



Press Release

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Bay Area Legal Community Raises \$1.6 million in Class Action Against Poverty

SAN FRANCISCO, December 15, 2011 – Yesterday evening, the Bay Area General Counsel Group and United Way of the Bay Area presented the 24th annual Koko Challenge Awards at the San Francisco offices of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey. This exciting evening celebrated the Bay Area legal community's outstanding generosity, rallying around the theme, "Class action against poverty."

Michelle Banks, Executive Vice President and General Counsel for Gap Inc. and Chair of the KoKo Cabinet, was elated to announce that the firms raised over \$1.6 million in 2011, up from \$1.5 million in 2010. This included a 100% increase in gifts to United Way's poverty-fighting programs, with more than \$600,000 donated to support SparkPoint, Community Schools, Earn It! Keep It! Save It!, MatchBridge and 211.

Beyond total dollars raised, participation reached an all-time high of 30 firms, with ten law firms joining the Koko Challenge for the first time ever this year.

Hew Pate, Vice President and General Counsel of Chevron, congratulated the competing firms for running exceptional United Way fundraising campaigns. The Koko Challenge recognizes achievements in total dollars raised, volunteerism, engagement, innovation and enthusiasm. The 2011 top award recipients, recognized by firm size, were:

- Baby Koko (1-45 attorneys) – Bryan Cave LLP
- Little Koko (46-100 attorneys) – Sidley Austin LLP
- Big Koko (100+ attorneys) – Reed Smith 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 to showcase their organization's accomplishments and impact on the community.

This year, United Way presented the Silverback Award to Gordon Hart, a partner at Paul Hastings. The Silverback Award recognizes a partner-level attorney for his or her extraordinary efforts and personal leadership during the campaign.

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This year's "Top Banana" award was given to Bahareh Mostajelean and Thomas Lee, both of Bryan Cave, for their enthusiasm and dedication as the coordinators of the firm's United Way campaign.

The 10 new firms in this year's Koko Challenge competed for a special "Rookie of the Year" award. Crowell & Moring LLP won for their impressive use of best practices and excellent results.

"We at United Way congratulate the Bay Area legal community for your exceptional generosity and community spirit in this year's Koko Challenge," said Anne Wilson, chief executive officer of United Way of the Bay Area. "With your support, we continue to make progress toward our goal to cut poverty in half by 2020. As we head into Koko's 25th anniversary year, we look forward to your continued engagement in support of the legacy we've built together. The Koko Challenge exemplifies what it means to LIVE UNITED – to make a real impact in our community by working together."

Award recipients and participants include: Crowell & Moring, Davis Wright & Tremaine, Brown Eassa & Mcleod, Morgan Lewis, King & Spalding Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, Ropes & Gray, Shook, Hardy & Bacon, Miller Starr Regalia, Goodwin Proctor, Jones Day, Kecker & Van Nest, Paul Hastings, SNR Denton, Squire, Sander & Dempsey, Winston & Strawn, Gordon & Rees, Morrison Foerester and Pillsbury.

The Koko Challenge was created 24 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, more than 50 Bay Area law firms have contributed more than \$26 million to Bay Area nonprofits through this annual event.

Koko Challenge winners are selected by a volunteer committee comprised of Bay Area General Counsels and senior attorneys. This year's committee was Chaired by: Michelle Banks of Gap, Inc. Michelle is joined on the Cabinet by: Nancy Greenan Hamill of UC Santa Barbra, Richard S. Kopf of The Fremont Group, Hew Pate of Chevron Corp, Jay J. Price of Bank of America, William R. Sawyers of Ernest Gallo Clinic and Research Center, James Strother of Wells Fargo and Co. and Vanessa Washington of Bank of the West. The volunteer committee expanded to include partners from four Bay Area law firms: Charles Custer of Gordon & Rees LLP, Michael W. Kelly of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey LLP and David Hearth of Paul, Hastings and Kevin Haroff of Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP.

About United Way of the Bay Area

United Way of the Bay Area is a nonprofit organization that creates pathways out of poverty. Our goal is to cut Bay Area poverty in half by 2020. We focus on helping working families and individuals, ensuring they can meet all of their basic needs, while creating opportunities for them to achieve lasting financial stability. We also invest in programs that empower the next generation for success. United Way convenes partners across sectors, advocates for policy change, runs community programs and educates residents about the issues most vital to a resilient community. Founded in 1922, United Way of the Bay Area serves Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. For more information, visit www.uwba.org.