

Lavender Law Career Fair & Conference draws 1,600 LGBT attorneys, students to South Beach



- [Gallery | 2010 Lavender Law Career Fair & Conference at the Loews Miami Beach Hotel](#)

BY STEVE ROTH AUS, srothaus@MiamiHerald.com

Corey-Scott Smith, a gay University of Florida grad and third-year law student at Penn State, hopes this weekend to meet his future employer at the [2010 Lavender Law Career Fair and Conference](#).

"I'm really upbeat and positive about it," said Smith, 25, who grew up in Daytona Beach. "I've met a lot of people who've taken an interest in my abilities. They're opening their doors and I believe are ready to hire."



Corey-Scott Smith

Andrew Greenberg, 25, a second-year law student at University of Iowa, calls the conference "a really good opportunity" to meet recruiters from the nation's leading gay-friendly law firms.

"You know every firm here is committed to diversity," said Greenberg, who is one of many young, fully out LGBT job seekers at the conference.

"I identified [as gay] even on my application to law school," he said.

About 1,600 attorneys and law students are attending the annual conference presented by the [National LGBT Bar Association](#) Thursday through Saturday at the Loews Miami Beach Hotel.

"There's such an interest in South Beach and that is why our attendance is so great," said D'Arcy Kemnitz, the Bar association's executive director since 2004.



D'Arcy Kemnitz

The group, which began after the 1987 gay March on Washington, represents about 2,500 paid members of 27 gay regional, state and local Bar groups throughout the United States.

"The National LGBT Bar Association is a national association of lawyers, judges and other legal professionals, law students, activists, and affiliates lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender legal organizations," according to its website.

This year's convention is focused on "jobs, jobs, jobs," Kemnitz said.

About 150 companies and law firms have sent recruiters to the conference, including Prudential, Liberty Mutual, Microsoft, Greenberg Traurig and Holland & Knight. Government agencies are also represented, including the White House.

"Even the FBI is looking for lawyers," Kemnitz said. "That's pretty cool!"

One company at the convention is seeking to hire 29 lawyers, she said.

"There are a lot of jobs right now, but you need to know where to look," Kemnitz said.

About 500 students from law schools including Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Stanford are attending the conference.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender attorneys are in demand at many large law firms, Kemnitz said.

"Prestigious law firms want to be the go-to place when a large company has a problem. In order to be good problem solvers, they need to have a diverse team. It builds creative thinking, outside the box," said Kemnitz, herself an attorney. "You want to have individuals on the team who look like the client, who understand the client."

Gay lawyers typically best understand the needs of gay clients, she said.

Young gay law students will be particularly well equipped for the task.

"The next generation sees the LGBT identity part of the whole parcel," Kemnitz said. "It's not like a suit you put on in the morning and take off at night."

She points to Miami lawyer Elizabeth Schwartz, 38, who has become one of the country's best-known lesbian attorneys.

"Liz is one of those precious jewels," Kemnitz said. "She provides what I call 'womb to tomb' services."

"An advisor is one thing. But you have to have good bedside manner. That's what she has. She's considered extraordinary. She's known nationally for being a great practitioner. Her name is her brand."



**Rick Hill of Lambda Legal
and Elizabeth Schwartz**

Schwartz, named one of the gay Bar association's "Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40," will be honored Saturday night with a reception at Emeril's Miami Beach.

All photos by STEVE ROTH AUS / Miami Herald Staff

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