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HUMAN RIGHTS



FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

OBSERVER

Minnesota Advocates' Twentieth Anniversary Year Celebration, Progress, and Much Work Ahead

For Minnesota Advocates, 2003 was a year when we celebrated our Twentieth Anniversary with our largest-ever Human Rights Awards Dinner. Mary Robinson, the keynote speaker and award recipient, told the crowd of almost 700 that she chose to come to Minnesota for the celebration because she remembered a previous visit in the turbulent days right after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. In Minnesota, she said, "I found a community that was addressing these problems from a human rights perspective." She added, "We must hold to our standards in a difficult time."

It was a year when we honored the human rights values, leadership and legacy of Paul and Sheila Wellstone by creating the Wellstone Fellowship at Minnesota Advocates - a position that in the new year will give a young or mid-career professional an opportunity to work for a year in human rights.



Don Fraser

It was a year when Minnesota Advocates launched a new lunchtime speaker series - "Human Rights and National Security" - to address concerns in the community about the current balance between human rights and the war on terrorism. Among those contributing was former Congressman and Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser, a Minnesota Advocates board member, who said, "Strengthening relationships with other democratic nations and our international institutions is the best long-term path to reduce the likelihood of attack and achieve the safety we are seeking."

It was a year when a Minnesota Advocates team, after years of work, went back to Bulgaria to support the introduction of a new law in the parliament that would dramatically increase protection for that country's battered women. The law - on civil orders for protection, based on a Minnesota law - appeared close to passage this fall.

It was a year when Minnesota Advocates again helped more than 800 refugees and asylum seekers through the increasingly

complex and contentious process of immigration to the United States.

It was a year when we helped monitor and ultimately contributed to the final report from the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is investigating human rights violations - executions, torture, the dislocation of thousands of people - that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s.

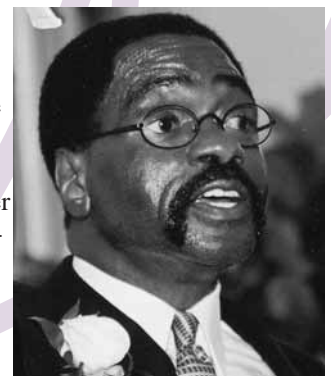
It was a year when Minnesota Advocates began work on its Battered Refugee and Immigrant Women Project, in which we

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Death Penalty Project Rubin Carter helps "keep the monster at bay"

"It's best that you try to keep that monster at bay before it's put into legislation."

Those were Rubin "Hurricane" Carter's words July 31st at a house party to benefit Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights' Death Penalty Project. The monster is the death penalty, and the potential legislation would be in the Minnesota Legislature.



Rubin "Hurricane" Carter

The generous crowd's donations will support re-activating the Death Penalty Project. In 1996, the project was forced to go on hiatus due to lack of funding. Now, thanks in part to its supporters, Minnesota Advocates has begun to carry on the work of the project, which will provide support to volunteer attorneys representing death row inmates,

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Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

The mission of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. Minnesota Advocates was founded in 1983 by a group of Minnesota lawyers who recognized the community's unique spirit of social justice as an opportunity to promote and protect human rights here at home and worldwide. We are a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that investigates and exposes human rights violations; represents immigrants and refugees in our community who are human rights victims; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through education and advocacy in Minnesota to engage the public, policy makers and children about human rights and cultural understanding. Minnesota Advocates holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.

From the Director's Desk

"Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." This statement begins the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a reminder to us that to advocate for human rights is to work for a world in which all people can freely live with dignity and respect.

In fact, "advocate" literally means to speak for something. As we look back on the state of human rights in 2003, we need to renew our commitment to speak for human rights. While the balance between national security and human rights, the laws of war, and military and foreign policy all present increasingly complicated issues, international human rights law presents basic, fundamental principles to focus our advocacy efforts.

In the culture of fear still prevalent in the United States after September 11, many immigrants and refugees are afraid to participate fully in our civil society. Many members of our community are afraid to join cultural and political groups, and afraid to participate in public meetings and community gatherings. Members of our community are afraid to speak out when their civil rights are violated or when they are targeted in increasingly punitive immigration policies. These conditions are intolerable in a free and democratic society and we must speak collectively to protect the human rights of all people living in our communities.

To speak for human rights means we must also speak out against all forms of injustice around the world. We must work diligently to ensure lives of dignity and respect for the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. We must speak out against the Indian Government for failing to protect the human rights of Muslim people in Gujarat. We must speak out against all forms of violence against women everywhere. We must speak in support of transitional justice and efforts to heal communities suffering after years of human

rights violations. We must speak in support of nonviolent alternatives to conflict in the world. We must continue to speak out until all people live free and equal in dignity and rights.

There is still much more work to be done to protect human rights here at home and around the world. People often ask us what they can do to help. First, you can commit to ensuring that all those you encounter in your communities are treated with dignity and respect through your own words and actions. You can support efforts to promote human rights in the United States and around the world through your volunteer work. You can write your elected representatives to encourage them to support policies that reflect a commitment to fundamental human rights and thank them when they maintain that commitment.

We are encouraged at Minnesota Advocates by your consistent support. We look forward to working together with you to be even stronger advocates for human rights in the coming year.



Robin Phillips
 Executive Director

Our Anniversary Year Continued from page 1

are applying our international experience investigating and documenting domestic violence as a human rights issue overseas to Minnesota's immigrant community. The project will identify barriers in the system that prevent women from getting help, and recommend strategies to overcome these barriers.

It was a year when Minnesota Advocates continued its co-sponsorship of the annual Regional Conference on Inclusive Communities, at which educators, police, community leaders and social service workers from the five-state region gathered for two days to create and learn about ways to bring more understanding, tolerance and inclusion to their increasingly diverse communities.

It was a year when Minnesota Advocates launched the Stop Violence Against Women website (www.stopvaw.org), a resource to help people in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union who work on issues of violence against women.

It was a year when Minnesota Advocates arranged for volunteer lawyers to counsel, and in some cases accompany, young, non-

“(T)he real work of soothing human suffering is done by small groups like Minnesota Advocates, whose many volunteers refuse to stop nudging the world toward redemption.”

citizen men from Muslim countries who were called in for questioning as part of the federal government's “special registration” program. Minnesota Advocates also fielded many questions over the phone from the students, tourists and temporary workers who were targeted by the program that the U.S. Department of Justice said was an anti-terrorism measure.

It was a year when Minnesota Advocates relaunched its Death Penalty Project to provide support to volunteer attorneys representing capital defendants in death penalty states and to provide education in Minnesota on death penalty issues. In 2003-04, the project's advocacy efforts will focus on defeating attempts to reintroduce capital punishment in Minnesota.



Paul and Sheila Wellstone

It was a year when Law & Politics magazine published a feature story called “Minnesota Advocates to the Rescue - Twenty years later and the organization is still sticking up for the voiceless all over the world.”

It was a year when the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* published an editorial celebrating our anniversary, saying, “... Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights has become one of the most prominent U.S.-based campaigners for fairness around the globe - and has opened the eyes of people here at home. ... (T)he real work of soothing human suffering is done by small groups like Minnesota Advocates, whose many volunteers refuse to stop nudging the world toward redemption.”

Minnesota Advocates, Partners Awarded for Immigration Work

Daniel Levy Award from National Lawyers Guild

The National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild in October selected Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, Centro Legal and Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota/Oficina Legal as co-recipients of the 2003 Daniel Levy Award.

The National Immigration Project initiated this award in 2002 to honor the memory of Daniel Levy, a tireless fighter for immigrants' rights who died of cancer in 2001. The award is given each year to an organization or organizations that exemplify Daniel Levy's work in promoting justice through effective advocacy, technical skills, and vision.

This year the board decided to name three organizations as co-recipients.

“I have personally worked closely with each of your organizations during my 17-year tenure at the National Immigration Project/NLG, and concur wholeheartedly with the board's choice,” Dan Kesselbrenner, Director of the National Lawyers

Guild, wrote to Minnesota Advocates, Centro Legal and Oficina Legal-Immigrant Law Center. “We wish that we could do more to recognize your organizations' critical work, but we are honored to be able to give you the Daniel Levy Award.”

“This award really makes us feel honored twice,” said Robin Phillips, Executive Director of Minnesota Advocates. “It's an honor, first, to be recognized by the National Lawyers Guild, which has done so much to fight for immigrants in this country. It's also a real honor to share the award with organizations like Centro Legal and Oficina Legal-Immigrant Law Center.”

The award was presented Oct. 23 at the National Lawyers Guild Conference in Minneapolis. The Boston-based National Immigration Project is a network of immigration lawyers, law students, jailhouse lawyers, and legal workers who work to end unlawful immigration practices, to recognize the contributions of immigrants in this country, to promote fair immigration practices, and to expand the civil and human rights of all immigrants, regardless of their status in the United States.

Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission Issues Final Report Minnesota Advocates Team Monitored Commission, Contributed to Report

More than 69,000 people in Peru either died or disappeared from 1980 to 2000 as a result of internal armed conflict between the government and armed rebel groups, according to the final report issued August 28 by Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The report documents the death toll at more than three times the original estimate. It provides detailed accounts of human rights violations committed during this 20-year period, identifies who is responsible for the violence, and suggests proper reparations. The commission reported that three out of every four victims were poor, indigenous persons, traditionally discriminated against, who found themselves in the middle of a violent struggle between the Peruvian military and bands of rebels attempting to overthrow the government.

A team of Minnesota Advocates volunteers and staff last year monitored the work of the commission in Peru, interviewed officials and victims, and visited prisons and mass gravesites. At the commission's request, the Minnesota Advocates team contributed its findings to the final report.

The Peruvian commission held numerous public hearings, exhumed three mass graves and interviewed more than 17,000 individuals, many of them in isolated mountain villages. It concluded that the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), an armed insurgent group, was the principal perpetrator of crimes and violations of human rights. Sendero Luminoso bears responsibility for 54 percent of the reported victim deaths. A second armed insurgent group, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) was responsible for an additional 1.5 percent of victim deaths.



The Minnesota Advocates Peru team visited mass grave sites at Lucanamarca.

The commission found that the armed forces applied a strategy of indiscriminate repression against the population suspected of belonging to the Sendero Luminoso, committing such serious human rights abuses as forced disappearances; torture; cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment; crimes against humanity; and extensive practices of sexual violence against women.

The report places responsibility for grave and massive human rights violations on the administrations of Presidents Fernando Belaunde, Alan Garcia, and Alberto Fujimori, all of whom were democratically elected. The Belaunde and Garcia governments of the 1980s are blamed for giving too much power to the military and failing to effectively address the conflict - resulting in the death or disappearance of thousands of people in the military emergency zones. President Fujimori's self-coup in April of 1992 brought an end to the rule of law and culminated in new anti-terrorism legislation that violated due process guarantees, as well as the Peruvian Constitution and international treaties. Thousands were convicted in unfair trials in "faceless courts," whose judges were often hooded to prevent their identification, in speedy court proceedings in which the right to a defense was severely restricted.

The commission also charged that President Fujimori, his advisor Vladimiro Montesinos, and high-level officials of the National Intelligence Service are criminally responsible for the assassinations, forced disappearances and massacres perpetrated by the "Colina" death squad.

The report includes a Comprehensive Plan for Reparations in which individual and collective, symbolic and material forms of compensation are combined. It places emphasis on symbolic reparations, attention to education and mental health, and individual and collective economic reparations such as institutional reconstruction and community development. Because the vast majority of victims were indigenous peasants, the report suggests that they should now receive "preferential treatment from the State."

The commission also recommends fair punishment of the perpetrators of the human rights abuses between 1980 and 2000 - including those in the military and government agencies.

The commission's report is a crucial first step in the direction of healing victims, identifying all lives lost, and national reconciliation in Peru. It is now up to the government of Peru to implement the recommendations and prosecute the perpetrators of human rights abuses. The final report is available in Spanish at www.cverdad.org.pe.

Finding Asylum

Many “Hard-fought” Battles by Volunteer Lawyers Make a Difference

Minnesota Advocates’ Asylum Project continued its high rate of success this year securing asylum for people who otherwise could have faced persecution, torture or even death in their home countries. Minnesota Advocates’ Refugee and Immigrant Program, with the help of about 350 volunteer lawyers, will serve more than 800 people this year.

Eventually, more than 90 percent of the people represented by

Minnesota Advocates’ Refugee and Immigrant Program, with the help of about 350 volunteer lawyers, will serve more than 800 people this year.

Minnesota Advocates are granted asylum in the United States. The successes this year are notable in the midst of so much rapid change in the ways that the federal government manages immigration.

“These wins represent some hard-fought battles by dedicated lawyers,” said Michele Garnett McKenzie, Director of Minnesota Advocates’ Refugee and Immigrant Program. “They’ve helped people rebuild their lives.”

One of the most recent grants of asylum involved a man from Sudan who was imprisoned and tortured by the government because of his Christianity and the political opinions connected to that religion. With his safety secured, he said he feels “like a whole person again,” and is now planning to study engineering at the University of Minnesota.

In his case, the Board of Immigration Appeals found that the Immigration Judge improperly relied upon findings of “oddi-

ties” and “implausibilities” to discredit the applicant. Reversing the immigration judge’s credibility finding, the Board stated “[a]n Immigration Judge’s personal conjecture is not a proper basis for making a credibility determination,” and went on to grant the applicant asylum in the United States.

Appearing before the Asylum Office, the Immigration Court, and the Board of Immigration Appeals, winning asylum cases in 2003 came from Gambia, Sudan, Guinea, Togo, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, China, Liberia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Colombia, Tibet and Egypt. It is notable that the Board of Immigration Appeals reversed the decision of the Immigration Judge in two cases and remanded in a third, bucking the trend of summary affirmations of asylum appeals.

Thanks to the following volunteers for reporting your asylum victories to Minnesota Advocates: Peter Ackerberg, Brian Aust, Chantal Bostock, Roger Branigan, Ben Casper, Kerry Cork, Clara Davis, Karen Ellingson, Erick Flyckt, Bob Gilbertson, Tom Gilde, Miguel Gonzales, Tamar Gronvall, Dan Hedlund, Don Hawkinson, Ed Hayward, Amy Schroeder Ireland, Duane Krohnke, Rebecca Lawrence, Tim Morrow, Caroline Ostrom, Derek Patrin, Michelle Rivero, Steven Shakman, Nancy Wolf, Tong Wu, and Paul Zerby, and to consulting attorney volunteers Linda Close, Laura Danielson, Lesley Guyton, Jeff Larson, Kathy Moccio, David Wilson, and Julie Zimmer.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who represented our clients this year.

Community Forum on Peru

Brings Concepts of International Justice to Minnesota

“A country that forgets its history is condemned to repeat it,” reads the motto of the Peru Truth & Reconciliation Commission. It is a powerful statement that reflects the commission’s dedication to commemorate the decades of conflict within Peru, in order for future violence to be averted.

On October 21, Minnesota Advocates sponsored a community forum entitled, “Speaking Truth to Justice: The Peruvian Truth & Reconciliation Commission.” The event, which was free and open to the public, began with a panel discussion on the recent completion of the Truth & Reconciliation process in Peru. Panel

members included Peruvian lawyer Maria del Carmen Cabrel Navarro and two members of Minnesota Advocates’ human rights monitoring mission to Peru in November 2002: Colleen Beebe, Deputy Executive Director of the Immigrant Law Center, and Jennifer Prestholdt, Deputy Director of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Panelists addressed the mechanisms and processes of the TRC and shared insight about what follow-up steps are now crucial. The event was co-sponsored by the Resource Center of the Americas, Rights Action, and the University of Minnesota Institute for Global Studies.

Founder's Reflection

Samuel H. Heins

Note: This article is one of an on-going series of reflections by the founding members of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights to recognize our 20th anniversary year. Samuel D. Heins is a member of the Minnesota Advocates board, and was its first chairman. He is a partner at the Minneapolis law firm of Heins, Mills & Olson.



Sam Heins remembers the early 1980s as a time when the Twin Cities, and its legal community, were not as globally connected as they are today. But in 1983, Heins said, a set of circumstances came together to create an organization in Minneapolis that in the decades ahead would touch the lives of people all over the world, and play a significant role advocating for human rights at home in Minnesota, around the country and overseas.

Heins was part of a group of lawyers who discovered 20 years ago this year that they shared an interest in international events, as well as a sense that they could have an impact far beyond Minnesota. The group included David Weissbrodt, Arthur Benson, Thomas Tinkham, William Cameron, Robert Sands, Barbara Frey, James Dorsey, Thomas Johnson, Wood Foster, Jr., Donald Fraser and Thomas Fraser.

“We had the notion that we could be useful in international human rights work,” Heins said. “And we were interested in expanding our professional horizons.”

So began, in 1983, the Minnesota Lawyers International Human Rights Committee, which evolved into Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Heins said the organization’s ultimate success - helping hundreds of asylum seekers; investigating and working to overcome human rights violations overseas; building the constituency for human rights and the rule of law every year among thousands of students and community members - would have been far more difficult without the energy and interest in the Minnesota legal community, and the timely guidance of Don Fraser and David Weissbrodt.

“They could focus us,” Heins said. “They could supply the what-next. ... It was Don’s idea that professional people around the world could join forces to protect each other - lawyers, journalists, doctors. That was the thinking.”

Weissbrodt at that time was on leave from the University of Minnesota Law School, working for Amnesty International. Fraser, of course, was the former nine-term Congressman from Minnesota who, before he came home to be elected Mayor of Minneapolis in 1980, was among Washington’s most respected internationalists.

The commitment of Heins’ group of lawyers, focused by Fraser and Weissbrodt, led to the group’s defining moment and its first project - creating an international standard to investigate suspicious deaths when governments are suspects.

This idea became the Minnesota Protocol, which was adopted for use by agencies of the United Nations and continues to be used around the world. For Minnesota Advocates, that project set an organizational precedent that shaped the group’s work for the next 20 years. The Minnesota Protocol had international impact, and it was entirely created by volunteers.

Today, Minnesota Advocates has 50 volunteers for every paid staff member. Every year volunteer lawyers, teachers, artists, doctors and community leaders contribute the equivalent of more than \$3 million in time and services - quadrupling the organization’s budget.

What sustains volunteers’ commitment, Heins said, are the glimpses they get of the impact they make. They see the asylum applicant find a home in safety; a class of students grasp the concept of human rights and convince their school board to stop buying sports gear made in overseas sweatshops; women in the developing world who for the first time find help escaping domestic violence or sexual abuse; children overseas who, for the first time in their lives, are in school. Heins in particular remembered Minnesota Advocates’ 1987 Human Rights Awards Dinner, when the organization honored the Organization of Families of the Detained and Disappeared in Argentina, Guatemala and South Africa.

“It was deeply moving,” Heins said. “These people were so courageous. And they were obviously touched that people in the middle of the United States knew about them and cared about their work. ... It was more than mere ceremony. It was an affirmation of their courage.”

“... professional people around the world could join forces to protect each other - lawyers, journalists, doctors. That was the thinking.”
- Samuel H. Heins

Heins said Minnesota Advocates' future will depend on its ability to keep itself vital - working on the human rights issues that matter here at home and overseas, and staying in touch with the communities of professionals that provide so much of the organization's ambition, resources and talent.

“I think the advocates will always do well to provide opportunities for people, so their capacity to do good is expanded,” Heins said. “That was one of our ideas from the start.”

Battered Refugee and Immigrant Women Project

"Extremely Compelling Situation"

Minnesota Advocates has finished the research phase of its project to document the obstacles faced by immigrant and refugee women when they seek protection from domestic abuse.

The team of eleven volunteers and the Women's Program staff have interviewed more than 120 different legal, medical and social service professionals. The drafting of the report - "State and Community Responses to Domestic Violence Against Immigrant and Refugee Women in the Twin Cities" - is due to be published next spring.

"Our interviews and research so far have revealed an extremely compelling situation for battered immigrant and refugee women," said Cheryl Thomas, Director of the Women's Program. "Language barriers, internal community pressures, and fear of immigration sanctions are leaving battered immigrant and refugee women trapped and isolated in violent relationships. There is a strong need in our community to document these difficult circumstances, describe how our community is responding to them and promote necessary systems change."

The team's immediate challenge is synthesizing information collected through the interviews. The project's Steering Committee - composed of domestic violence advocates from many different

communities in the Twin Cities - is now helping the team review and analyze the information for the final report. The Steering Committee will also provide feedback on the report in the spring and help develop a plan for publicizing the report's findings and recommendations.

The Women's Program is continuing, at the same time, to participate in the Immigrant and Refugee Battered Women's Task Force. The Task Force is an informal group of advocates from Twin Cities domestic violence organizations that conducts bi-annual trainings on domestic violence and immigration. This summer's training, held at Metro State University on June 19 and 20, was very well-attended. This fall's training will be held November 20 and 21 at Church United, 1000 1st St. SE, Little Falls, MN.

"Language barriers, internal community pressures, and fear of immigration sanctions are leaving battered immigrant and refugee women trapped and isolated in violent relationships."

- Cheryl Thomas

Human Rights Education Trainings

Global, Peace, and Human Rights Education Network Classes

Minnesota's students come from different cultural, economic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds, and it can be a challenge to bring such diverse groups together and create a cohesive, supportive classroom. Beginning in November, the Minnesota Global, Peace, and Human Rights Education Network is offering several learning opportunities for educators to explore available resources and share best practices in the human rights education field. Minnesota Advocates is a member of the education network and will help to organize and facilitate the sessions. Dates and locations for the sessions are listed below. Interested educators can obtain more information from Sarah Herzog at the Institute for Global Studies: 612-624-7346, shertzog@umn.edu. You may register on-line for the courses by visiting <http://igs.cla.umn.edu/outreach/ghrnetwork.htm>.

Introduction to Global, Peace, and Human Rights Education: \$75 for the series

Location: Human Rights Center, University of Minnesota Law School, 229 19th Ave. S, Minneapolis

Dates: November 11, 2003 - Universality of Culture & Human Rights; January 13, 2004 - From Civil Rights to Human Rights; February 10, 2004 - Economic Rights in a Diverse Classroom; March 9, 2004 - Visioning the Future: Best Practices.

Advanced Topic Series in Human Rights Education: \$50 for the series

Location: Resource Center of the Americas, 3019 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis

Dates: Monday, November 10, 2003, 4-6 p.m. - Right to Learn: Education and Human Rights; Monday, January 12, 2004, 4-6 p.m. - Speaking Truths: Justice and Human Rights; Monday, February 9, 2004, 4-6 p.m. - Human Realities: Women and Human Rights; Monday, March 8, 2004, 4-6 p.m. - Truth and Activism: Human Rights Defenders.

The Global, Peace, and Human Rights Learning Circle: Free

The Learning Circle will be a small, on-going gathering of a maximum of 15 educators, who will share their ideals, goals, practices, and honest experiences in creating an environment and learning experience for all to develop to their fullest potential. First meeting will take place at the Human Rights Center on Monday, November 17, 4-6 p.m.

House Parties

A Minnesota Advocates Tradition Continues

Death Penalty Project *(Continued from page 1)*

coordinate trainings on death penalty issues, and combat attempts to re-introduce the death penalty to Minnesota.

Carter, famous for his gale-force punches as a boxer, was wrongfully convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison in 1966. Carter was exonerated and released in 1985. His story was later told in a song by Bob Dylan, and a major motion picture starring Denzel Washington. Carter now serves as the Executive Director of the Association for the Defense of the Wrongfully Convicted in Toronto.

Thanks to the hospitality of Sam and Sylvia Kaplan, the party was a stunning success. In addition to raising money, the event brought together community members to support the Death Penalty Project, and elevated public awareness of capital punishment issues in Minnesota. More than 400 people attended the event - lawyers, judges, advocates, academics, and constituents who simply oppose the death penalty.

Carter admonished the crowd to prevent the death penalty from returning to Minnesota. Carter was particularly concerned with the possibility that the decision on capital punishment could be left not to the legislature but to voters, still sorting through fresh fears of terrorism.

“Fear always makes the wolf look bigger than he is,” Carter



Minneapolis lawyer Sandra Babcock, left, a member of the Death Penalty Project Steering Committee, helped arrange the appearance by Rubin Carter at the July 31 house party. The event was generously hosted by Sylvia and Sam Kaplan, right.

said. “It is totally insane to ask for a perfect punishment - which is death -from an imperfect system.”

Women’s Human Rights Program: Sharing the “Stop Violence” website

More than a hundred people filled Marlene Kayser's home in St. Paul September 15 for the Women's Program Fall House Party, which highlighted the Stop Violence Against Women website being developed by staff and volunteers of the Women's Program.



Jolanta Howard

The website is an on-line education and advocacy tool aimed at combating violence against women in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Long-time supporters and guests new to the program mingled well into the evening, enjoying Marlene's legendary hospitality. Congresswoman Betty McCollum was among the program's supporters to attend.

Cheryl Thomas, the program director, gave special recognition to the many volunteers who have been researching and writing material for the website: Amy Brown, Barbara Cole, Bo Chun, Eliana Bronstein, Elizabeth Braun, Heather Sammons, Jessica Schnabel, Jolanta Howard, Kara Obermeyer, Jess Warning, Moira Lynch, Karen Lundquist, Karen Sullivan-Hook, Karensa Fischer, Kate Merkel, Luana Banu, Marian Heinrichs, Milana P. Tolins, Mindy Brueggemann, Patrick Peterson, Penni Frank, Robyn Linde, Siv Dobrovolny, Tovah Flygare and Valerie Field.

Jolanta Howard, one of the website volunteers, spoke about her family's life in Lithuania. She said she cherishes her freedom here in the United States to make change through programs like the Women's Program.

Cheryl also thanked current and former staff members Molly Beutz, Elisabeth Duban, Rose Park, Victoria Saca, Elizabeth Snyder and Christine Tefft, who have all had roles in designing, researching and writing for the website. Special thanks goes to Molly Beutz, who recently completed a year-long fellowship through Yale Law School. Molly was instrumental in pre-launching the website in March.

Molly, Rose Park and Christine Tefft demonstrated the website for house party guests with help from Urban Planet's Charles Weed, who generously provides technical support for the project.

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Refugee and Immigrant Program: Our work with asylum seekers

Minnesota Advocates' Refugee & Immigrant Program celebrated its first house party early in October to both raise money for and highlight its work on behalf of asylum seekers.

The event was hosted by Hyder Khan, Nazneen Khatoon, and their son, Sulmaan Khan, in their Bloomington home. More than 100 people joined us on a warm fall evening that featured a fragrant array of Indian food; many stories from people who had found safety with the help of Minnesota Advocates and its volunteer lawyers; and finally, impromptu musical entertainment provided by guitarist Jesus Purisaca Ruiz.

In his remarks, Hyder Khan encouraged the crowd to remember how their contributions would be multiplied many times over. The Refugee and Immigrant Program has an annual budget of \$242,000, but is supplemented by more than \$2.6 million in legal services by volunteer lawyers. David Parker, a University of Minnesota physician who is a member of the Minnesota Advocates board, made the case for physicians and therapists to join in the effort to provide free medical assessments to asylum seekers for documentation of their asylum claims.

We would like to thank the host committee for the event:

Abdinur Ali, Zarina Baber, Sarjit and Rabinder Bains, Audrey Carr, Ikramul Haq, Muzammil (Minou) Hussain, Loan Huynh, Jerry Ingber, Shuja G. Khan, Mark Lee, Kathleen Moccio, Hassan Mohamud, Dipankar Mukherjee and Meena Natarajan, Valentine Ngwanyia, Irfan Sandozi and Afshan Anjum, and Zafar Siddiqui.

Among those attending the party were Refugee & Immigrant Program Steering Committee members Valentine Ngwanyia, Mark Lee, Lesley Guyton, Mary Kariuki, and Loan Huynh.

Many thanks: Minnesota Advocates would like to thank the following restaurants for their generous donations of food to the Refugee and Immigrant Program House Party:

**Bombay Bistro
Jewel of India
New Delhi
Tandoor
Taste of India**

Staff and Intern Update

Brenda Anfinson, Program Assistant in the Refugee and Immigrant Program, is our Lutheran Volunteer Corps worker for the next year. She graduated from Luther College in May with a degree in Spanish and Anthropology.

Amy Beier, Program Assistant in the Refugee and Immigrant Program, graduated from the University of Minnesota last May with majors in Global Studies and French.

Emily Good, Staff Attorney in the Refugee and Immigrant Program, graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School last May. She has previously interned with Minnesota Advocates. She received her undergraduate degree in American Studies from the University of Iowa.

Megan Powers has been promoted from Education Program Associate to Education Program Director. Congratulations, Megan!

Molly Beutz, Visiting Legal Fellow in the Women's Program, finished her term at Minnesota Advocates in September. Her exceptional energy and commitment to our work will be greatly missed. Thank you, Molly!

Eric Iverson, the Refugee & Immigrant Program Assistant, left Minnesota Advocates in August to attend law school at American University. Eric's many languages will be missed by our clients! Eric's human rights work continues - we have heard that he has begun volunteering with the War Crimes Research Project at American University.

Many dedicated interns, whose work is vital to our mission, assist the staff of Minnesota Advocates. This fall, we welcome:

Laura Young and **Anna Cronk** in the Death Penalty Project; **Nicholas Dobbins**, **Megan Elliot**, **Kelsey Boesch**, **Margaret Carlson**, and **Allison Kahn** in the Education Program; **Elizabeth Pappas** and **Adriana Dobrzycka** in Special Projects; **Lily Lyons**, **Hlee Vang**, **Peder Nestingen**, **Mary Ellison**, **Danielle Serie**, and **Siv Dobrovolny** in the Refugee and Immigrant Program.

Minnesota Advocates at the UN

New Standard for Corporate Responsibility: David Weissbrodt Wrote New UN Agreement

A major milestone for the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights over the summer was the passage of the UN Human Rights Norms for Transnational Corporations.

This agreement - which sets human rights standards for international corporations and other businesses, and is intended to spur greater corporate social responsibility - was written by David Weissbrodt, a sub-commission member who is a founding board member of Minnesota Advocates and a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School.

Historically, international human rights law has focused on state responsibilities. While international law also places



David Weissbrodt

obligations on businesses, Weissbrodt believed there was a need to clarify the scope of those obligations in a changing world. As global businesses have expanded their power in the world, an increasing number of UN bodies and others have recognized that with greater power should come greater responsibility.

The new UN agreement pulls together into one document the key international human rights laws, standards, and best practices applying to all businesses.

“The norms essentially represent a restatement of existing international law on human rights, humanitarian law, international labor law, environmental law, anti-corruption law, consumer protection, etc.” Weissbrodt told the BBC. “And what they do essentially is set forth a restatement of all those laws, and say that any company that wants to respect the law and be socially responsible would want to do the things that are set forth in the norms.”

No responsible corporation wants to be a party to abusive working conditions or other human rights violations. The UN Human Rights Norms and the explanatory Commentary will help businesses know and comply with the relevant human rights laws, and will provide a clear road map to action that transcends the conflicting provisions of the various private codes of conduct. They also endorse methods of independent monitoring and other implementation mechanisms to hold businesses accountable for violations of human rights, humanitarian, labor,

environmental, and other international principles and best practices, and will contribute to further international legal development of those issues.

In an increasingly interdependent world, where poverty, disease, violence, war, human rights abuses and environmental degradation persist, clear international standards will help ensure that business will be part of the solution to today's problems and not - knowingly or unknowingly - exacerbate them.

To meet the new challenges with a sensible legal framework for business behavior is in the interests of the companies themselves, as well as their workers, shareholders, communities, and other stakeholders. Indeed, the UN Human Rights Norms can make a substantial contribution to long-term development and poverty reduction, which benefits both business and society.

Minnesota Advocates Team Raises Profile at United Nations Human Rights Meeting in Geneva

A team from Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights attended the 55th session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland, in August to bring some of the organization's priority issues to the international forum.

Executive Director Robin Phillips and Refugee and Immigrant Program Staff Attorney Manpreet Dhanjal accompanied volunteers Hyder Khan, Andrew Parker, Penny Parker, Joe (Chip) Pitts, and Irfan Sandozi to the sub-commission meeting. Parker documented the discussion and voting records of the sub-commission meeting until its conclusion on August 15, and maintained an online journal for the entire three-week long sub-commission meeting.

The team contributed to deliberations on a wide range of issues. Penny Parker, for instance, delivered speeches on human rights violations in country situations around the world, and the violence against Muslims in India, highlighting the Gujarat massacre. Dhanjal presented Minnesota Advocates' findings and recommendations for the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Minnesota Advocates' mission also met with many members of the sub-commission to discuss the work of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the community response to the rise of Hindu nationalism in the Indian government. Francoise Jane Hampson, the sub-commission member

Continued on page 11

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from the United Kingdom, spoke publicly on Gujarat and Muslims in India. Her remarks included the possibility of genocide and crimes against humanity by the Indian government.

Pitts presented a joint statement by Minnesota Advocates and the Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights supporting the passage of the United Nations Human Rights Norms and Commentary for Transnational Corporations. Oxfam and Human Rights Advocates asked Khan and Andrew Parker, respectively, to present a speech supporting the Norms and Commentary.

Two Minnesota Advocates board members are part of the sub-commission - David Weissbrodt is the United States' expert to the sub-commission, and Barbara Frey is the United States' alternate to the sub-commission. Frey presented her working paper on the human rights impact of small arms and light weapons. The presentation was the first of a three-year study, with a progress report to be filed in 2004 and a final report in 2005.

Muria Kruger, an associate at Heins Mills & Olson, and Bridget Marks, an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota, supported Weissbrodt at this year's sub-commission meeting.

"The mission was a wonderful opportunity to give our programs and projects a larger impact on international forums," Dhanjal said. "With our continued presence at the sub-commission, Minnesota Advocates will continue to be an active member in the international human rights arena while attempting to implement international human rights standards in the United States and overseas."



Minnesota Advocates UN Team: Robin Phillips, Manpreet Dhanjal, Hyder Khan, and Irfan Sandozi. Not pictured: Andrew Parker, Penny Parker and Chip Pitts.

A CLE for the Eighth Circuit



More than 190 lawyers - including Michael Gans, left, the Clerk of the Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and Bob Gilbertson of Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi - attended Minnesota Advocates' latest Continuing Legal Education training October 3. The free workshop gave attorneys of all experience levels an overview of procedures for asylum appeals in the Eighth Circuit - which, because of changes in immigration rulings, is attracting more appeals. Co-sponsors of the training were the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers; the Minnesota Hispanic Bar Association; the MSBA's Appellate Practice Association and New Lawyers Section; West Publishing; Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi; and the University of St. Thomas. Special thanks to Bob Webber of Myers Thompson, who organized the seminar; Robins Kaplan's Gilbertson and Sally Silk, who produced the training materials; and Amy Schroeder Ireland of Leonard, Street & Deinard, who was Minnesota Advocates' liaison and coordinator for the conference.

**You can create a legacy in
human rights**

—
Please remember
Minnesota Advocates
in your estate planning.

Events Update

Women's Human Rights Speaker Series *Women's Rights, Health Care and Health Policy*

Presented by State Senator Linda Berglin

Thursday, November 6, 2003, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Briggs and Morgan, P.A., 2200 IDS Center

Linda Berglin has represented Minnesota in the state legislature for over 30 years. She is currently the chair of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, and counts as one of her greatest achievements the passage of the MinnesotaCare legislation. Complimentary lunch is provided for those who pre-register. Please RSVP by Tuesday, November 4 at 12:00 to Mary Hunt at (612) 341-3302 x 107 or mhunt@mnadvocates.org.

Death Penalty Project Brown Bag Series *Litigation Before the International Court of Justice in Mexico v. United States*

Presented by Sandra Babcock

Thursday, November 13, 2003, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights is proud to announce the launching of a new speaker series: the Death Penalty Project Brown Bag lunches. The series will be held every other month at a location to be announced. On November 13 at Dorsey & Whitney LLP, Sandra Babcock will discuss her work on behalf of Mexican nationals on death row in the US. One CLE credit will be applied for. Please RSVP to Rose Park by Wednesday, November 12 at (612) 341-3302 x 106 or email rpark@mnadvocates.org. Watch our website, www.mnadvocates.org, for more information on future brown bag lunches.

Human Rights and National Security Speaker Series *Eliminating Bias in the Legal Profession Post September 11*

Presented by Michele Garnett McKenzie

Thursday, November 20, 2003, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Fredrikson & Byron, PA, 4000 Pillsbury Center

Michele Garnett McKenzie is the director of the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights' Refugee and Immigrant Program. Ms. McKenzie will discuss the new forms of bias faced by immigrants since the attacks of September 11, and how to prevent such bias from interfering with access to justice and effective legal services. One elimination of bias credit will be applied for. The lecture is free and open to the public; lunch is provided for those who pre-register. RSVP by Tuesday, November 18 to Rose Park at (612) 341-3302 ext. 106, or email rpark@mnadvocates.org.

STOPVAW Website Launch

The Women's Program will launch the Stop Violence Against Women Website from Budapest, Hungary on November 25, 2003. All sections of the website -- Domestic Violence, Trafficking in Women, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault -- will be available for use. The website was created in partnership with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Open Society Institute as a tool for advocates in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) to use as they develop strategies to address violence against women. It provides research, reports, model and sample laws and policies, training materials, international and regional laws and standards, European Union documents and a mentoring component. MAHR's partner, the Open Society Institute, will host an event to formally launch the website in Budapest.

Women's Human Rights Speaker Series *Mainstreaming Gender: Advocating for Women's Rights in the Int'l Criminal Court*

Presented by Barbara Frey

Thursday, December 4, 2003, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Briggs and Morgan, P.A., 2200 IDS Center

Barbara Frey is Director of the Human Rights Program in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota. She is a founding member, former Executive Director, and current member of the Board of Directors of Minnesota Advocates. Complimentary lunch is provided for those who pre-register. Please RSVP by Tuesday, December 2 at 12:00 to Mary Hunt at (612) 341-3302 x 107 or mhunt@mnadvocates.org.

Human Rights and National Security Speaker Series *The Post September 11 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Court*

Presented by Judge Michael J. Davis

Thursday, December 18, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Fredrikson & Byron, PA, 4000 Pillsbury Center

Judge Michael J. Davis serves on the FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) Court, a special federal court which makes determinations on warrant applications by government agencies gathering foreign intelligence information in the U.S. Judge Davis will speak about the FISA Court and the expansion of the government's FISA powers under the USA Patriot Act. One CLE credit will be applied for. Lunch will be provided for those who pre-register. RSVP by Tuesday, December 16 to Rose Park at (612) 341-3302 ext. 106 or email rpark@mnadvocates.org.

**C.L.E. Session:
 “Emerging Issues in Human Rights:
 Fact-Finding, Monitoring, and Reporting”**

Minnesota Advocates will offer a three credit C.L.E. course on Human Rights Day, December 10, 2003, from 1:00-4:30pm in room 005 of the Law-Graduate Schools Building at Hamline University. The C.L.E. course will be followed by Minnesota Advocates’ annual “Celebration of Community & Diversity”, 4:30-7:00 p.m. at Hamline University. The cost of the C.L.E. is \$75. The celebration is free and open to the public.

Agenda

Introduction to Human Rights Law

Robin Phillips, Executive Director
 Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

Human Rights Fact-Finding, Monitoring & Reporting

Jennifer Prestholdt, Deputy Director
 Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

Human Rights Monitoring in the U.S.: The Battered Refugee and Immigrant Women Documentation Project

Cheryl Thomas, Women’s Program Director,
 Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights
 and Molly Beutz, Attorney, Faegre & Benson

Three general C.L.E. credits will be applied for.

For more information on the celebration and C.L.E. session, please visit www.mnadvocates.org

For directions to Hamline University, go to <http://web.hamline.edu/maps.html>

Emerging Issues in Human Rights: C.L.E. Registration

I will attend the C.L.E. session. Enclosed is my registration fee of:

- Attorneys, legal professionals, government employees, etc: \$75.
- Student rate: \$20
- I cannot attend the C.L.E., but I would like the materials sent to me. (\$20 cost)

Name _____ **Email address:** _____

Org./Firm/School _____ **Attorney Registration #** _____

Work Address _____ **City/State/ZIP** _____

Work Phone _____ **Home Phone** _____

Enclosed is my check.

Please charge my registration fee:

Mastercard/Visa #: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Please return registration form by November 30 to:

**Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights
 650 Third Avenue South, #550
 Minneapolis, MN 55402-1940**

Minnesota Advocates News Briefs



Interpreters needed

The Refugee and Immigrant Program is looking for volunteer interpreters to help asylum seekers in Minnesota. Arabic, French, Spanish, and Somali language skills are especially valuable. Training will be provided, date to be determined. For more information, please contact Amy Beier at (612) 341-3302 x 118.

Doctors and therapists needed

The Refugee and Immigrant Program is looking for volunteer doctors and therapists to help document asylum claims. The work is in partnership with the Center for Victims of Torture and Physicians for Human Rights. Anyone interested in volunteering - as well as any attorney who needs an evaluation of a client in support of an asylum case - should contact Manpreet Dhanjal at (612) 341-3302 x 103.

Save the date for International Women's Day

The 9th Annual International Women's Day Celebration will convene on Saturday, March 6, 2004, at Mondale Hall in the University of Minnesota Law School on the campus's West Bank. Save the date, and watch for details.

Human Rights Day 2003: A Celebration of Community & Diversity

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights' annual celebration of Human Rights Day will take place Wednesday, December 10,

from 4:30-7:00pm. Hamline University School of Law will host these events in their University Conference Center in the Law/Graduate Schools Building. The event will commemorate the 55th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, while highlighting the contributions of our outstanding volunteers, supporters, and constituents. This free event will include entertainment, food and beverages donated by local restaurants, a door prize drawing, a small exhibition of human rights artwork, a silent auction, and a short program recognizing some of our volunteers. Before the celebration, we will offer a three-credit Continuing Legal Education course. Please visit Minnesota Advocates' website for more details.

Minnesota Advocates **On-line Donations**

Click on "Donate" at www.mnadvocates.org

This option allows supporters with any major credit card to make nearly instantaneous contributions to the cause of human rights, in a single gift or recurring monthly gifts. The same mechanism also allows transfers of stock.

The service is administered by VeriSign, the most experienced company managing internet financial transactions, and the information contained in this secure transaction will not be shared with anyone other than Minnesota Advocates.

What's more, the processing of these donations is underwritten by a grant, which means that every penny of your credit card contribution through our website will be applied to the work of Minnesota Advocates.

Attention federal employees:

You can support Minnesota Advocates through your donations in the Combined Federal Campaign. Look for us in the CFC catalog under Human and Civil Rights Organizations of America.

New Education Web Resources

Updates "Rights Sites" Project

Minnesota Advocates' Education Program staff surveyed teachers from our Rights Sites schools around the Twin Cities metro area this summer and posted updates about their human rights lessons and activities on the organization's website.

The Rights Sites Project is a partnership between Minnesota Advocates and 8 elementary, middle and high schools in the Twin Cities metro area. Teachers and administrators work closely with our education staff to create effective and supportive human rights learning environments in their classrooms. The new human rights education updates on our website (www.mnadvocates.org) will assist schools in planning and troubleshooting future projects.

The Education Program also compiled and posted new post-9/11 educational web resources for community groups, schools, and others interested in human rights in a post-9/11 world. The new web page explores resources and topics such as anti-terrorism efforts, the current situation in Guantanamo Bay, new legislation affecting immigrants in Minnesota, and other information related to human rights and national security. In the coming months, the Education Program will continue to add post-9/11 resources and information to our website.

Wellstone Fellowship Applications

Minnesota Advocates has begun to accept applications for the Wellstone Fellowship, a new position created this year to honor the work and legacy of the late Paul and Sheila Wellstone. The Wellstones were committed advocates for human rights and great friends and supporters of this organization.

This appointment, beginning in the spring of 2004, will provide a recent law school graduate, or lawyer pursuing a new course of his or her career, to work for a year in human rights. For details, see the Minnesota Advocates website: www.mnadvocates.org. Applications must be postmarked no later than February 15. No calls please.

Volunteer Corner Mary Ellingen

Minneapolis lawyer Mary Ellingen first became a Minnesota Advocates volunteer in the spring of 2000, when she participated in the Women's Program's fact-finding mission to Poland to document sexual harassment. Mary was an invaluable member of the team, both preparing background information on Poland beforehand and conducting many of the interviews with the team in Poland.



Mary Ellingen

She remains an active member of the Women's Program volunteer team. She is currently helping in Minnesota Advocates' project documenting obstacles immigrant women face in gaining protection from domestic abuse. She has already conducted more than twenty interviews with people in the Twin Cities who can affect the lives of

battered women - police, social service workers, judges and community leaders. She has scheduled numerous additional interviews, and will be helping to draft the report.

Mary says that the project has allowed her to get a "first-hand look at how the face of Minnesota is changing." She hopes that the report will "give concrete suggestions and recommendations for improvements and point the way for changes that will benefit all battered women."

Mary, whose contributions were recognized by the entire organization in 2002 when she received the Minnesota Advocates Volunteer Award, said, "Minnesota Advocates does its homework and makes it easy for volunteers to participate to the degree they are able to."

She said that volunteering for Minnesota Advocates "is a wonderful opportunity to expand your knowledge," and says that her work on the Twin Cities documentation project has been not only a "wonderful learning opportunity" but also a "chance to work with really eminent women in the state of Minnesota in the field of domestic violence."

Staff

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Brenda Anfinson

Ronald L. Barnes
Amy Beier

Tony Brown

Manpreet Dhanjal

Michele Garnett McKenzie

Emily Good

Mary Hunt
Rosalyn Park
Megan Powers
Jennifer Prestholdt
Christine Tefft

Cheryl Thomas
Beth Varro

Executive Director
Refugee & Immigrant
Program Assistant
Administrative Director
Refugee & Immigrant Program
Assistant
Development/Communications
Director
Refugee & Immigrant Program
Staff Attorney
Refugee & Immigrant
Program Director
Refugee & Immigrant Program
Staff Attorney
Women's Program Associate
Legal Fellow, Special Projects
Education Program Director
Deputy Director
Women's Program Staff
Attorney
Women's Program Director
Receptionist/Administrative
Assistant

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