

**George Mason American Inn of Court Co-Hosts Color of Justice Program
for local minority high school students**

On Saturday, March 17, 2012, the George Mason American Inn of Court co-sponsored a *Color of Justice* program in conjunction with the Hispanic Bar Association of Virginia, the Northern Virginia Black Attorney's Association, the Virginia Women Attorneys' Association, the Asian Pacific Bar Association, the Fairfax Young Lawyers Division, the Alexandria Young Lawyers Division and the George Mason University School of Law. The program was coordinated by Judge Michael Rosas of the National Labor Relations Board. This was the Inn's first year as a co-sponsor.

The purpose of *Color of Justice* is to reach out to minority high schools students to encourage them to consider legal and judicial careers. Over one hundred students from high schools in Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia attended the program held at the Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court. During the full day seminar, the students heard from a diverse group of judges, lawyers and law students and participated in a mock trial. Many of the lawyers actively participating in the program were members or alumni of the George Mason American Inn of Court

The keynote address was delivered by the Honorable Gerald Bruce Lee of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, a past president of the Inn. The mock criminal trial was



Hon. Judge Gerald Bruce Lee Making Keynote Speech

next and featured GMAIC alumnus, Judge Nolan Dawkins of the Alexandria Circuit Court, as the presiding judge, and Daniel Lopez and GMAIC member, Darwyn Easley, as the prosecutor and defense attorney respectively. After the trial, the assemblage of judges, lawyers and students broke into nine judge-led discussion groups. During the small group discussions, the high school students were encouraged to ask questions about the trial, the evidentiary rules and courtroom protocol. Then they were asked to deliberate the fate of the defendant, a high school student charged with assaulting a School Resource Officer.

The final event was a judicial panel, moderated by GMAIC past president Judge Teena Grodner of the Fairfax Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court. Current Inn member, Judge Gayl Carr of the same court also took part in the panel, along with judges from the EEOC, Military and Immigration courts. The judges discussed and shared their unique paths to the bench.

Color of Justice is an extraordinary outreach program that promotes equality of opportunity. It affords Inn members and alumni the ability to share their passion for the law with young people who might not otherwise have envisioned themselves as lawyers and judges.