

BASF's Volunteer Legal Services Program Honors Federal Pro Bono Project Volunteers at United States District Court, Northern District of California

October 27, 2011 – San Francisco – The Bar Association of San Francisco's Volunteer Legal Services Program (VLSP) and the United States District Court, Northern District of California hosted a reception on October 25 celebrating VLSP's Federal Pro Bono Project, as part of National Celebrate Pro Bono Week. The Federal Pro Bono Project offers a wide range of legal services to pro se litigants in federal court, including arranging pro bono counsel for litigants who are referred for appointment of counsel by the court. At the event, Chief Judge James Ware, Judge Edward Chen and Daniel Burkhardt of BASF/VLSP thanked the attorneys who volunteered with the project and spoke about the importance of assisting those who cannot afford representation.

In addition, several awards were presented to project volunteers. Magistrate Judge Maria-Elena James presented an Outstanding Pro Bono Service Award to Steven Shunzo Miyake for his work counseling clients on foreclosure issues. Judge Marilyn Patel presented an Outstanding Pro Bono Service Awards to Stephen Holbrook Sutro and Jennifer Briggs Fisher, both of Duane Morris, for their tireless pro bono representation of a small start-up software company, which was a defendant in a contract dispute case. And Chief Judge James Ware presented the Outstanding Law Firm in Pro Bono Service Award to DLA Piper which took on three full scope cases and one limited scope case through the project in just the past two years.

In addition to providing a valuable service to pro se litigants and the court, many attorneys find that volunteering is a great way to develop federal court experience.

###

The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) is a nonprofit voluntary membership organization of over 8,000 attorneys, law students and legal professionals in the Bay Area. Founded in 1872, BASF is one of the largest and most dynamic metropolitan bar associations in the U.S., with a long and distinguished record of community action, public service and service to the legal profession.