



Section News

Seattle Unemployment Project Receives Perkins Public Service Award

By Linda A. Neilan

The Section has awarded its Frances Perkins Public Service Award for 2006 to the Unemployment Insurance for Battered Women Project. The project provides victims of domestic violence with legal representation in unemployment benefits proceedings.

The project was organized in conjunction with the Access to Justice Institute at Seattle University School of Law and the Unemployment Law Project, a local nonprofit legal services agency in downtown Seattle. Carrie Gargas, the project attorney, accepted the award at the Section's annual Pro Bono Workshop, held in August during the ABA Annual Meeting in Honolulu.

Washington was one of the first states to make unemployment benefits available to victims of domestic violence who lose their

jobs because of threats of violence against them or their immediate family members. The project was established in 2002 in response to this new law to help ensure that victims of domestic violence or stalking have legal representation when seeking unemployment insurance benefits.

At the Pro Bono Workshop, Gargas spoke passionately about the project's clients, most of whom are women seeking critical financial assistance while escaping further abuse. She described the case of a Latina woman who left her job in a restaurant after her husband repeatedly abused her. The project helped her, and hundreds of other victims of abuse, obtain unemployment insurance benefits.

With Gargas as its only full-time attorney, the project relies heavily



Carrie Gargas

on law students and pro bono attorneys. Indeed, the project's success can be largely attributed to its emphasis on training, education, and outreach. By focusing its resources on training law students and pro bono attorneys, as well as performing educational and outreach efforts in Washington, the

project has increased access to the legal system for hundreds of victims of domestic violence.

Gargas and the project are the third honorees to receive the Frances Perkins award. The D.C. Employment Justice Center, which represents low-wage workers in employment cases, and Michael Banks, whose efforts led to freeing an innocent man on death row, received the award in years past.

The Pro Bono Committee of the Section encourages all members to perform at least 50 hours of pro bono work per year in accordance with Rule 6.1 of the ABA's Model Rules of Professional Conduct. For more information, go to www.abanet.org/labor/pbcomm.html. ■

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Canino and Zirkin Named Federal Attorneys of the Year

The Section's inaugural Federal Labor and Employment Attorney of the Year selections are Robert Canino, regional attorney in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) Dallas district office, and Stanley Zirkin, chief of the National Labor Relations Board's Contempt Litigation and Compliance Branch. The Sec-



Robert Canino

tion formally presented the awards at its plenary session at the ABA 2006 Annual Meeting in Honolulu, before a full and enthusiastic house that included Canino's wife, children, parents, and aunt.

Canino joined the EEOC as a trial attorney in 1987, shortly after graduating from the University of Oklahoma College of Law. He was pro-

moted to supervisory trial attorney in 1991, and in 1999 began his service as the commission's regional attorney in the Dallas district office. Canino's distinguished record of public service includes his participation on the Council for the Labor and Employment Law Section of the Dallas Bar Association.

Zirkin, whose career with the National Labor Relations Board has spanned more than three decades, has a record of sustained excellence in the field of labor and employment law as an attorney, manager, teacher, and writer. Zirkin was the primary drafter of the "Contempt Proceedings" chapter in the ABA treatise *How to Take a Case Before the NLRB, 7th Edition*, published by the BNA books. While at the board, Zirkin has been recognized for his dedication to the principles of the National Labor Relations Act. Zirkin has served as a

volunteer on the American Arbitration Association's National Community Dispute Settlement Panel and as an instructor of advocacy skills for the Legal Education Institute Department of Justice.

The selection process for the award began in March 2006, with a solicitation for nominees sent to all members of the Section and to the leadership of various federal government agencies engaged in labor and employment work. The Committee on Outreach to Government Lawyers received 25 nominations, supported by fact sheets and essays. The nominees, who represented a remarkable diversity of federal service, were all distinguished in their contributions to the advancement of the principles of justice, fairness, and equality that underlie our nation's employment statutes.

Following a very careful vetting



Stanley Zirkin