

Seven Stars Pave the Way for Countless Others to Follow

The 13th annual Spirit of Excellence Awards luncheon was the largest yet with 850 attendees who applauded seven award winners from across the country.

The Spirit of Excellence Awards celebrate the accomplishments of lawyers who excel in their professional settings; who personify excellence on the national, state or local level; and who have demonstrated a commitment to racial and ethnic diversity in the legal profession.

The motto of the awards—*ad astra per aspera*—is Latin for “to the stars with difficulty” and symbolizes the struggle of racially and ethnically diverse lawyers as they travel the road to personal and professional success.



From left to right: ABA President William H. Neukom; Mia Frances Yamamoto; Cesar Alvarez; Kay Hodge, Chair of the ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity; John Kozyak; Margaret Bush Wilson; Christopher Arriola; Lawrence Baca; George Bundy Smith

To watch video of the award winners, click on their names below:

- Cesar L. Alvarez of Miami, chief executive officer of Greenberg Traurig, LLP
- Christopher J. Arriola of San Jose, Calif., is an assistant district attorney for Santa Clara County
- Lawrence R. Baca of Virginia who recently retired from the U.S. Department of Justice as senior trial attorney for the Office of Tribal Justice
- John W. Kozyak of Miami, senior partner at Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton, PA
- Hon. George Bundy Smith of New York, partner at Chadbourne & Parke, LLP
- Margaret Bush Wilson of St. Louis, principal at Wilson & Associates
- Mia Frances Yamamoto of Los Angeles, principal at the Law Offices of Mia Frances Yamamoto