

# NYC Attorneys to Speak at Annual Bar Foundation Luncheon Lawyers Provided Assistance to Sept. 11 Victims' Families and Businesses

May 20, 2002

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**May 20, 2002** (PHOENIX) – On Thursday, June 6, during the Annual State Bar Convention, the Arizona Bar Foundation luncheon will feature three New York City attorneys who were directly involved in the Sept. 11 World Trade Center attacks and its aftermath– Kevin Conway, Conway & Conway; Kevin Curnin, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP; and Michael Miller, Attorney at Law. These inspiring attorneys will share their stories, both of survival and assistance to victims. The Annual State Bar of Arizona Convention is June 5-8 at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson, Ariz.

“The events of Sept. 11 were horrific and these lawyers experienced these dark moments directly,” said Mark Rubin, president of the Arizona Bar Foundation Board of Directors. “While one of our speakers was a first hand victim, the other two organized efforts that helped hundreds of victims with direct assistance. All three have been changed for life and will share their stories of courage and selflessness. Each lawyer was affected in a different way and the stories they will share on June 6 will pull at your heart. We are extremely honored to have them as our speakers; these men are true heroes!”

Conway, a managing attorney at Conway & Conway since 1989, was directly impacted by the Sept. 11th attacks. His firm was located in the heart of New York’s financial community on the 33rd Floor of the North Tower in the World Trade Center.

“We lost everything, if it weren’t for an intern that had a master client list in her briefcase, the firm probably wouldn’t have recovered,” said Conway. “We are still in temporary offices in mid-town, but thankfully, all of our attorneys and employees made it out of the World Trade Center safely on Sept. 11th.”

Curnin, an attorney director for Stroock & Stroock & Lavan’s Public Service Project is responsible for overall management of the firm’s pro bono programs, including advising and assisting associates and partners with their pro bono litigation or transactional work.

Stroock’s Public Service Project played a leading role in mobilizing New York City’s legal rescue operation for victims of the World Trade Center disaster. The firm conceived, designed and helped implement the small business relief program that has been adopted by the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, dozens of law firms, and hundreds of lawyers across New York City to assist those affected by the Sept. 11 tragedy. Additionally,

Stroock established an Adopt-A-Firehouse Program, where attorneys worked with local fire, police and rescue units to help the spouses and families of men and women who gave their lives with immediate and long-term financial assistance, including trusts and estate guidance and the creation of charitable foundations for each unit.

Stroock also helped create and now serves on as general counsel to From the Ground Up, the leading

WTC small business victim advocacy group, which is lobbying to reform how financial assistance is rendered to small businesses and to give small businesses a larger voice in the redevelopment of lower Manhattan.

Miller, an estate and trust attorney and president-elect of the New York County Lawyers' Association provided assistance to hundreds of families who needed to apply for death certificates following the attacks of Sept. 11th.

"Over the past 8 months I have heard so many different stories from husbands, wives and children, but they all have the same ending," said Miller. "In the days after Sept. 11, it became clear that with so many people missing, the death certificate process needed to be simplified. That is when we began to assemble volunteer lawyers to assist families."

To date, Miller has helped more than 100 families navigate and apply for death certificates. Some days, he interviewed families for 10 to 12 hours, just to get through all of the victims that needed to talk and tell their stories to an attorney. As a solo practitioner, he doesn't draw a salary; the time he has spent volunteering comes out of his own pocket.

"I am doing this because I want to help people move on from this terrible event," said Miller. "It's a very small contribution, but it's a contribution. Lawyers are often seen as mercenary; we're the butt of many jokes. But this effort shows that the law can be a very noble profession. Isn't always, but it can be."

The Arizona Bar Foundation luncheon is being held at the Westin La Paloma in Tucson on June 6 at 12:00 p.m. Tickets are available to the general public for \$ 40. To make reservations or for more information, please contact Patricia Rogers at 602-340-7267.

**The Arizona Bar Foundation** was created over twenty years ago to support democracy education in primary and secondary schools and to support legal aid for the indigent throughout the state. In 2002, the Foundation will disburse nearly \$1 million in funding to support 11 legal aid agencies throughout the state.

Each year, the Foundation funds comprehensive K-12 education programs, teaches youth about conflict resolution, peace making, public policy making, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In 2002, the Arizona Bar Foundation will reach 40,000 Arizona school children with this curriculum. In addition, the Bar Foundation administers an annual \$500,000 Congressional grant that supports a democracy education program in Bosnia and Herzegovina.