

Legal Organizations



Among charter members of the women's division of the Florida Chapter of the National Bar Association are (from left to right above) Dianne S. Smith, Carolyn Y. Howard, Cynthia Johnson, Vera E. Gilford and Judge Leah A. Simms.

Black women lawyers organize

Eleven black women lawyers recently came together, in Miami to form a Dade County Chapter of the National Bar Association's Women Lawyers Division, a first for Florida.

The National Bar Association, founded in 1925 to promote justice and civil rights for all, is comprised of over 8,000 lawyers, judges, law faculty, administrators and students in 53 chapters nationwide. The Women Lawyers Division was organized in 1972 to address issues unique to women in the legal profession and to enhance their professional growth.

The newly formed group discussed some of the many concerns facing them as blacks, as women, as professionals and as concerned citizens of Miami. They identified a need for more sensitive and responsive news reporting by the media. A media monitor was developed to help avoid incomplete, biased or selectively discriminating reports. A committee was also formed to organize a reach out service to the community which would advise and refer citizens seeking help to participating lawyers.

Charter members include Judge Leah A. Simms; assistant county attorneys Dianne Saulney Smith and Cynthia Johnson; Marilyn Hollifield with the firm of Holland and Knight; IRS senior attorney Vera E. Gilford; assistant state attorneys Latricia C. Donley and Knovack Gramby Jones; Valeria Bland Thomas with the City of Miami Police Department; Greer E. Davis with JESCA Legal Services; Jan A. Templeman with the firm of Kirkpatrick & Lockhart; and Carolyn Y. Howard, president of the National Bar Association, Women Lawyers Division, Washington, D.C.

A second meeting of the group was held May 18.