



Washington State Bar Association

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Kripa Upadhyay Receives 2011 Community Service Award

(SEATTLE) — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) announces that Seattle attorney **Kripa Upadhyay** has been presented with the **2011 Community Service Award**. This award recognizes exceptional non-law-related volunteer work and community service. WSBA President **Steven G. Toole** will present the award at the WSBA Annual Awards Dinner on September 22, 2011, at the Hyatt at Olive 8 in Seattle.

A first-generation immigrant from Nepal who came to the United States in 1998, Upadhyay received her law degree from Seattle University School of Law. As someone who has personally been through the immigration process, she says she identifies with the fears, anxiety, and hopes that accompany the immigrant experience, and she is deeply committed to helping immigrants in the United States. Her commitment to organizing “Know Your Rights” presentations on various topics ranging from immigration, landlord-tenant rights, wage and labor laws, and family law issues is her way of ensuring that Immigrant communities have access to information and resources that they need but are unable to attain, either due to economic or linguistic barriers. Upadhyay is fluent in English, Nepali, Hindi, and Urdu, and is currently learning Spanish.

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Upadhyay is an attorney at Orbit Law PLLC, where her practice focuses on immigration law; she assists individuals and companies in securing immigrant and non-immigrant visas. Prior to her legal career, she was a program coordinator with the South Asian Network, in Los Angeles, where she advocated on behalf of victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and bias/hate-motivated attacks, and worked with elected officials, federal agencies, and other community-based organizations to address issues of racial profiling and other issues of critical concern to immigrant communities. In addition, Upadhyay also created course materials and conducted approximately 200 hours of free training on cultural awareness for various service providers, including law enforcement, firefighters, social workers, and crisis shelter staff, to help them work more effectively with immigrant communities; she is currently developing a similar program for use in the greater Seattle area.

“Not only does she [Upadhyay] educate us about our rights and responsibilities, and provide us with guidance on all issues related to law, but she also educates other people about our community and our needs,” said **Dhan B. Pun**, founder and program director of the Women’s Prevention and Protection Center in Nepal. “She continues to work to help us without ever asking for recognition of any kind.”

“It is crucial to educate the [Bhutanese and Burmese refugee] community about their rights and responsibilities, while also simultaneously educating service providers in the state of Washington about these groups and their unique challenges,” said **Vicki Asakura**, executive director of the Nonprofit Assistance Center. “[Upadhyay] is committed to helping those communities develop leadership within their own ranks to make positive contributions to their own communities and to the larger society.”

Upadhyay is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and previously served as the chair and vice-chair of its Citizenship Day Committee, which provides free legal assistance to indigent immigrants who are filing for citizenship or naturalization. She is a volunteer attorney for the Immigrant Families Advocacy Project and for Volunteer Advocates for Immigrant Justice; a legal advisor to the Nepal Seattle Society; and a board member of the Nepalese Children’s Education Fund.

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About the Washington State Bar Association

The WSBA is part of the judicial branch, exercising a governmental function authorized by the Washington State Supreme Court to license the state's 34,470 lawyers. The WSBA both regulates lawyers under the authority of the Court and serves its members as a professional association — all without public funding. As a regulatory agency, the WSBA administers the bar admission process, including the bar exam; provides record-keeping and licensing functions; and administers the lawyer-discipline system. As a professional association, the WSBA provides continuing legal education for attorneys, in addition to numerous other educational and member-service activities.

The governance of the WSBA is vested in its Board of Governors. There are three governors from the seventh congressional district; one from each of the other eight districts; and three at-large, one of whom represents the Young Lawyers Division. The president is **Steven G. Toole**, of Bellevue. The 2010–2011 president-elect is **Stephen R. Crossland**, of Cashmere; the 2011–2012 president-elect is **Michele G. Radosevich**, of Seattle; and the immediate past-president is **Salvador A. Mungia**, of Tacoma. The Board meets regularly (every six weeks) at various locations around the state, and its meetings are open to the public. Much of the work of the Bar is carried out through its numerous standing committees, 27 sections, and a Young Lawyers Division with its many committees.

The Washington State Bar Association's mission is to serve the public and the members of the Bar, ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.

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