

October 1, 2002
New York

Honoring Cyrus Vance

On October 30th we will be honoring our former President and a true statesman, Cyrus Vance, at a memorial service at the Association. Eulogized last spring by Ted Sorenson as a “man for all seasons,” Cy’s career impacted countries all around the globe and certainly his cherished profession here in New York. One of his many accomplishments at the Association was fostering pro bono activity by the bar.

Carrying the Legacy Forward

To create a permanent legacy based on his extraordinary career, the Association has created the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice Initiatives. The Vance Center's mission combines his commitment to integrity in international affairs and increased access to justice. We are fortunate that Joan Vermeulen, former Executive Director of New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, is serving as Executive Director of the Center.

Already, The Vance Center is pushing forward a number of projects that the Association has been working on over the past two years, growing out of our highly successful 2000 conference, "Partnerships Across Borders: The International Crisis in Access to Justice." Building on relationships that began at that conference, we have worked with bar associations, law schools and non-governmental organizations in countries that have gone through a transition from authoritarian to democratic government. Our work with these groups has particularly focused on promoting fundamental changes in the legal profession and the practice of law.

Global Reach

Currently, we are working in South Africa on a project to expand opportunities for black lawyers, and in Argentina and Chile to assist emerging pro bono initiatives. The South African Visiting Lawyer Program will begin this fall. Seven young South African lawyers from previously disadvantaged communities will arrive in New York to work for a one-year intensive fellowship at some of the city's leading law firms and investment banks to gain practice experience that is still difficult for them to obtain in South Africa.

This winter, the Vance Center is co-sponsoring a pro bono conference in Chile to help institutionalize a pro bono initiative in the leading law firms and law societies in Latin America. This conference is modeled on a similar conference in Argentina that the Association co-sponsored last year.

The Center is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the life and legacy of Cyrus Vance, outstanding public servant and vigorous advocate for access to justice. To learn more about these programs and the Vance Center, contact Joan Vermeulen at jvermeulen@abcny.org. And I invite you to join Cy’s many friends at the memorial service on October 30.