

## Press Release

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### **Bay Area Law Firms Go Bananas for Charity in the 2007 Koko Challenge 19th Annual Competition Raised Over \$1.2 Million for Bay Area Community**

SAN FRANCISCO, December 7, 2007 – Yesterday evening, the Bay Area General Counsel Group and United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) announced the 2007 Koko Challenge Award winners during a ceremony hosted at the law offices of Gordon & Rees, LLP. The 19<sup>th</sup> annual Koko Challenge recognized local law firms for running exceptional United Way fundraising campaigns by excelling in total dollars raised, innovation and enthusiasm.

This year, 12 participating firms raised \$1,295,000 for charitable causes, setting a standard of excellence in philanthropy for the business community. The 2007 top award recipients, recognized by firm size, were:

- Baby Koko (1-45 attorneys) – Ropes & Gray LLP
- Little Koko (46-100 attorneys) – Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP
- Big Koko (100+ attorneys) – Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

Each winner received a furry, stuffed toy gorilla based on Koko, the female gorilla who learned sign language and had her own pet cat. Many of the winning firms display their “trophy” in a lobby or other prominent location during the coming year to showcase their organization’s accomplishments and impact on the community.

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This year's "Top Banana" award was presented to Meghan Carlson of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP for her enthusiasm and dedication as the coordinator of her firm's United Way campaign.

Other award recipients included: Baker & McKenzie LLP; Folger Levin & Kahn LLP; Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher; Gordon & Rees, LLP; Kecker & Van Nest LLP; and Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP.

The other 2007 Koko Challenge participants were Filice Brown Eassa & McLeod; Morrison & Foerster LLP; and Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P.

"We at United Way applaud the Bay Area legal community for their exceptional fundraising efforts in this year's Koko Challenge. I also want to acknowledge their outstanding community service efforts – in particular, the attorneys and law-firm staff who provide pro-bono legal counsel, serve on nonprofit boards and fill other key volunteer roles in the community," said Anne Wilson, chief executive officer of UWBA. "With their support, United Way and our nonprofit partners are achieving lasting impact in our region. We could not serve the community without them."

The Koko Challenge was created 19 years ago to offer Bay Area attorneys -- known to be highly competitive, yet generous and caring -- a direct link to local health and human service philanthropy through an enhanced partnership with United Way. Since that time, over 50 Bay Area law firms have contributed more than \$22 million to Bay Area nonprofits through this annual event.

### **About United Way of the Bay Area**

United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to community impact. UWBA serves Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. Our mission is to be the catalyst that enables people to strengthen their communities by investing in one another. Through the Bay Area Community Fund, United Way supports more than 250 local programs that fight poverty and create opportunities for children, youth, families and neighborhoods to thrive. In San Francisco, United Way 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember phone number that connects people in need—as well as individuals seeking to give—with community services. United Way's introduction of 2-1-1 in San Francisco is the first step in plans to promote and establish 2-1-1 service throughout the Bay Area. For more information, visit [www.uwba.org](http://www.uwba.org).