

## 2005 Daniel Levy Award

The Editorial Board of *Bender's Immigration Bulletin* is pleased to announce the **2005 Daniel Levy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Immigration Law** will be presented to **Ann Benson**, Directing Attorney, Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project,<sup>1</sup> Seattle, Washington.

With this annual award<sup>2</sup> Matthew Bender honors an individual who emulates the values that informed Mr. Levy's life and work: enthusiastic advocacy on behalf of immigrant clients; deep scholarship in immigration law; and an expansive vision of justice.

Award Reception: Wednesday, June 22nd from 7-8 p.m., near the AILA welcome reception room at the Convention Center at the 2005 AILA Conference in Salt Lake City. (Exact room to be announced.)

*Bender's* Featured Columnist, Lory Diana Rosenberg, has this to say about Ms. Benson:

"Annie initiated and developed the Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project, an innovative project designed to educate and provide essential backup to public defenders allowing them to provide excellent representation to noncitizen defendants, and in that capacity she:

- tirelessly counsels defenders on a daily basis;
- develops curricula and holds conferences and trainings;
- interprets the law and makes it understandable to others; and
- provides resource manuals and written materials to guide both defense and immigration practitioners.

She has worked overtime to build and help lead a national coalition of domestic violence, immigration and social service providers who make the VAWA provisions a meaningful reality for abused spouses and children, and in that capacity she:

- provides training, conference planning and daily support to enable others;
- consults with advocates to ensure VAWA provisions are accessible to domestic violence survivors with criminal records;
- represents survivors of domestic violence in cutting-edge litigation (*Hernandez*);
- and counsels and assists others so they can succeed in litigation (*Tokatly*.)

She unselfishly devotes time to counseling law students - even those of other teachers (e.g., my students) -- showing them how to analyze the law

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.defensenet.org> (Click on Washington Immigration Defenders Project.)

<sup>2</sup> Previous award winners: 2002 - Charles Wheeler; 2003 - Lisa Brodyaga; 2004 - Chris Nugent.

and focus their energies, helping them grow and develop their own analytical and writing abilities, so that they can expand their academic understanding, and add their contributions to the broader community of advocates.

Annie's past employment at NWIRP and her ongoing community work reflect her humanitarian drive and creative energy, her firm commitment to bettering people's lives, and her dedication to using her professional skills and talents to insist on high standards of practice and justice in the legal system. Annie is an educator, an advocate and an inspiration with boundless energy and determination. She is dedicated to improving the level of knowledge and practice of advocates and attorneys representing noncitizens, and generating a higher measure of fairness and reasonable solutions for immigrants. She is equally committed to supporting individuals as they go through the process.

Annie shares her humanity, her knowledge and her expertise with the utmost generosity and humility. She is an innovator, having researched, designed and edited a criminal-immigration defense manual. Her scholarship in grappling with circuit court jurisprudence is legendary. Her incredible (quiet) leadership helped me understand some of the dynamics of domestic violence and immigration issues.

She helped to found – and remains active in - The National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women, a phenomenal, collaborative grassroots legal organization of domestic violence advocates, social workers, community advocates, and immigration lawyers, which, amazingly, has won both respect and deference from DHS and Congress. She has taken on the job of speaking out for defendants charged with domestic violence, while at the same time standing firm on protecting DV survivors.”