

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Benny Agosto, Jr. To Be Sworn In As 2011-2012 HNBA National President

Benny Agosto, Jr., a partner with the law firm Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Sorrels, Agosto & Friend, in Houston, Texas, will be sworn in as the 2011-2012 Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) National President on Saturday, September 3, 2011, at the 2011 Annual Convention to be held in Dallas, Texas. Mr. Agosto will be sworn in by longtime friend and former HNBA National President Justice Jimmie Reyna of the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

The HNBA is a nonprofit national membership organization that represents the interests of more than 100,000 attorneys, judges, law professors, legal assistants and law students of Hispanic descent in the United States and Puerto Rico. The HNBA promotes opportunities for Latinos in the legal profession through advocacy and substantive programs. The HNBA also advocates for the larger Latino community on important policy issues such as access to justice, judicial diversity and independence, economic development, voter protection, and immigration reform.

As the first attorney from Texas to serve as National President of the HNBA, Mr. Agosto will help the HNBA collaborate with other national bar associations, governmental leaders, and community groups to achieve greater Hispanic involvement and prominence in the legal profession.

“I believe that we all have a duty to serve our local community, but I also believe that you have to expand yourself and reach not only your local community but your state, and then the nation, which is what the HNBA is allowing me to do,” said Mr. Agosto in regards to his upcoming position as HNBA National President.

Mr. Agosto is also a former Region XII President of the HNBA, Co-Editor-In-Chief of the HNBA Journal of Law & Policy, and has sat on the HNBA Board of Governors since 2006. In addition to serving on the HNBA board, Mr. Agosto has been very active in many local organizations. He is a former President of the Mexican-American Bar Association of Texas (MABATx), a current board member of the Mexican-American Bar Association of Houston (MABAH), a board member of the Houston Trial Lawyers Association, a board member of the Houston Bar Association, and has chaired several committees and subcommittees within those organizations as well.

Mr. Agosto is currently a board member of the HNBA Legal Education Fund, which supports the HNBA’s educational and charitable missions. He is the founder and President of the Mexican-American Bar Association of Texas Foundation (MABATx Foundation), which helps provide scholarships for Hispanic students. In addition, he is a fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation, a life fellow of the Houston Bar Association Foundation, and a fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

Mr. Agosto has been a partner at Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Sorrels, Agosto & Friend since 2004. With more than 60 years of experience, and as one of the oldest plaintiff’s law firms in

Texas, Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Sorrels, Agosto & Friend has been serving and protecting the rights of seriously injured people and their families since 1951.

Mr. Agosto's practice focuses on the area of civil litigation. He has successfully litigated thousands of cases on behalf of injured workers and is a strong believer in protecting the right of undocumented workers to have a fair trial. Most notably, Mr. Agosto recently won an award of \$1.4 million for the family of a worker who was killed on the job. In *Republic Waste v. Martinez*, the trial court excluded evidence of the worker's immigration status. Defendants argued that the worker's immigration status was relevant to the issue of future lost income. The Court of Appeals for the First District of Texas concluded that the probative value of the worker's immigration status was slight and was outweighed by its prejudicial effect. Thus, the court of appeals affirmed the trial court's ruling. This historic ruling created a new standard in Texas, ensuring that undocumented workers have the opportunity to be compensated for their injuries.

"As HNBA National President, I will pursue initiatives in three main areas—professional, children, and community. The professional initiative will focus on increasing pro bono work by recognizing and honoring lawyers across the nation who contribute significantly to their community through pro bono work. The children initiative will include projects such as the Feed the Children Initiative, which raises awareness and money for communities in which the HNBA meetings are held. And finally, the community initiative will include a Veterans Initiative, which will bring lawyers and veterans together to obtain legal representation," said Mr. Agosto.

Mr. Agosto is also a frequent speaker and lecturer on issues relating to civil litigation and has published multiple articles in numerous journals and periodicals such as *Trial Magazine*, *Texas Bar Journal*, and the *Houston Lawyer*. He was also listed in *Texas Monthly Super Lawyers* from 2004 to 2011. In addition, he has been featured in national periodicals such as the July/August 2011 issue of *Hispanic Executive* and has recently been named one of the 101 Most Influential Leaders in the Latino Community by *Latino Leaders Magazine*. Recently, Mr. Agosto was appointed by ABA President-Elect William Robinson to serve as a member of the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession.

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