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IN THIS ISSUE:

Pg. 2: Helping the Injured Allows Decker to Show Her Good Side

Pg. 2: Payton Schools Children on Importance of Community Service

Pg. 3: Firm Investigates Dangerous Products

Pg. 3: WBL Employees Build Homes in Honduras

Pg. 4: Owens Corning Asbestos Bankruptcy Trust Opens



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BLACK TO LEAD BAR ASSOCIATION

ASHEVILLE, NC—Janet Ward Black has been elected the 113th president of the North Carolina Bar Association, the largest voluntary organization of lawyers in the state.

Black was sworn in during the 2007 Annual Meeting of the bar association, which was held at the Grove Park Inn.

As president of the 13,500-member organization, Black will serve a one-year term. She is only the 4th woman president in the Association's history and the first president who represents only injured people. As president she will focus on a new project announced in her acceptance speech. The "4 ALL" campaign will seek to increase support for legal services for North Carolina's poor.

Black's calendar for the year will be a full one as she continues to represent her clients in their cases, while she actively represents the Bar Association. Black represents people who suffer serious bodily injury as a result of the

negligence of others. Her practice is heavily focused on dangerous products, including harmful drugs and asbestos.

The Bar Association, founded in 1899, serves both attorneys and the general public with programs including professional support, lobbying on issues of concern to its members, continuing legal education programs, legal information materials, a Lawyer Referral Service, and support for pro bono legal services. More than 70 percent of the state's practicing attorneys are members. **WBL**



4 ALL TO HELP THE POOR GET LEGAL AID

ASHEVILLE, NC—"Bolstering legal aid for the poor will be a priority," announced Janet Ward Black on the night she was named president of the North Carolina Bar Association. In her acceptance speech at the 2007 Bar Association Convention Black, the founder and CEO of

Ward Black Law said the focus of her term would be the "4 ALL" campaign, designed to raise awareness and support for the thousands of North Carolinians who have legal needs but cannot afford an attorney.

Black cited a number of disturbing statistics on poverty in North Carolina. About 3 million low-income North Carolinians are eligible for legal services, which are primarily provided by Legal Aid of North Carolina. But the Raleigh-based nonprofit law firm, which has a staff of 122 lawyers across the state, has the resources to serve only about 25,000 clients a year.

"The voices represented by these statistics must not be kept silent by ignoring

the problem," Black said. "As attorneys, the members of the Bar Association are in a unique position to get involved in this effort and affect real change. There can be a one-to-one correlation between an attorney's involvement and a needy person helped.

Black and a team of attorneys and staffers from the N.C. Bar Association have outlined several major initiatives for her term to support the 4ALL campaign. Among them, the team is organizing a one-day statewide event during which members of the public will be able to talk to an attorney at no cost. In doing so, Black hopes the media will partner with attorneys in their area to facilitate communication between lawyers and the public.

Black hopes the 4ALL campaign outlives her term. "We're not about to just put a Band-Aid on it and hope the problem goes away," she said. "I believe our efforts can have a far-reaching impact. (See 4ALL, pg. 4)



Rachel Scott Decker's Areas of Concentration

Nursing Home

Negligence

Automobile

Collisions

Wrongful Death

Slips and Falls

Medical Malpractice

Inadequate Security

Personal Injury

HELPING THE INJURED ALLOWS DECKER TO SHOW HER GOOD SIDE

Rachel Decker has seen the law from both sides now. Decker, who has been practicing law 11 years, began her career at a defense firm, defending lawsuits on behalf of individuals and companies that had been sued for negligent actions.

When a case went to trial, her job was to convince jurors to take sides with the accused. She represented insurance companies and their clients in automobile accidents, premises liability cases and nursing home cases. Now, as a plaintiff's attorney, she only works for injured people.

"I like working for people instead of insurance companies," Decker said. "I feel like I can make a difference one person at a time." Decker usually reviews about 100 cases each

month from callers all across the state. Those who are too badly hurt to travel can expect that she will hit the highway to help with a case.

"If they've been hurt, they should call," said Decker. "There's no risk in calling. I'll talk to them for free, and if I think they don't need a lawyer, I'll tell them."

Decker, who is married and has two young children, credits her family and neighbors for giving her the support she needs to be able to devote long hours to helping others.

Decker often provides answers that can help an entire family when a call comes in about a nursing home injury. Often the family is unsure about whether anyone is to blame for the death or injury of a loved one. Decker points out that unexplained bruising, bed sores and repeated falls and fractures are a few of the signs that an elderly person may have been improperly cared for in a nursing home. Decker also handles auto wrecks and other serious bodily injury cases. **WBL**

PAYTON SCHOOLS CHILDREN ON IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Attorney **S. Camille Payton** of Ward Black Law attended a Community Leaders' Forum at Southern Elementary School in Greensboro at the invitation of the third-grade social studies class.

Speaking to approximately 45 students, Payton addressed a number of topics, sharing with the children pictures of the attorneys and other staff members at the firm. The emphasis of her presentation, however, was on how Ward Black Law reaches out to those in need. She explained how the firm offers legal services and assistance to those who have suffered injury in various ways.

Payton talked with the children about the firm's participation in community events such as the Light the Night Walk, which benefits victims of leukemia, and the Human Race, benefiting the various non-profit organizations in the community.

Among the photos she displayed for the eager group of the students was a picture taken in Honduras, featuring four Ward Black Law employees who participated in a Habitat for Humanity project this spring. (See related story on page 3.)

"I love spending time with the kids at Southern Elementary," Payton said. "At the forum we talked about work, and what attorneys can do to help people, and how a business such as ours can reach out to people in need."

The firm's involvement with Southern Elementary dates back to August, 2006, when Ward Black Law adopted the school through the Guilford County Schools Community Partnerships program as a Fill the Bus partner. The firm raised approximately \$700 by organizing and participating in various office events such as a bake sale, a spaghetti luncheon, a neighborhood breakfast and a silent auction.

In December 2006, the firm partnered with Southern again by sponsoring a family of six connected with the school. Through individual contributions from the attorneys and staff, Ward Black employees were able to provide a good Christmas for a family that had had a difficult year. Gifts included clothing, toys and a basketball goal for the children and gift certificates for the mother of the family to spend as she needed. **WBL**



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

If you prefer to receive this newsletter by email, please let us know by emailing newsletter@wardblacklaw.com. We welcome your comments and suggestions by e-mail or by phone.

Patch (continued from page 3)

...was approved by the FDA in November 2001. The patch delivers hormones very quickly into the bloodstream and has become associated with serious side effects, including blood clots, stroke, heart attack, coma, and death.

According to the FDA at least 17 women between the ages of 17 and 30 have suffered serious or fatal side effects since 2002. Ortho-McNeil, a subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson, began warning the public about the high dose of estrogen and related health risks in November, 2005.

Last fall the FDA announced that Ortho Evra labeling would be further supplemented to add the results of two recent studies, one of which found the risk of clotting was twice as great to women who use the patch, compared to those who use birth control pills. Women should speak with their doctors about the risks and benefits of using the patch.

Ward Black Law is also investigating and handling claims against the manufacturer of Composix Kugel Mesh hernia patches. The Rhode Island-based medical device manufacturer Davol, Inc. is being sued for the product, which has been

used in hernia repair surgeries all over the country. In 2005, Davol recalled several of the patches under order of the FDA for a FDA Class I recall. A "Class I" recall means that the product can cause life-threatening injuries. In 2006 the recall was expanded to include additional lots of the patches manufactured by Davol.

Some recipients of the patches have had to undergo additional surgeries to have the hernia patches removed. The device was recalled because the "memory recoil ring" is subject to failure once inserted into the abdomen. The failure of the "memory recoil ring" can cause bowel perforations and/or chronic intestinal fistulae (an abnormal connection between organs). Additionally, in some patients the mesh patches had adhered to vital organs, such as the intestines, causing severe pain and

requiring extensive surgery.

Thousands of people have undergone hernia repair with Composix Kugel Mesh patches. Although it is too early to know how many people will be adversely affected, there have been 24 reported cases of failure of the memory coil ring. [WBL](#)

Owens Corning Asbestos Bankruptcy Trust Opens

After a seven year wait, a trust to evaluate claims for asbestos diseases against that company opened for business on June 1, 2007. According to WBL attorney David Rhodes, "It's been a long wait, but now we can start filing claims for our clients." The creation of the trust starts time limits for filing. More information is available at www.WardBlackLaw.com and at www.OCFBAsbestostrust.com. [WBL](#)

4 ALL (continued from page 1)

I don't see this so much as a campaign, but rather more like a crusade for the members of the N.C. Bar Association. This isn't something you can 'kind of do,' but rather a restructuring of how we think about this issue of delivering legal aid to the poor."

Several pages of the Ward Black Law website (www.WardBlackLaw.com) have been devoted to tracking the progress of the campaign and events. [WBL](#)

FIRM INVESTIGATES DANGEROUS PRODUCTS

When a product or device harms you or a loved one, how do you hold large corporations responsible? Seemingly, the news contains a daily warning about a new drug or product recall. Some of these recalls are done before anyone is seriously harmed. At other times, however, a company does not recall a product until a number of people have been harmed or even killed. Ward Black Law handles cases for people injured by dangerous products.

Over the years, Janet Ward Black and the lawyers with her firm have successfully prosecuted cases against manufacturers of dangerous products such as Asbestos, Vioxx, Fen-Phen and breast implants. Currently the firm is investigating injuries caused by contaminated peanut butter, the Kugel Mesh hernia patch and the Ortho Evra birth control patch.



Peanut butter was in a different type of sticky situation earlier this year. Thousands of jars of the lunchtime favorite were removed from shelves all over the country after the product was linked to food poisoning. In February, the FDA warned consumers not to eat peanut butter sold under the brand names Peter Pan and Great Value (the Wal-Mart brand) because of the possibility of salmonella contamination. The jars had product codes beginning with 21111 and were manufactured in Georgia.

Symptoms of salmonella poisoning include diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramping. ConAgra, which makes Peter Pan, advises those who have eaten the product to consult a physician if they've consumed the product and developed symptoms that don't improve.

Ward Black law is investigating cases in which medical treatment was sought and salmonella poisoning was diagnosed. Salmonella poisoning can be confirmed through a stool culture.

Consumers probably won't need an attorney in order to get a refund for the money they paid for their peanut butter since many grocery stores will refund the purchase price. ConAgra has information on its website about the recall. Its web address is: www.conagra.com.

Another product that has been labeled dangerous recently is the Ortho Evra® birth control patch. Ward Black Law represents women who have experienced clotting problems as a result of using the patch. Manufactured by Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical, Inc., Ortho Evra is a birth control patch that...**(See Patch on page 4)**

The firm is investigating:

Benzene

Cialis

Crestor

Fosamax

Mirapex

Permax

Seroquel

Serzone

Tequin

Trasylol

Viagra

Zyprexa

WBL EMPLOYEES HELP BUILD HOMES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

HONDURAS — Four Ward Black Law employees — Tom Esker, Danielle Bull, Jan Green and Carol Towery — traveled with Greensboro Habitat for Humanity on a home-building expedition to Santa Rosa de Copan in Honduras.

The week-long effort consisted largely of heavy labor, including digging foundations for four houses, mixing and pouring concrete, and making and laying adobe bricks. The Ward Black crew, along with 21 other Habitat for Humanity team members, worked side-by-side with the Honduran people who planned to live in the houses once completed.

It wasn't all work and no play, however. Children from a nearby elementary school came by each day to play. The group visited a local orphanage while there and also found time to tour a local coffee factory and visit the site of some Mayan Ruins. **WBL**

Tom Esker, Danielle Bull, Jan Green and Carol Towery pause while digging footings for a new home.



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