



PUERTO RICO ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

"You No Longer Stand Alone"

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Membership Benefits

Punch & Jurists —

PRACDL members are automatically joined to Punch & Jurists. This provides access to their sites: www.fedcrimlaw.com and www.ussguide.com via a username and password provided by Punch & Jurists. These sites provide a wealth of information of interest to federal criminal defense lawyers. Members can also receive (and should) the **Punch & Jurists** newsletter via email as a PDF attachment. This is all included as part of your PRACDL membership, although if you were to subscribe individually it would cost \$199.00 per year, more than twice the PRACDL annual dues.

CLE Workshops and Seminars —

PRACDL offers workshops and seminars on a variety of legal topics. Sometimes these are free to members and, when members have to pay, it is always at a discount of the price charged to non-members. The 4 workshops offered last year were free of cost to PRACDL members. PRACDL will also strive to get CLE credit for members to use towards fulfillment of both their Commonwealth of Puerto Rico CLE requirements as well as towards the District Court's CLE requirements for CJA Panel Members. This year PRACDL plans to offer two seminars, tentatively one will be in May and the other in November. **Rachel Brill** is currently the Chairperson of the CLE Committee.

— FOUNDED 1991 —

AN AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS

PRACDL Blogs & PRACDL Group Listserv —

The [PRACDL Blog](#) -and its sister blog [TrialPrep](#) - while online for anyone to read and take advantage of all the materials and links contained in it, is a very useful resource. Often linked to in other well known criminal law blogs, one of the posts made it into a petition for rehearing en banc before the First Circuit. Explore it and use it.

PRACDL members have regularly received emails from PRACDL with attached copies of briefs and other valuable information for use in their practice. We have now set up a listserv – **PRACDL Group** – to which only PRACDL members may belong. This allows all members to post to the entire group and receive the posts from the entire group. The extent to which PRACDL members join the group will determine how successful this tool will be. This will work just as the CJAFirstCircuit Group or BOPWatch, or NACDL's Listserv. All members will have an email address to which they can post to the entire group via email. You can also reply to particular messages by hitting reply to all in your email software. This will also allow for the uploading of briefs and other legal memoranda online for access by all members and will be used as our brief bank by accessing the groups page online. Members should save the groups email address - pracdl-group@googlegroups.com - in their Contacts list to avoid group emails being sent to the spam folder, as well as to be able to post to the entire group as they see fit. The PRACDL Group's home page is <http://groups.google.com/group/pracdl-group> but you must sign up by responding to the group's email invitation.

Tom Lincoln is currently the Chairperson of the Publications Committee, which oversees the PRACDL Blogs as well as the PRACDL Group Listserv.

Brief Bank —

PRACDL's Brief Bank has never been properly developed. As indicated above, we will attempt to create our Brief Bank online at the PRACDL Group page under files. However, depending on which is easier for members to access and use, we might also decide for creating it under a Gmail e-mail account, which allows us to place labels on the various briefs (or emails submitting the briefs). Which route the Brief Bank takes is still up for final decision. The special Gmail account (separate from the PRACDL account) has already been set up. It is briefbank@gmail.com and PRACDL members receive the password to this

account to sign into it. The Federal Public Defender's Office in San Juan keeps an online Brief Bank, but as of now it is limited to briefs and legal memoranda from the FPD's Office itself. PRACDL's Brief Bank will include briefs and if possible the respective opinions from any criminal defense source.

Strike Force —

PRACDL members enjoy the benefit of our Lawyer's Assistance Strike Force. It is intended to bring support and representation (if needed) to PRACDL members under attack for doing our job as defense lawyers. **Linda Backiel** is currently the Chairperson of the Strike Force. She is also eager to hear from attorneys with issues PRACDL should know about (with or without requests for help) and the availability of others to intervene with briefs, etc., when requested, respecting, of course, any attorney's request for confidentiality regarding consultations/requests for help. PRACDL really needs to get a collective sense of issues of concern to lawyers in this district and to raise the profile of the criminal defense bar as defenders of fundamental endangered principles. You may contact **Linda Backiel** at lbackielr@gmail.com regarding these matters.

Amicus Curiae Committee—

The PRACDL Amicus Curiae Committee sometimes works in tandem with the Strike Force. We had one example of an attorney coming under attack in which attorneys working on the Strike Force assumed the representation of the defense attorney, and an *Amicus Curiae* brief was filed on behalf of PRACDL. There may be cases in which no Strike Force representation is involved and PRACDL will file an *Amicus* brief to express and promote policy concerns regarding the criminal justice system. Whenever members have a case that they understands may merit PRACDL's involvement as *amicus curiae* they should contact PRACDL via email at pracdl@gmail.com. You may also contact any of the Board Members in the contacts list.

Mentoring Program—

PRACDL has long proposed assisting with the District Court's Mentoring Program for new CJA Panel Members. At present, all of the defense attorneys on the District Court's CJA Panel Committee are also members of PRACDL.

The criminal defense lawyers currently serving on the CJA Committee are the

following:

- Héctor Deliz - PRACDL Member and past Board Member
- Joseph C. Laws, Jr. - FPD and PRACDL Board Member
- Thomas R. Lincoln - PRACDL Secretary
- Epifanio Morales - PRACDL Member
- Jorge E. Vega-Pacheco - PRACDL Board Member
- Alice Velázquez - PRACDL Member
- José L. Novas-Debien - PRACDL Board Member (Alternate Member)

Rachel Brill —also a PRACDL Board Member— is the new National CJA Representative for the district of Puerto Rico.

Chairing the Court's CJA Committee is District Judge Aida M. Delgado-Colón, who is a past Board Member of PRACDL and was our first Secretary. District Judge Gustavo Gelpí (past AFPD) and Chief Magistrate Judge Justo Arenas are also on the Committee, as is Magistrate Judge Bruce McGiverin (past PRACDL Member). The Clerk of the Court is also a member of the CJA Committee.

The current PRACDL Board submitted a proposal to the Court's CJA Committee wherein PRACDL members would serve as mentors in the Court's Mentoring Program for new CJA Panel members who the Committee determined had to go through the mentoring program. The plan approved by the CJA Committee was recently submitted to the full Court, which approved the same as a one year pilot program.

Forensic Experts —

PRACDL is working in the preparation of a list of Forensic Experts that will be made available to all members.

Summaries of Case Docket Reports —

Monthly Summary Reports of Criminal Cases filed in the District of Puerto Rico, their nature, etc., are distributed to all PRACDL members. Not only is this of assistance to members in knowing what is going on in the District Court's Criminal Docket, but members may then sign up to receive notices via the CM/ECF system of any cases they may be interested in following, or they can then go to the particular case docket to see any motions or orders they are

interested in or review case dispositions which may be useful in negotiating for their own clients by comparison.

PRACDL Contacts —

You may always contact PRACDL at pracdl@gmail.com - or by mail at the postal address appearing on this letterhead. You may also contact any of the Board Members at their respective e-mail addresses:

- Mariángela Tirado-Vales - President - mtvlaw@gmail.com
- Linda Backiel - Vice President - lbackielr@gmail.com
- Thomas R. Lincoln - Secretary - tomlincoln@onelinkpr.net
- Jorge E. Rivera-Ortíz - Treasurer - jeroesq@aol.com
- Rachel Brill - rabrill@gmail.com
- Jason González-Delgado - jgdgglaw@gmail.com
- Joseph C. Laws, Jr. - jlaws@coqui.net
- José L. Novas-Debién - jnovas@caribe.net
- Jorge E. Vega-Pacheco - jorge.vegapacheco@gmail.com

Policy Statements—

The PRACDL Board, in conjunction with PRACDL members issues policy statements on various matters affecting the criminal justice system. It also distributes to members so-called Best Practices for Criminal Defense Lawyers to follow in various areas of our criminal defense practice, to assist members and non-members alike in the practice of our chosen vocation.

Suggestions are always welcomed.