

## RUTHE CATOLICO ASHLEY

**Ruthe Catalico Ashley** is the President of Diversity Matters, an organization committed to diversity and leadership pipelines in the legal profession. Formerly, the President/CEO of California ALL (Aspire·Learn·Lead) a non-profit organization focusing on building educational pipelines by closing the achievement gap from pre-school to the profession. Prior positions include Chief Diversity Officer for CalPERS (California Public Employment Retirement System), the largest public pension fund in the United States with assets of \$190 billion. Ashley also served as the Assistant Dean for Career and Professional Development at the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, responsible for preparing hundreds of students for careers after law school. Her extensive rolodex assisted students in building relationships in California and across the nation. Her continuing commitment to student success makes her a sought after mentor and role model.

In 2010, Ashley brought together the State Bar of California and the California Department of Education in a historic partnership to build the first six law academies in the state under the California Partnership Academy model. In the fall of 2011, these law academies will start classes with 10<sup>th</sup> graders in San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, W. Contra Costa and Sacramento counties. This is the first “boots on the ground” program that the State Bar has fully supported and endorsed in its efforts to diversify the profession.

In 2010, Ashley was appointed to the American Bar Association’s Commission on Women in the Profession and the California Judicial Council’s Committee on Access and Fairness where she continues to be a voice for diversity in the legal profession. In July, 2007, Ashley was appointed as the chair of the ABA’s Presidential Advisory Council on Diversity which focuses on pipeline projects in the legal profession. In October, 2007, she was appointed as the chair of the Bench Bar Coalition with members from the California bench and bar that advocates with the California legislature on issues that affect California’s courts and judiciary.

Ashley was elected to the State Bar of California Board of Governors in 2004 and was appointed chair of a major initiative, the Diversity Pipeline Task Force. As chair of the Diversity Pipeline Task Force, Ashley led a group of 70 prominent members of the legal community including bar presidents, law firm partners, educators, deans, professors, corporate counsel and the judiciary in a project that facilitates the formation of diversity pipeline programs. This unique project put the State Bar of California in the lead in providing a resource of “Best Practices” that was continuous, sustainable, had impact and could be replicated by any legal entity. Ashley led the Board of Governors in the creation of a new Access and Fairness Council (COAF) that institutionalizes the work of the task force into the State Bar structure. Now in its fourth year of existence, the COAF sets policy and direction for the State bar and addresses issues of national importance in the diversity space.

Ashley will receive a special Diversity Award at the State Bar’s Annual Meeting in September 2011. She is credited with the vision to start many of the innovative programs at both a state and national level in the legal profession in the area of diversity and educational pipelines. Other awards include the Trailblazer Award from the Minority Bar Association of Western New York (2009), Distinguished Community Service Award presented by the Philippine American Bar Association (2007), Heritage Award presented by the California State Legislature (2005), “Filipina’s Who Could be President (2004), Lifetime Achievement Award from Pace University School of Law (2004), the Unity Award for Community Service from the Unity Bar Association (2002), Unsung Heroes Award from Sacramento’s public television station KVIE and Union Bank for volunteerism and activism (2001), the “Trailblazer Award” presented by the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (1998.). She is a past president of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, a past president of Legal Services of Northern California, a past chair of the Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce and a past president of the Asian Bar Association of Sacramento. She continues to serve on other boards and commissions including the ABA’s Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO).

A 1988 graduate of Pacific McGeorge School of Law, Ashley practiced law for 14 years prior to returning to her alma mater’s career office. Her prior legal experience included trial work in both large and small law firms. In 1998, she

was a founding partner at the first Asian-American women-owned law firm in the greater Sacramento area which specialized in healthcare law, civil rights, employment, and business litigation.