

Diversity Panel Presentation Successful!
By Judge Craig Shaffer (COD)

The FMJA Committee on Diversity, as part of the 50th Annual Convention, held a Diversity Panel Presentation at the Alfred A. Arraj United States District Court on July 24, 2012. Magistrate Judges participating on the panel included Linda Anderson (Southern District of Mississippi), Sonja Bivins (Southern District of Alabama), Nancy Joseph (Eastern District of Wisconsin), Michael Watanabe (District of Colorado), and Leo Brisbois (District of Minnesota).

Audience members included practicing attorneys from Colorado's various specialty bar associations, as well as law students participating as summer law clerks or interns in the Denver legal community's Pledge to Diversity program. Welcoming remarks were provided by Chief Judge Wiley Daniel, the first diverse Article III judge to sit on the United States District Court in Colorado. Each panel member briefly described the career path that led to his or her appointment as a magistrate judge. Those remarks served to highlight the panelists' varied experiences and backgrounds, and the particular challenges they faced upon becoming members of the federal judiciary.

Panelists discussed the importance of a diverse federal judiciary and encourage the audience to seek out judicial positions and, more particularly, appointment as a magistrate judge. The panel provided advice on how lawyers and law students can promote their careers and gain the practical experience that will make them strong candidates to fill magistrate judge vacancies. At the conclusion of the Panel Presentation, the District Court hosted a reception for panelists and audience members.