

BACK STORY



From left to right, immediate past state bar president Cam Ferenbach, scholarship winners Rick Benito and Colin Seale, and committee chair, Romeo Perez.

STATE BAR DIVERSITY COMMITTEE PUTS ITS MONEY BEHIND ITS PRINCIPLES WITH TWO NEW SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The State Bar of Nevada's Diversity Committee has awarded two \$5,000 scholarships to University of Nevada Boyd School of Law students Patrick "Rick" Benito and Colin Seale. The scholarships further the committee's mission to increase diversity within the state bar and the legal profession and to promote cultural competence.

"These scholarships sponsor just two of the future leaders of the legal profession with backgrounds and perspectives reflecting our changing society," says committee chair Romeo R. Perez. "I am so proud about the number of applicants that we had to this scholarship. I am humbled by the number of truly diverse people that we have coming through Boyd. It is this diversity that we hope to carry through to the profession."

Scholarship recipients were selected based on essay responses that best supported the committee's mission and on qualifying students' ties to their communities. "The existence of the scholarship shows the level of commitment of the state bar to broadening the awareness of diversity in and among our profession," Perez maintains.

Benito grew up in inner-city Las Vegas, where he continues to live while supporting his family and attending law school full-time. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps for eight years as a fighter/attack pilot and graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with a B.S. in computer science. "At its core, the

legal profession is not about cases, statutes, or attorneys and judges," says Benito. "The legal profession is about the people we call clients and the problems we help them solve. The members of our profession, more than in most professions, benefit greatly from understanding their clients and their clients' goals." Benito is entering his third year of law school and expects to graduate in May 2012.

Seale grew up as the child of an immigrant and single mother in Brooklyn, New York and overcame numerous obstacles to earn his master's degree in public administration. Seale moved to Las Vegas, entered law school part-time, and currently serves as a middle school math teacher at Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy, where he has implemented a six-week "introduction to law" program. Seale believes that diversity matters to our state bar. "Not just because of the general values that diversity offers to any sort of business," he explains. "But because as stewards of the public interest, we have a role to truly represent the entire public." Seale expects to graduate from Boyd School of Law in May 2013.

The diversity scholarships were funded by a grant from the state bar's Lawyer Referral (LRIS) program.

For more information on the state bar's Diversity Committee, visit www.nvbar.org/content/diversity. ■