordinance stated:

[I]legal immigration leads to higher crime rates, contributes to overcrowded classrooms and failing schools, subjects our hospitals to fiscal hardship and legal residents to substandard quality of care, and destroys our neighborhoods and diminishes our overall quality of life.

Ultimately, the Ordinance was defeated by a narrow 3 to 2 vote at a July 24th council meeting.

The Carlton Fields team, led by Nancy Ciampa, included Ray Allen, Alina Alonso, Cristina Alonso, John Blue, Gus Bravo, Danet Figg, Daniel Hernandez, Angie

Puentes, Chris Smart, Chantell Vichot, and Sylvia Walbolt. Others ready to help in the event of the Ordinance’s passage were: Lori Baggett, Dave Cannella, Michael Donaldson, Karen Persis, Kenya Reddy, and Tom Warner.

## PRO BONO EFFORTS

### GUARDIANSHIP CASE SUCCESSFUL

Miami shareholder **Ana Harris**, with the assistance of paralegal **Chris Martinez**, obtained the guardianship court orders necessary for a 15 year old boy, Shawade, to apply for permanent residency in the United States and avoid being deported upon turning 18. Shawade was born in the Bahamas and was brought to the United States by his mother when he was five years old. Shawade's mother died of cancer when Shawade was nine years old, and since then he has been living in Miami, Florida with a relative without proper immigration status.



Harris

Ana and Chris obtained the appointment of a legal guardian for Shawade, and an order from the probate judge that it would be in Shawade's best interest to stay in the United States. With this order, Shawade's legal guardian will be able to apply for permanent residency status for Shawade.

### HONDURAN DEATH SQUAD LEADER ORDERED TO PAY \$47 MILLION

Carlton Fields recently obtained a \$47 million verdict on behalf of torture survivors and relatives of civilians murdered by Honduran military forces in the early 1980s.

The lawsuit, filed in the Southern District of Florida, alleged torture, abduction, and non-judicial killing by the leader of a Honduran death squad. Tampa shareholder **Sylvia Walbolt** asked Miami shareholder **Ben Reid** to handle this case from the American College of Trial Lawyers.



Bravo

Carlton Fields worked with the Center for Justice and Accountability, a San Francisco based organization that works to deter torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world by helping survivors hold their persecutors accountable. Ben Reid and Miami associate **Gus Bravo** tried the case along with associate **Angie Puentes**, who worked on the case at an earlier stage with the assistance of Miami paralegal **Terry Rogers**.



Puentes

## RANKINGS AND AWARDS

### 2007 Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms

Carlton Fields is ranked in the 2007 *Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms* as one of the best law firms in which to work. The firm ranked in the "Diversity" categories:

- 4th in "Diversity Issues with Respect to Women"
- tied for 6th in "Diversity Issues with Respect to Minorities"

The firm also ranked in the "Quality of Life" categories:

- 3rd in Pro Bono
- 4th in Informal Training/Mentoring
- 5th in Overall Satisfaction
- 7th in Office Space
- 13th in Associate/Partner Relations

### Minority Law Journal's 2006 Diversity Scorecard

Carlton Fields ranked #26 overall on the 2006 Diversity Scorecard. The firm ranked #2 for the percentage of Hispanic American attorneys in the firm.

### MultiCultural Law's 2006 Top 100 Law Firms for Diversity

Carlton Fields ranked 73rd in *MultiCultural Law's* 2006 Top 100 Law Firms for Diversity list. In addition, the firm ranked in the following categories:

- 35th for Partners
- 12th for Associates
- 2nd for Hispanic Americans

### Florida Trend's 2006 Florida Legal Elite

33 of the firm's attorneys were selected by their peers as *Florida Trend* magazine's 2006 Florida Legal Elite. This represents the top 2% of lawyers in Florida. Of those, the following nine minority and women attorneys were recognized:

**Alina Alonso, Cristin Conley, Nancy Linnan, Wendy Lumish, Lu Prats, Gary Sasso, Patricia Thompson, Sylvia Walbolt, and Gwynne Young.**

President and CEO **Gary Sasso** was selected as one of the "Top Managing Partners: Head of the Firm" in *Florida Trend*.

### 2006 Florida Super Lawyers

45 Carlton Fields attorneys were recognized for 2006 *Florida Super Lawyers*. Of those, the following 12 minority and women attorneys were recognized:

**Katy Bell, Ruth Barnes Kinsolving, Nancy Linnan, Laurel Lockett, Wendy Lumish, Marsha Madorsky, Jason Murray, Edith Osman, Lu Prats, Gary Sasso, Patricia Thompson, and Sylvia Walbolt.**

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### EMY MONDESIR TO JOIN CARLTON FIELDS AS NEXT DIVERSITY FELLOW

By Christina Kunz

Carlton Fields' Diversity Fellowship Program at Stetson University College of Law will once again continue during the 2006-2007 school year. **Emy Mondesir**, who is entering her final semester of law school this fall, will be joining the firm's Tampa office in September as the next Carlton Fields Diversity Fellow.

Over this past summer, Emy served as a legal intern at the Home Shopping Network in St. Petersburg. During the spring of this year, she served as a judicial intern with The Honorable David Demers, Chief Judge for the Sixth Judicial Circuit, and with Magistrate Keela Samis. Prior to attending law school, Emy earned her B.S. in Mass Communication from Florida International University in 2003.



Mondesir

"I am thrilled about the opportunity to learn from experienced legal practitioners and to apply the concepts I learned in class to real legal cases. I am certain that through this experience, I will obtain the expertise and knowledge needed to serve clients in the future," said Emy.

Carlton Fields created the Diversity Fellowship Program at Stetson University College of Law in 2004, with the help of St. Petersburg shareholder **Bob Biasotti**. The program attracts students that have experienced barriers during their pursuit of a legal education and are interested in serving as a fellow with the firm. The Carlton Fields Diversity Fellowship Program is open to applicants regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or veteran status.

"We are committed to supporting students in their pursuit of legal training by providing opportunities to perform real legal work and access to the network of our attorneys who mentor them. We are delighted that Emy will be joining Carlton Fields as our next fellow," said **Jason Murray**, Carlton Fields Diversity Committee Co-Chair.

### CARLTON FIELDS' LU PRATS RECEIVES AWARD FROM STETSON UNIVERSITY

Tampa shareholder, **Lu Prats**, was selected as the 2006 recipient of the Paul M. May Meritorious Service Award by the Stetson Lawyers Association.



Prats

This award is presented each year to an alumnus of the Stetson University College of Law who shows continued support and commitment to the University and to the profession of law. The award was presented to Lu at the Stetson College of Law Alumni Reception during The Florida Bar Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 21, 2006 at the Boca Raton Resort and Club. Lu is the president of the Stetson University National Alumni Association. He also serves on the Stetson University Board of Trustees and the Alumni Board executive committee.

### TALLAHASSEE BUILDINGS NAMED THE "BOB MARTINEZ CENTER"

Two office buildings are designated as the "Bob Martinez Center" named after the firm's Managing Director, Government Consulting, **Bob Martinez** by the Florida Senate.



Martinez

The buildings are located at 2600 Blair Stone Road in Tallahassee, Florida and house the Department of Environmental Protection and the DEP lab complex. Governor Martinez served as Florida's 40th governor from 1987 to 1991 and was the state's first Hispanic governor.

As governor, Bob supported several major environmental programs. Under his administration, additional protections for Florida's surface waters were created. He also supported the Solid Waste Management Act and Preservation 2000. After leaving the governor's office, Bob served as the Director of the National Drug Control Policy ("Drug Czar of the U.S.") under President George H. W. Bush. He is still actively involved in a number of corporate and non-profit organizations throughout Florida. He has also remained a prominent participant in politics locally, statewide, and nationally.

More Achievements continued on page 8

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### CARLTON FIELDS' SYLVIA WALBOLT RECEIVES AWARD FROM THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION SECTION OF LITIGATION

Tampa shareholder **Sylvia Walbolt** is one of the recipients of The John Minor Wisdom Public Service and Professionalism Award. The award was presented at the American Bar Association Section of Litigation annual meeting on April 20, 2006.

The John Minor Wisdom Public Service and Professionalism Award was established by the American Bar Association Section of Litigation in 1990. It is named for Judge John Minor Wisdom, a scholar and jurist of the highest integrity whose tenure on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth

Circuit is best known for its recognition of constitutional rights of all citizens. Judge Wisdom's decisions establishing the right to vote, implementing equal educational opportunities, and strengthening the right of effective counsel are marked by wisdom and compassion.



Walbolt

Each year the Section honors Judge Wisdom through the selection of outstanding individuals and firms to receive the award that bears his name. The recipients of the Wisdom Awards have made outstanding contributions to the equality of justice in their communities, ensuring that the legal system is open and available to all.

### ABA PROJECT: WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS IN THE LAW

One of the key ongoing initiatives of the American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession is its Oral/Video History Project - "Women Trailblazers in The Law: Our Visions, Our Voices." The Women Trailblazers project involves audiotape-recording the oral histories of leading women private practitioners, government and public interest attorneys, judges, and legal academicians, and transcribing those interviews. Resources permitting, brief videotapes will also be made to preserve interviewees' living images for posterity. In addition,

the project will locate existing oral and video histories of leading women in the profession and facilitate access to them.



Young



Cruz-Brown

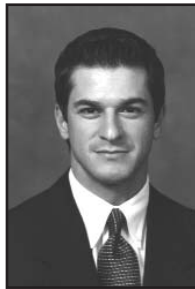
Tampa shareholder **Sylvia Walbolt** has been selected to provide an oral history in this project. Tampa shareholder **Gwynne Young** will be interviewing Sylvia. Both Gwynne and Tallahassee shareholder **Kelly Cruz-Brown** have participated in the project's interviewer training.



## NEW MINORITY SHAREHOLDERS

*Jaret Fuente and Daniel Vega were elected shareholders with Carlton Fields in February 2006.*

**Jaret Fuente** is a member of the Pharmaceutical and Medical Device, Products and Toxic Tort Liability, and Business Litigation and Trade Regulation practice groups. Jaret joined Carlton Fields in July 2001. Prior to joining the firm, Jaret



Fuente

practiced with Bovol, Bush & Sisco, P.A. He grew up in Tampa and graduated from the Florida State University College of Business with a degree in Marketing in 1994. In 1998, he graduated from the Florida State University College of Law.

Jaret is a member of numerous professional organizations, including The Florida Bar, American Bar Association, Hillsborough County Bar Association, Defense Research Institute, and Florida Defense Lawyers Association. He also has been an active participant in several firm committees and serves as the head of the Carlton Fields Summer Associate Program. He devotes time to numerous volunteer causes, the most significant of which is the American Diabetes Association (ADA). For the past several years, he has been closely involved in fundraising activities for the ADA and has been a Carlton Fields team leader in America's Walk for Diabetes.

In his free time, Jaret enjoys running, working out, watching football, and fishing.

**Daniel Vega** is a member of the Construction practice group. Dan was born in Santiago, Chile and grew up in Miami. Prior to college, Dan served in the United States Army and participated in Operation Desert Storm.



Vega

Following his service in the Army, he graduated from Florida International University in 1994 with a degree in Criminal Justice. In 1998, he graduated *cum laude* from the Florida State University College of Law. Dan was hired as a summer associate by Popham Haik Schnobrich & Kaufman in 1997. He became an associate of the firm upon graduation from law school, following Carlton Fields' acquisition of Popham Haik's Miami office.

Dan is involved in an array of professional organizations, including The Florida Bar, American Bar Association, Dade County Bar Association, and Latin Builders Association. When asked if there were any individuals in the firm who have been instrumental in his success, he expressed particular appreciation for the contributions of Jose Loreda, Bruce King, Patricia Thompson, and Paul Nettleton.

In his free time, Dan enjoys playing basketball, participating in fantasy football and baseball, and honing his skills as a steakhouse connoisseur.

*Leonor Lagomasino joined Carlton Fields in July 2006 as a shareholder in the Miami office.*



Lagomasino

**Leonor Lagomasino** is a member of the firm's Insurance practice group. She recently joined the firm after practicing for 10 years with Mark Greenberg, who also recently joined the firm as a shareholder. Leo and Mark were partners in the firm Greenberg & Lagomasino, P.A. in Miami. Prior to arriving at Carlton Fields, she had connections to the firm through shareholders Tony Pelle, Ana Harris, David Drobner, and Bill Rohrer, all of whom she knew while she was an associate at Katz, Barron, Squitiero & Faust, P.A. in Miami. When Mark Greenberg began discussing a potential move to Carlton Fields, Leo initially was resistant, but changed her mind after hearing great things about the firm from Tony, Ana, David, and Bill.

Leo was raised in Bethesda, Maryland and attended Loyola University. In 1983, she graduated from Loyola *cum laude* with a B.B.A. in Accounting and Philosophy. She graduated from the University of Florida College of Law in 1987. She is a member of the American Bar Association and Federal Bar Association.

Leo's hobbies include oil painting, photography, and gardening. She also is trying to take up golf.

## NEW MINORITY ASSOCIATES

The firm also welcomes four new minority associates: Fentrice Driskell, Derek Harris, Nestor Rivera, and Eden Essex.

**Fentrice Driskell** is a member of the Business Litigation and Trade Regulation practice group. She joined Carlton Fields following a two year clerkship with The Honorable Anne C. Conway, United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, Orlando Division.

Fentrice grew up in Lakeland, Florida. Following high school, she attended Harvard University, from which she graduated *cum laude* in 2001 with a degree in Government. While at Harvard, Fentrice served as President of the Undergraduate Council, Harvard's student government organization. She has the distinction of being the first Black woman to serve in that capacity. Following college, Fentrice attended the Georgetown University Law Center, from which she graduated in 2004.



Driskell

When asked why she chose to come work at Carlton Fields, Fentrice replied that diversity made all the difference for her. Although many other firms touted diversity as a value, she did not sense that they embraced a true commitment to diversity as part of their firm cultures, unlike Carlton Fields. Explains Fentrice, "I wanted to work somewhere where differences are not only accepted, but respected and valued. [At Carlton Fields,] diversity is reflected on many fronts."

In her free time, Fentrice enjoys fishing, listening to music, reading, and playing tennis. She is also currently learning how to play the guitar.

**Derek Harris** is a member of the Business Litigation and Trade Regulation practice group. He spent the previous four years as an associate in the Atlanta office of Jones Day.

Derek grew up in Wilmington, Delaware and attended the University of Delaware. He graduated in 1999 with a major in Criminal Justice and a minor in Legal Studies. He subsequently graduated from the Georgetown University Law Center in 2002.

After working primarily on tobacco litigation at Jones Day, Derek joined Carlton Fields because he believed it would give him the opportunity to branch out in his practice and become a better, more complete attorney. He also was attracted by the office culture and the friendly and inviting nature of everyone in the Atlanta office.

Derek is actively involved in *pro bono* work on behalf of the Truancy Intervention Project, both in representing children having delinquency problems and mentoring them as well. He also is a member of the State Bar of Georgia's Children & the Courts Standing Committee.

In his free time, he enjoys fantasy football, traveling, and reading. He also is enjoying preparing for the arrival of his first child with his wife, Kelly.

**Nestor Rivera** is a member of the firm's Health Care practice group. He joined us following six years as an associate in the Health Law group at Fowler White Boggs Banker, P.A. in Tampa.

Nestor grew up in Miami and attended the University of Miami, from which he graduated *with honors* in 1997 with degrees in Political Science and Business Management. He graduated from Emory University School of Law in 2000. He is actively involved in the



Harris



Rivera

American Bar Association Health Law Section and the American Health Lawyers Association. Nestor recalls that what attracted him to Carlton Fields when he moved back to Atlanta was his familiarity with the firm's reputation when he worked in Tampa. He wanted to work at a firm with a friendly, collegial atmosphere and be surrounded by high quality lawyers who were also high quality individuals. As an added bonus, for him, Carlton Fields is "a piece of Florida in Atlanta."

When he is not working, Nestor loves to travel, visit museums, and attend the theater. He also enjoys watching sports and fine dining.

**Eden Essex** joined the St. Petersburg office as an associate in the Real Property Litigation practice group.

Eden grew up in Indiana and attended the University of Notre Dame, where she graduated, *magna cum laude*, in 2002 with a B.A. in Government and International Studies. She recently graduated from Harvard Law School in June 2006. While at Harvard, Eden worked as a research assistant for Alan Dershowitz, worked with the Harvard Project on Wrongful Convictions, and was also named an ABA Legal Opportunity Scholar. This past school year Eden was actively involved with the Hale and Dorr Legal Services Center where she assisted low income homeowners in litigation through the Center's Predatory Lending Division.

Eden is excited to begin her legal career at Carlton Fields. When she is not working, Eden enjoys spending time with her fiancé, Cory, as well as their two golden retrievers, Champ and Daisy. Eden also enjoys playing tennis, going to the beach, and watching Notre Dame football.



Essex

## CARLTON FIELDS: PIONEERS IN EMBRACING DIVERSITY

By Nestor J. Rivera

From hiring its first female lawyer in 1963, to hiring its first Black lawyer in 1971, to being the first large Florida law firm to elect a female Chair of the Board of Directors in 1999, Carlton Fields has a long-standing history of embracing diversity in the workplace through the hiring, promotion, and advancement of women and minorities.

Over the years, Carlton Fields has implemented many initiatives aimed at creating a climate of inclusion, growing its talent pool, fostering innovation and creativity, and becoming the employer of choice for female and minority attorneys and staff. Highlights of Carlton Fields' diversity initiatives include the following:

- **Recruitment and Hiring of a Diverse Workforce:**

Carlton Fields recruits at minority law school job fairs and law schools with diverse populations. In addition, the firm actively seeks referrals of minority attorneys from other attorneys, and legal search firms who work with Carlton Fields are strongly encouraged to submit resumes of minority attorneys.

In 2004, the firm established the Carlton Fields Diversity Fellowship Program at Stetson University College of Law, with the goal of providing access to the practice of law within a large firm environment for students who may have experienced socio-economic or cultural barriers to legal education. Each semester a student is selected to receive a paid law clerk fellowship position with the firm.

Each year, Carlton Fields participates in or donates scholarship funds to the Professional Opportunities Program, which provides Black law students with summer judicial internships and associate program opportunities in Florida.

### Carlton Fields Diversity Facts

- Carlton Fields' current President and Chief Executive Officer is Hispanic
- Four members (23.5%) of Carlton Fields' 17-member Board of Directors are women, and three members (18%) of the Board are minorities
- Attorneys currently at Carlton Fields were born in 16 countries and speak 12 languages
- 80% of the attorneys promoted to shareholder status at Carlton Fields in 2005 are women
- 40% of the attorneys promoted to shareholder status at Carlton Fields in 2006 are minorities
- Four of Carlton Fields' firm-wide Practice Groups are headed by female or minority attorneys
- Carlton Fields' Tallahassee office is headed by a female minority shareholder

- **Retention of Female and Minority Attorneys:**

In an effort to retain female and minority attorneys, Carlton Fields created the Minority Lawyer Network and the Women's Initiative Network. Both groups promote socialization among the female and minority lawyers, and provide outlets to voice concerns and receive feedback from other female and minority attorneys and senior management within the firm. The groups also promote professional development through mentoring and educational seminars with more experienced lawyers and provide assistance in identifying outside organizations that can facilitate career development and networking opportunities.

In 2005, the firm piloted an Outside Mentoring Program for its minority attorneys with business professionals from the community. The program allows the attorneys to become familiar with established minority professionals in the community and receive valuable advice from them.

- **Collaborative Efforts with Communities and Bar Associations:**

Carlton Fields' attorneys are actively involved with and have held leadership positions in a wide variety of organizations that foster diversity in the legal field and in the community in general, including: the George Edgecomb Bar Association, Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association, National Association of Women Lawyers, Florida Association of Women Lawyers, Georgia Association of Women Lawyers, Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association, National Bar Association, and Cuban American Bar Association.

## CARLTON FIELDS DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

The Diversity Committee is co-chaired by Miami shareholder **Jason Murray**, and Tallahassee shareholder **Michael Donaldson**.

Cristina Alonso, Miami

Henry Gyden, Tampa

Bob Biasotti, St. Petersburg

Ana Harris, Miami

Johanna Wills Clark, Orlando

Deborah Jensen, Tampa  
Director of Human Resources

Ana Craig, Miami

Christina Kunz, Tampa  
Director of Attorney Recruitment

Kelly Cruz-Brown, Tallahassee  
Chair, Women's Initiative Network

Nancy Linnan, Tallahassee

Alex del Russo, West Palm Beach

Jason Murray, Miami  
Co-Chair, Diversity Committee  
Chair, Minority Lawyer Network

Mike Donaldson, Tallahassee  
Co-Chair, Diversity Committee

Penelope Dixon, Tampa

Gary Sasso, Tampa  
President and CEO

Danet Figg, West Palm Beach

Don Schmidt, Tampa  
Chair, Recruiting and Retention Committee

Jaret Fuente, Tampa  
Chair, Summer Associate Program

Shuman Sohrn, Atlanta

Joanna Garcia, Tampa

Sylvia Walbolt, Tampa

Tom Grewe, Orlando  
Director of Professional Development

Elizabeth Zabak, Tampa  
Director of Client Services

The material contained in this newsletter is general and summary in nature, and consists of highlights and information pertinent to clientele of Carlton Fields. It is not intended to be specific legal advice on any matters discussed. If you have questions regarding the content of this newsletter, please contact your attorney at Carlton Fields. The hiring of a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely upon advertisements. Before you decide, ask us to send you free, written information about our qualifications and experience.

### Atlanta

One Atlantic Center  
1201 W. Peachtree Street  
Suite 3000  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309  
Phone: 404.815.3400

### Miami

4000 International Place  
100 S.E. Second Street  
Miami, Florida 33131  
Phone: 305.530.0050

### Orlando

450 S. Orange Avenue  
Suite 500  
Orlando, Florida 32801  
Phone: 407.849.0300

### St. Petersburg

200 Central Avenue  
Suite 2300  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701  
Phone: 727.821.7000

### Tallahassee

215 S. Monroe Street  
Suite 500  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
Phone: 850.224.1585

### Tampa

4221 West Boy Scout Boulevard  
Suite 1000  
Tampa, Florida 33607  
Phone: 813.223.7000

### West Palm Beach

Esperanté  
222 Lakeview Avenue  
Suite 1400  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401  
Phone: 561.659.7070

For more information on the  
**Carlton Fields Diversity Newsletter, *Mosaic***, please contact:

**Jason M. Murray** at 305.539.7425 or by email at [jmurray@carltonfields.com](mailto:jmurray@carltonfields.com)  
**Michael P. Donaldson** at 850.513.3613 or by email at [mdonaldson@carltonfields.com](mailto:mdonaldson@carltonfields.com)

[www.carltonfields.com](http://www.carltonfields.com)