



LATINA/O BAR ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON / ASOCIACIÓN DE ABOGADOS LATINOS DE WASHINGTON
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NEWS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORMER DIRECTOR HENRY CRUZ APPOINTED TO WASHINGTON STATE COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS AND NEW DIRECTORS APPOINTED

SEATTLE, WA, SEPTEMBER 4, 2007. At its June and July Board of Directors Meetings, the Latina/o Bar Association of Washington's (LBAW) Board of Directors welcomed three newly appointed directors: **Nicole McGrath**, **Stephanie Thorpe** and **Jesse Valdez**. All three new members will serve a two-year term, from 2007 to 2009. The Board of Directors also bids farewell to a key member of their team, **Henry Cruz**, an attorney at Rios Cantor, P.S., who was recently appointed by Governor Christine Gregoire to the serve as a Commissioner on the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs.

Commissioner Cruz was the Board's Co-VP for Membership & Programs and the Co-Chair for the LBAW's Immigration Committee. Henry has been responsible for the successes behind various significant community efforts such as the Annual Hispanic Seafair Legal Clinics, Ray Ibarra film screening, and numerous know-your-rights presentations and community forums across the State.

"Henry has committed an incredible amount of resources and skills to this organization over the past two years. Although we will miss him dearly," stated M. Lorena González, President of LBAW, *"we know he will serve the Commission and our community well."*

The Board of Directors also welcomes Nicole, Stephanie and Jesse to LBAW's Board of Directors. **Nicole McGrath** is a native of Los Angeles and was admitted to the Washington bar in 2002. She graduated from Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN with a B.A. in 1994 and received her J.D. from Gonzaga University in 2001. Thereafter, Ms. McGrath worked as a public defender at The Defender Association for five years. She practices in the areas of professional liability and professional licensing. Prior to joining the Board, Nicole worked with LBAW's Judicial and Banquet Committee. **Stephanie Thorpe** is an associate attorney at Rios Cantor, PS, a premier Latino-owned law firm in the State of Washington. Stephanie focuses on immigration and some criminal defense matters. Stephanie has been involved in the LBAW over the past three years in the Membership, Judicial and Banquet Committee. Stephanie will also serve as 2008's Banquet Committee Co-Chair. **Jesse Valdez** is an Eastern Washingtonian who went to Seattle University for his J.D. and University of Washington for

his LL.M. in Taxation. Jesse is a partner at Ruthford & Valdez, PLLC where his practice is made up of business law, corporate bankruptcy, wealth preservation and various litigation matters. Jesse has been active in the LBAW through his role as the Organization's Liaison to the Hispanic National Bar Association and as a member of the Banquet Committee.

"The entire Board is excited to see the leadership of this Organization evolve into a group of multi-talented individuals with unique backgrounds and valuable experiences," says Ciarelle J. Valdez, President-Elect of LBAW, *"our team is ready to serve and carry on creating new opportunities for our membership while continuing to serve the needs of our community."*

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The purpose of the Latina/o Bar Association of Washington is to represent the concerns and goals of Latino attorneys and Latino people of the State of Washington. For more information about the Latina/o Bar Association of Washington, visit www.lbaw.org.