

**Creating Your Own Opportunities for**  
**Speaking, Writing And Networking**

**ABA National Conference for the Minority Lawyer**

**June 24, 2005**

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**In September 2004, Seattle attorney Ronald R. Ward was elected as President of the 30,000 member Washington State Bar Association (WSBA), after serving two years on that organization's Board of Governors, and as President-elect. He is the first African-American to serve as President in the WSBA's 116-year history.**

**Mr. Ward is the founder of WSBA's Washington Leadership Institute, a program focused on leadership development in young lawyers with three to ten years practice experience, with special emphasis on lawyers of color, women and other traditionally underrepresented diverse groups. The Institute is the recipient of the 2005 American Bar Association Partnership Award. Ron is also a member of the American Bar Association House of Delegates and the National Conference of Bar Presidents.**

**Mr. Ward earned his Juris Doctor degree in 1976 from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. He is licensed to practice law in California and Washington. Prior to commencing private practice, he was a Washington State Assistant Attorney General. Ron was elected Vice-President (1994-1996) and seven-term member of the Board of Governors of the Washington State Trial Lawyers' Association (WSTLA) (1989-1996). From 1993-1996 he was co-chair of WSTLA's Seattle Downtown Roundtable, an area-wide group of personal injury lawyers. In 1994 he was the recipient of a Distinguished Service Award presented by Anheuser-Busch Companies at the national convention of the National Bar Association. In 1995 he was honored with a WSTLA Special President's Recognition Award. *Washington Law and Politics* named Mr. Ward as one of "Washington's Super Lawyers," in 2003, 2004, and 2005.**

**Ron was an appointee to the Court Composition Committee studying proposed changes to the Washington Supreme Court, and is a past member of the Washington State Bar Association Judicial Recommendation Committee for the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. He currently serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Judicial Administration's Legislative Court Funding Implementation Task Force.**

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**RONALD R. WARD, Attorney at Law**

**Page 2**

**Mr. Ward's particular passions are Community, Diversity, Access To Justice, Court Funding, and Trial Advocacy. He is a frequently requested lecturer and speaker on a wide range of topics both in this country and abroad, and has been the recipient of a number of awards from local and national organizations for his service to the legal community and to the public. Mr. Ward is also a member of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, King County Bar Association, and the Loren Miller Bar Association.**

**Ron Ward's law practice emphasizes the area of auto accidents, construction site personal injuries, fisherman, seaman and processors' injuries and wrongful death. During the course of his career, Mr. Ward has had the privilege of assisting his clients in recovering millions of dollars in settlements and verdicts, which have allowed them to go on to lead comfortable lives.**

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### I. Greetings and Introduction.

## II. CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPEAKING APPEARANCES.

### A. MAJOR BENEFITS OF SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS.

*2 distinct categories:*

*(1) Business Speaking Engagements,*

*(2) Inspirational/Community-Service Opportunities*

- **BUSINESS - Professional recognition for you and your firm**
  - Speaking can help you reach dozens, and sometimes hundreds of potential clients and creates instant networking possibilities.
  - Speaking gives you tremendous visibility and credibility that increases over time.
  
- **INSPIRATIONAL/COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES – Inspiring others and giving back to the community**
  - To really connect with an audience, tell personal stories
  - Willie Brown example of someone who inspired you
  - WYLD Pre-Law Student Conference in Yakima example of you inspiring others

- You can inspire others and have an impact on the lives of people you may never know, in ways you may never know.
- Speaking to schools is a great way to reach and inspire young people. (Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program)

## **B. INFLUENCE**

### **You can have tremendous influence.**

- Leverage your position to create bully pulpit.
- Just by making yourself available, you have influence. Lawyers are leaders and persons of influence.
- Ripple effect - your example will inspire others, who will go on to inspire others.

## **C. TIPS**

- Find a subject you feel passionate about.
  - Identify your area of expertise.
  - Identify your target audiences.
  - The largest users of public speakers are corporations and associations.
- Chambers of Commerce.
  - Service Clubs.
  - Industry-specific Associations.
  - University Extensions.
  - Professional Associations.
    - Utilize resources such as directories of associations and corporate meeting planners.
    - Professional speakers' bureaus.
    - Speak on a regular basis.

- If you're willing to speak for free, you'll find that there are more outlets available than you'll know what to do with.
- Even though speaking can be intimidating at first, anybody can find groups to speak to and master the basics of giving a good speech. . (Imagine Teaching A Class. Be flexible. Have to be like great jazz musicians—masters of improvisation).
- The promotional value of your talks goes beyond your time on the podium. Often, when you speak to a group, the group publicizes the event. Many people who do not attend the event will still read the information, or will hear about you from other attendees.
- Think about potential questions that the audience may pose to you and have appropriate answers.
- Think about thought-provoking potential questions that you can pose to the audience.

### III. WRITING ARTICLES

- A. Well-written articles can provide positive word-of-mouth about you and your issues.
- B. Write a short biographical note, or "blurb" about you and your business to accompany the article.
- C. Seek out publications that your target audience will be reading.
  - Professional journals.
    - Start with your own bar publication.
      - Local business publications.
      - Specialized community publications. Local examples:
        - *Colors Northwest Magazine*: monthly publication featuring issues relevant to Pacific Northwest communities of color.

- *Diversity News*: monthly information on women and minority owned businesses in Puget Sound region.
- *The MEDIUM* – Influential weekly newspaper covering regional news focusing on the African-American community
- *The Facts*: weekly community bulletin board-style paper covering the African-American community.
- Specialized publications are a good place to start, but don't limit yourself.
- Become familiar with publication.
- Pitching specific ideas of interest to the publication's audience will increase the likelihood of getting published.

#### **IV. CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NETWORKING.**

The key to true business networking is the establishment of mutually beneficial relationships. Networking is part of the process of developing your social capital.

A. Choose the right networking group or event for your area of practice.

B. Participate in groups where your potential clients meet.

C. Focus on quality contacts versus quantity.

D. Be able to clearly state what you do.

- Develop a 10-second introduction as well as a 30-second presentation.

F. Follow up after the event.

- Send a handwritten card immediately after event.
- After two weeks, arrange to meet for coffee or lunch.

G. The more people know about you, the more they will trust you.

H. Make networking an integral part of your everyday contacts.

- **Make the best of chance and casual meetings during the workday.**
  - **Learn more about each new acquaintance.**
  - **Be willing to help and offer to stay in touch.**
- I. Networking keeps your vital communications skills sharp.**
- J. Join online business-networking communities.**
- K. Tailor your networking approach for different occasions.**