

Introducing VISION + ACTION: Inside The Institute

Welcome to the inaugural edition of **VISION + ACTION: Inside The Institute**, a joint publication of The National Employment Lawyers Association (NELA) and The Employee Rights Advocacy Institute For Law & Policy (The Institute). The Institute is NELA's public interest organization and shares NELA's mission of advancing equality and justice in the American workplace. The Institute furthers employee rights through innovative legal strategies, policy development, grassroots advocacy, and public education.

The launch of **VISION + ACTION: Inside The Institute** marks The Institute's second anniversary and recognizes its tremendous strides toward ensuring that our nation's promise of equal justice under law is a reality for all workers. **VISION + ACTION: Inside The Institute** is a quarterly report that will keep you abreast of The Institute's many exciting developments, projects and accomplishments throughout the year.

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Leah Hofkin Joins NELA & The Institute As Director of Development

We are delighted that Leah A. Hofkin has joined NELA and The Institute as the first Director of Development for both organizations. She will guide the expansion of NELA and The Institute's fundraising programs, including gifts from individuals, *cy pres* awards, planned giving and grants. Working closely with Terisa E. Chaw, NELA/The Institute's Executive Director, the NELA Executive Board and The Institute's Board of Directors, Leah will help ensure that we have the resources we need to carry out our bold agenda.



A 1988 graduate of Columbia University School of Law, Leah comes to NELA/The Institute with a diverse background. After practicing food and drug law for nine years, Leah obtained a Masters in Arts Administration from Golden Gate University and began her development career at the Bay Area Discovery

Museum. In 2000, Leah joined American Conservatory Theater as Manager of Foundation and Government Relations and from there became Director of Development for San Francisco's Magic Theatre, a position she held for nearly five years. Prior to joining NELA/The Institute, Leah was Managing Director of Development for Positive Resource Center, which provides benefits counseling and employment services for people affected by HIV/AIDS in the San Francisco Bay Area.

As part of its 2008 "Working for Change" agenda, the National Employment Lawyers Association created The Employee Rights Advocacy Institute For Law & Policy ("The Institute"). Their shared vision for the future is one in which workers will be paid at least a living wage in an environment free of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and capricious employment decisions; employers will fulfill their promises to provide retirement, health, and other benefits; workers' safety and livelihood will not be compromised for the sake of corporate profit and interests; and individuals will have effective legal representation to enforce their rights to a fair and just workplace, adequate remedies, and a right to trial by jury.

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“Leah's professional qualifications and personal interests make her an ideal match for us,” said Teri. “With her on our team, we will build a robust development platform that will support our ambitious initiatives to achieve our common mission of advancing equality and justice in the American workplace.” Leah is based in NELA/The Institute's San Francisco office and can be contacted at lhofkin@employeeightsadvocacy.org.

Matt Koski Joins The Institute As First Paul H. Tobias Attorney Fellow

The Institute is pleased to announce the appointment of Matt Koski as the first Paul H.



Tobias Attorney Fellow. Named in honor of NELA's Founder, The Paul H. Tobias Attorney Fellowship Program offers a new lawyer who embodies Paul's tireless spirit in championing the rights of individual employees the opportunity to work on cutting-edge projects at The Institute. Paul has inspired generations of employee rights advocates and has been a powerful force for employee rights for over fifty years. Through The Paul H. Tobias Attorney Fellowship Program, NELA and The Institute are cultivating the next generation of employment lawyers who will carry out Paul's vision for a better workplace for everyone.

Matt's major activity is The Institute's National Litigation Strategy Project, which is devoted to ensuring that individuals whose workplace rights are violated have their day in court by ending abusive legal maneuvers by employers and unwarranted case dismissals by judges. In addition, he is working with NELA, The Institute and our coalition partners on a solution to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, which dramatically altered the pleading standard in civil cases.

Matt is a 2008 graduate of University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law where he served as Articles Editor of the *McGeorge Global Business and Development Law Journal*. He was a member of the Roger J. Traynor Honor Society and the recipient of the Witkin Award for The Law of Treaties. Matt is based in NELA/The Institute's San Francisco office and can be reached at PHT_Fellow@employeeightsadvocacy.org.

Kazan McClain Foundation Funds Institute's Employee Rights Advocacy Scholarship Program

The Institute's Employee Rights Advocacy Scholarship Program recently received a significant boost for 2010 with generous grants from the Kazan McClain, Abrams, Fernandez, Lyons, Greenwood, Harley & Oberman Foundation, Inc., and its donor-advised fund, the Denise Abrams and David Harrington Fund. Kazan McClain has been a long-time supporter of NELA and The Institute's commitment to ensuring that NELA's renowned continuing legal education programs are accessible to public interest, legal services and private lawyers who otherwise could not afford to participate. Since The Institute was founded in 2008, the Employee Rights Advocacy Scholarship Program has distributed almost \$39,000 in scholarships to sixty-two employee rights advocates and law students. Scholarships are available to all of NELA's 2010 continuing legal education programs, including:

Effective Appellate Advocacy In Employment Cases

March 12-13, 2010

Crowne Plaza Hotel Dallas Downtown
Dallas, Texas

NELA At 25—Don't Stop Believing

2010 Annual Convention

June 23-26, 2010

The Omni Shoreham Hotel

Washington, DC

Breaking Down Barriers In The Workplace:

Representing Workers Under The ADA Amendments Act & FMLA

October 16-17, 2010

Marriott Oakland City Center

Oakland, CA

For more information about The Institute, visit www.employeeightsadvocacy.org.

For more information about NELA, visit www.nela.org.