

CHICAGO COMMITTEE TO DEFEND THE BILL OF RIGHTS

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NEWS LETTER

WINTER 2010

CCDBR INTRODUCES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In the face of fresh civil-liberties challenges emerging almost daily, CCDBR has entered a new phase of struggle with an enlarged and rejuvenated board of directors. We are proud to inform you that in recent months we have added four outstanding young members to the board. In order of arrival they are: Jevon Gammon, Kali Cohn, Alicia Robinson, and Amanda Graham.

JEVON GAMMON

Jevon is a West Side educator and graduate of Western Illinois University; with special experience in broadcast media.



ALICIA ROBINSON

Alicia, a lifelong South Sider and third year student at DePaul Law School, was president of the DePaul Black Students Law Association and recently became the first recipient of the CCDBR-backed Larry Kennon Scholarship - created in honor of our advisory board member (see back).

AMANDA GRAHAM

Amanda, a second-year student at DePaul Law School, is president of DePaul's chapter of the National Lawyers Guild and has just returned from their annual meeting in New Orleans.



KALI COHN

Kali, recommended to us by the Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BORDC), comes to Chicago after graduation from University of Rochester; she is active in the Illinois Coalition Against Torture and works for an immigrants' aid organization dealing primarily with South Asians.

All of them are working on vital projects for CCDBR: an educational program on threats to internet freedom, abuses of racial profiling and stop-and-search by the Chicago Police Department, and a freedom of information request to the Illinois Fusion Center - one of many bodies across the country which pool data in the service of the emerging Surveillance State.



CCDBR PARTICIPATES IN ILLINOIS COALITION AGAINST TORTURE (ICAT)

Several CCDBR board members are participating actively in the Illinois Coalition Against Torture (ICAT), of which we are an organizational member. ICAT pursues a multi-faceted agenda including follow-up to the great victory represented by the perjury conviction of police torturer John Burge, education on the torture issue from local to international levels, and active support and political mobilization in behalf of legislation to make torture by public officials a felony. In particular, we are backing the remarkable bill submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressman Danny Davis, which uniquely defines torture using international standards and removes any statute of limitations on prosecution. ICAT is also focusing on a Springfield fbill that would revoke licenses of health-care professionals who participate in torture.

LARRY KENNON EVENT A SUCCESS



In March CCDBR Vice President Brenetta Howell Barrett led the organizing of a highly successful celebration of the career and achievements of Attorney Larry Kennon, on the occasion of his retirement and 80th birthday. Speakers paying tribute to Larry included Tim Black, Stan Willis, Jim Montgomery, among several others.

DePaul Law student Alicia Robinson was selected as the recipient of the first annual Larry Kennon Scholarship, which seeks to provide financial support for students interested in following Mr. Kennon's footsteps as attorneys working on behalf of the public interest.

NEW PARTNER FOR "ACTING FREE"



Concern for the future of our "Acting Free" program funded by the Bill of Rights Foundation (BORF/501c3) has been allayed now that the prestigious Raven Theater (Clark and Granville) has agreed to join our work on civil-liberties plays by students at Senn High School. Pegasus Theatre, which co-sponsored the program for three years with such satisfying results, encountered financial difficulties and had to withdraw. We wish them well and look forward to our association with Raven. Checks to BORF (tax exempt) would be particularly welcome now to support this unique project with its excellent track record of three successful "seasons."

ANNOUNCING THE CCDBR BLOG

Take a look at our new blog featuring news and analysis of interest to CCDBR supporters. Visit <http://defendingourliberties.wordpress.com> and let us know how we might improve it.

RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH CCDBR

The FBI raids of September 24 on antiwar activists in Minneapolis and Chicago serve as a wake-up call that CCDBR is as necessary as ever to stand in defense of our basic rights. Reading "fighting homegrown terrorism" as the new equivalent of "fighting Communism at home," we see a disturbing echo of McCarthyism at its worst: guilt by association, Orwellian surveillance and searches (including official naked-scanning and groping at airports), abuses of grand jury investigations, and the chilling message that anyone who speaks out risks persecution.

As if the Patriot Act blanket extensions, refusal to act on torture prosecution, and so many other recent disappointments were not enough, we now contend with the new threat to First Amendment rights of prosecutions for "material support of terrorism." Sadly, the Supreme Court has upheld an interpretation of this offense that prohibits anyone from "coordinating" even advice on non-violence with an organization the State Department defines as "terrorist." Conviction for such an offense carries a very long prison sentence. Many of us will remember from the days of McCarthyism how viciously the similar "Attorney General's List of Subversive Organizations" was manipulated and abused.

With your continued financial and moral support, we will continue to stand up and speak out for the bedrock rights that shield us from tyranny. As 2010 ends, following the November 2 election that bodes even more ill for protection of constitutional rights, please help us enter 2011 with the resources we need to keep fighting.

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Robert H. Clarke | Vice President: Brenetta Howell Barrett
Treasurer: Donald Goldhamer | Secretary: Anna Nussy Perlberg

Directors: Timuel Black, Mabel Brail, Kali Cohn, Jevon Gammon, Amanda Graham, Luster Jackson, Carol Heise, Milt Herst, Bennett Johnson, Lillian Margolis, William Martin, Nancy Mikelsons, Lewis Myers Jr., Odie Payne III, Alicia Robinson, Ruth Tregay Siegel, Robert W. Starks, Oscar Worrill