

**Candidate Profiles for Class I Director Positions with The Dominican Bar Association, Inc. (the  
“DBA”)**



**Election Date and Location:**

**October 23, 2019**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Anderson Kill**

**1251 Avenue of Americas**

**New York, New York 10020**

## **Argilio Rodriguez**

I write to express my interest in returning as a Board Member with the Dominican Bar Association. I previously served on the Board from 2013 – 2014 and was primarily involved in the Gala and Scholarship committees, and often assisted in the organization's efforts to coordinate with other bar associations. I also represented the DBA on two judicial screenings panels during that time. I started my career in 2008 as an Associate at Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossman LLP focusing on Securities and Mergers and Acquisitions class action litigation in federal courts throughout the country. In 2010, I started my own firm serving primarily the Latino business community in New York City in employment and commercial litigation, and liquor licensing, with an industry focus on restaurants and nightlife. I am proud to say that I am responsible for opening and defending many Dominican businesses throughout New York City. Throughout that time, I have been named a Rising Star by SuperLawyers magazine each year since 2015 in Employment Litigation (Defense). I have taught a CLE with the New York City Bar entitled Opening a Restaurant in New York City: Legal Issue Bootcamp, Labor & Employment Considerations. I would love nothing more than to have the honor and privilege of serving on the DBA Board once again.

Argilio Rodriguez, Esq.

Rodriguez + Co.

## **Bernarda Villalona**

I am seeking to become a Board Director of the Dominican Bar Association (“DBA”).

I am a highly motivated and naturally talented trial attorney of 15 years with a proven record of success seeking to continue my service to the community by becoming a Board Director of the DBA. Having grown up in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, been raised by a single mother of five children who emigrated from the Dominican Republic, and attending public school, I have experienced death, poverty, violence and racism firsthand. These experiences have driven me to public service. I’d like to continue my service to the community by promoting the values of the DBA and using the DBA to assist and educate our community on the law.

Prosecuting crime at the state level requires persuasive writing, strategic thinking, superior trial acumen, and capability to forge strong relationships. In my twelve years as a Prosecutor with the Kings County District Attorney’s Office, three years with the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office, and my time in Panama leveraging instructional prowess in training police officers and prosecutors, I have demonstrated my ability to meet all challenges.

Aside from my career in public service, I am very active in the community. I am a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Rho Omega chapter where I serve as Treasurer of the chapter of 214 members and Chair of the Money Is Power – Financial Literacy Seminar community service programs. I am also involved in providing a yearly College Tour to high school students and college preparatory classes.

By adding me to the leadership of the DBA, you will acquire a highly motivated and naturally talented trial attorney and leader committed to public safety and service to the community. It is my goal for the DBA to get the recognition it deserves and for all communities to know that the DBA exist and is the premiere organization for law, education, and service to all.

Bernarda Villalona, Esq.

## **Bianka Perez**

Good evening President Munoz,

It is with great pleasure that I express my interest in joining the DBA Board for the upcoming year. As you know, I have always been involved and continue to volunteer as an advisory board member. DBA is dear to my heart and I want to continue helping the new generation of leaders in the growth of DBA. Of course if we you have sufficient interest in board members I will gladly continue as an advisor to the board. The more the merrier!

## **Jeffrey Saavedra**

I am interested in becoming a general board member of the DBA. As a rising fourth year associate at Dechert LLP, I finally feel like I have the time and ability to dedicate to a board position. I have been searching for an bar association that touches on my values and I believe I have found that with the DBA. In the little time I have worked with the DBA I can see that it is greatly dedicated to its community and furthering the progression of Dominican-American attorneys and Latinx attorneys in general. It would be a great honor to serve on the board as a general board member in hopes of getting a better feel for how the board operates and later running for a position with greater responsibilities. I believe that my experience and connections to the greater big-law market would serve the DBA and its members well. I know that as an associate at Dechert I have the full backing of my firm in my commitment to the DBA. Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to reach out with any further questions.

Best,

Jeffrey

## **Jose Andres Jaime**

To whom it may concern:

My name is José Andrés Jaimé and I am running for a board seat on the Dominican Bar Association.

As a son of a Dominican mother, I've never forgotten the origins of our people and the culture that has united us. My pride in our patria has shaped me into the man, son, brother, friend and lawyer I am today. For me, the unity in our culture has always been a beacon for my personal and professional growth. In a profession such as ours, where we are few and far between, that call for unity is further elevated.

I believe it is our duty to carry the mantle forward and to take active roles in organizations where we can build and organize for the representation of our Dominican community, and further, the Latinx community at large. The DBA serves as the platform for that mission.

As an active member of the DBA, I have tried to gauge the conversations surrounding our communities, involve myself with the DBA's programming and generally be present when available. I have had the privilege of meeting and harvesting valuable relationships with various members in the organization and I've taken refuge in the thought that the DBA is a place where I can connect with others who share in similar stories as mine. In short, the DBA is a home away from home.

This is why I wish to be a part of the Board, so that I can work alongside talented counterparts to build a home for other lawyers to come.

Thank you for considering my candidacy. I hope to work with you all in the near future.

Yours truly,

José Andrés Jaime

## **Peter Garcia**

October 16, 2019

### ***Via Electronic Mail***

Mr. Marbel Leonel Muñoz,  
*President and Director*

Atenedoro Gonzalez,  
*Recording Secretary and Director*

Ms. Estefani Rodriguez,  
*Vice-President and Director*

Jamell Isidor,  
*Corresponding Secretary and Director*

Doralyn De Dios,  
*President-elect and Director*

Christian Calderon,  
*Treasurer and Director*

Dominican Bar Association Canal Street  
Station P.O. Box 203 New York, NY 10013

Re: **Statement of Interest to Serve as Board Member** Dear Esteemed Colleagues:

My name is Peter A. Garcia, and I submit my statement of interest to serve as a board member of the Dominican Bar Association. To assist with your decision, I briefly detailed information about me and the value I bring to the organization.

### **About Me**

Since a young age, I always had a passion for the financial markets and a passion for making a positive impact for my family and community. Since then, I have pursued experiences that achieved both passions.

For about four years prior to law school, partially while in law school, and since graduating law school, I have worked in roles focusing on securities regulation mainly for financial institutions. Presently, I work as a Senior Examiner for the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), regulating over 3,600 broker-dealers and over 620,000 registered representatives in the country, striving to ensure the protection of investors and the integrity of the financial markets. With a background in finance and accounting, coupled with interests in securities regulation, I believe I have been an effective regulator to identify and address (i) risks and harms effectuated

to investors and (ii) practices that contravene the spirit of or expressed requirement under applicable securities laws.

I have also taken steps to make a positive impact for my family and community. I will highlight some of my notable involvements.

While attending Seton Hall University – Stillman School of Business, I co-founded the (presently known as) Association of Latino Professional for America (ALPFA) student chapter for my university. Through this initiative, I assisted with the creation of other ALPFA student chapters in my area, such as William Paterson, Kean University, and Montclair University. I am most proud of how I actively led a small group to collectively organize with the north NJ ALPFA student chapters to raise thousands of dollars that allowed the organization to partially or fully sponsor numerous students to the national ALPFA convention –with the help of our sponsorship, some of students obtained full-time job opportunities through the convention.

While in law school, I was actively involved with various bar associations and affinity organizations. Particularly, I was an active delegate, board member, and leader for MetroLALSA – a non-profit organization led by Latino/a law students to be a resource for other Latino/a law students in the NY-NJ metropolitan area and for our community. During my involvement with this organization, I assisted and led various initiatives, but was most proud of the thousands of dollars raised that covered, in part or in whole, the costs for scholarships and to attend conferences held by HNBA, NLLSA and others.

Since graduation, I served as a mentor through various organizations, such as the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey (HBA-NJ) High School Pipeline program (Union City High School) and the LatinoJustice PRLDEF New Generation Líderes (NGL) program, as well as served as a mentor to students and young professionals outside of formal programs.

Last, but not least, I serve as an active member and leader for FINRA’s Latino affinity group called (ironically, yet on purpose) FLAN, assisting with internal newsletters and community outreach programs.

### **Value-add as Board Member**

As a board member, I believe I will bring much value to the Dominican Bar Association’s executive board and to the overall membership and community. I believe you are seeking for an effective and passionate board member – someone who will be engaged and active with the organization and its initiatives. I am that person.

My background and experiences also demonstrate my eagerness to go beyond my expected responsibilities and assist the team achieve the overarching – and short-term – goals and deliverables. But more importantly, I am passionate about making a positive and long-lasting impact for our community. Overall, I am ready for the challenge and journey to deliver meaningful results through my commitment and involvement through the Dominican Bar Association.

With that said, based on my experiences and motivation to bring about positive, long-lasting impact for our communities, I believe I will bring much value to the Dominican Bar Association and overall stakeholders.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Garcia

## **Raphael Gil**

I would like to be considered for a Board position with the DBA. As I mentioned to you when we spoke, I am looking to take on a more active role with the DBA. I am enclosing my resume here, but I'd be happy to answer any additional questions you or the board may have about my interest.

Best,

Raphael

## **Zoila Del Castillo**

I am submitting this statement in support of my application to join the Dominican Bar Association Board of Directors. I am a first generation Dominican immigrant in the United States. My family and I emigrated from the Dominican Republic when I was a young teenager and settled in the Bronx. Growing up in the Bronx, I learned about the harsh realities Latino/as face in the United States often due to their socio-economic status and inability to speak the English language. This unique perspective fueled my desire to one day become a lawyer who advocated for the rights of underserved Latino/as. In my pursuit to become a lawyer, I also thrived to become educated on the social and legal issues affecting the Latino/as in the United States in order to better serve my community.

Having minored in Latin American and Latinx Studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, I was deeply impacted to learn how minorities of color were grossly underrepresented in the legal profession. This perspective led me to believe that becoming an attorney was unattainable as a first generation Afro-Dominican in the United States. However, throughout my journey, I was fortunate to have encountered several attorneys who have taken the time to mentor me while building long-lasting relationships that have profoundly impacted my career and shaped me as a person. Without their guidance and support, I would not have understood how to navigate the process of becoming an attorney or had a community to turn to for support when the legal profession has presented its many challenges.

My personal experience navigating the legal profession has allowed me to appreciate the importance of bar associations such as the Dominican Bar Association, which supports Latino law students and legal professionals through its programs and networking opportunities. I believe that these bar associations not only allow for professional growth, they also provide attorneys of Dominican heritage with a sense of community in a profession where Latinos are significantly underrepresented. For that reason, I am an active member of bar associations and other organizations that promote diversity and inclusion, such as: the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) Region II, where I serve as Deputy President and Chair of the Young Lawyers Division; the Women's Bar Association (BWBA), where I serve in the Mentorship and Young Lawyer's Committee; LatinoJustice PRLDEF, where I served as a Lideres Board Member; the Network of Bar Leaders; and the Metropolitan Black Bar Association (MBBA). I believe that my demonstrated commitment to social justice and the advancement of Latinos in the legal profession will help me make a significant contribution to the mission of the Dominican Bar Association.