

The National LGBT Bar Association truly believes in its mission to promote equality in and through the legal profession. In addition to supporting inclusion and acceptance for lesbian, gay and bisexual legal professionals, the LGBT Bar has taken meaningful steps to support transgender professionals as well.

Far too often, transgender individuals are left out in discussions of LGBT equality. Nowhere has this recently become more evident than in organizations' non-discrimination statements. A recent survey the LGBT Bar took of National Association of Legal Professionals (NALP)-accredited law schools uncovered some disturbing results. Very few law schools include gender identity and expression as protected entities in their official non-discrimination policies. While sexual orientation is almost uniformly listed, there is still an entire class of the LGBT community that remains unprotected.

The Law Student Division (LSD) of the LGBT Bar is working to combat this problem. It is reaching out to all of the law schools that do not list gender identity and expression in their official policy. Representatives will work to inform schools about how they can support and include transgender students and will be available to educate university officials about how to better promote diversity.

At the 2012 Lavender Law[®] Conference, the National LGBT Bar Association will feature many transgender legal professionals who will help inform and educate participants. The LGBT Bar recommends amelioration for transgender professionals, especially those involved in the military. Featured speakers include Calpernia Addams, Paula Neira, Denise Brogan-Kator and Mia Yamamoto.

Calpernia Addams served as a hospital corpsman with the Navy and United States Marine Corps and currently advocates for transgender rights as an actress, writer and spokesperson. Paula Neira graduated with distinction from the US Naval Academy and served at sea and ashore, including in mine warfare combat during Operation Desert Storm. Denise Brogan-Kator is a veteran of the Vietnam era, serving in the U.S. Navy Submarine Force, and advocated locally and statewide for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Mia Yamamoto served in the Army for two years and has been in private practice since 1984.

With such incredible speakers, the 2012 Lavender Law Conference will remain inclusive and encouraging of transgender legal professionals. The National LGBT Bar Association maintains its commitment to justice for the entire LGBT community and will continue to tirelessly advocate for equality.