



## 2010 SEMINAR/FORUM NEWSMAKERS

The 2010 Annual Seminar/Forum on In-House Pro Bono drew significant media coverage this year, due largely to remarks brought by Attorney General Eric Holder. While the media are not permitted to attend substantive sessions to avoid chilling candor and discussion, the Seminar/Forum was a highly covered event due to moving and provocative comments by Holder who addressed attendees at the event's Pro Bono Expo Luncheon and received the Institute's Chesterfield Smith Award. Holder has been under fire recently by Keep America Safe, click [here](#) for more info, for hiring seven attorneys who undertook pro bono work defending Guantanamo detainees. Holder used his appearance at the conference to discuss publicly for the first time the importance of the work of these attorneys:



Attorney General Eric Holder

As you all know, advancing the cause of justice sometimes means working for the sake of the fairness and integrity of our system of justice. This is why lawyers who accept our professional responsibility to protect the rule of law, the right to counsel, and access to our courts – even when this requires defending unpopular positions or clients – deserve the praise and gratitude of all Americans. They also deserve respect. Those who reaffirm our nation's most essential and enduring values do not deserve to have their own values questioned. Let me be clear about this: Lawyers who provide counsel for the unpopular are, and should be treated as what they are: patriots.

Fox News, *Politico*, *The Blog of the Legal Times*, and NPR were just a few of the media outlets in attendance to cover Attorney General Holder's remarks. Click [here](#) for his full remarks.

Also drawing significant news coverage were remarks by Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg at the Seminar/Forum Reception honoring Brackett Denniston, Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary of GE. Ginsburg echoed Holder's support for the "al-Qaeda Seven," saying:

I was unsettled, indeed alarmed, by press reports in early March about attacks on nine recent Department of Justice appointees. Their alleged transgression, while in private practice, they had provided legal assistance to Guantanamo Bay detainees. One of the nine was a former law clerk of mine, a young man of great intelligence, integrity, and devotion to the ideals that make the U.S.A. a Great Nation.

An email from Esther, received the very day the news broke, reminded me that the base assault was not the first of its kind. In 2007, the then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Detainee Affairs urged corporations to cease doing business with law firms on his not-so-little list. The list named several prominent law firms whose members had undertaken to represent Guantanamo detainees. Brackett Denniston answered the Deputy Assistant Secretary's suggestion in no uncertain terms. "Pro bono service and the rule of law," he said, "are great traditions in the American legal profession." We at GE have no intention of in any way [disturbing our relationship with law firms] on the basis of the pro bono, charitable, or public service [activities in which] lawyers in those firms choose to engage. "Justice is served," he added, "when there is quality representation even for the unpopular." To that expression of the true American way, one can only say Amen.

Ginsburg also quipped that "contrary to Senator Bunning's prediction, I am alive and in good health," in response to the Senator's remarks shortly after Ginsburg underwent treatment for pancreatic cancer. Originally covered by *The Blog of the Legal Times*, the story was picked up by the Associated Press and appeared in more than twenty major news outlets, including *ABCNews.com*, *The Boston Herald*, *Huffington Post*, *The Guardian*, *The Las Vegas Sun*, NPR, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and myriad other blogs and local newspapers. Click [here](#) for her full remarks.



Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg



Esther Lardent, Brackett Denniston, Justice Ginsburg, Regina Pisa, and Judge Laurie Zelon

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