



## Washington State Bar Association

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Seattle Firm Bendich, Stobaugh and Strong, P.C. to Receive Washington State Bar Association's Local Hero Award**

*Seattle Washington, March 9, 2005* — The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) today announced that David F. Stobaugh and Stephen K. Strong, and the Seattle law firm of Bendich, Stobaugh and Strong, P.C., have been chosen to receive the WSBA's Local Hero Award for their outstanding *pro bono* work on securing the passage of provisions permitting clients who win employment discrimination and similar cases to take a full tax deduction for their attorneys' fees and costs by outlawing the double taxation of attorney awards in employment discrimination, civil rights, and other aspects of cases involving employment relations; as well as for their work on a WSBA-sponsored bill to amend the Washington Attorney Lien statute to give lawyers a property interest in attorney fees. The Local Hero Award is presented to lawyers, judges, or groups who have made noteworthy contributions to their communities. WSBA President Ronald R. Ward will present the award to David Stobaugh and Stephen Strong at a reception for Board of Governors Alumni and WSBA directors on Friday, March 11, 2005, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Mayflower Park Hotel in Seattle.

The law firm of Bendich, Stobaugh and Strong, P.C., led by David Stobaugh and Stephen Strong, was instrumental, through extensive lobbying and financial support, in making it possible for a provision of the Civil Rights Tax Relief Act (CRTRA) barring the double taxation of attorneys' fees to become law on October 22, 2004 as part of the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004. "The CRTRA is one of the most significant pieces of civil rights legislation in almost a decade," wrote Janet E. Hill, president of the National Employment Lawyers Association (NELA), of which Bendich, Stobaugh and Strong, P.C. is a member firm. "Under the new law, individuals who are successful in employment discrimination and other workplace-related cases may now take a full deduction on their federal income tax returns for the attorneys' fees and costs they incur in vindicating their rights." Prior to the enactment of this new legislation, those individuals were taxed both on the amount that they had received as compensation

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for unlawful discrimination, and on the fees paid to their attorneys. As a result, it was possible for their tax bills to surpass their award.



Mr. Stobaugh has been a partner/shareholder in Bendich, Stobaugh and Strong since 1975, with a civil trial and appellate practice that emphasizes class-action litigation for employee benefits and other types of compensation; small business financing and advice; civil liberties litigation; and actions by individuals and groups to obtain government records. For 20 years, from 1975-1995, Mr. Stobaugh was a member of the Legal Committee of the ACLU of Washington. From 1986 to 2004, he was a member of the Board of Directors of Evergreen Community Development Association. He is co-founder of the Center for a Changing Workforce, a nonprofit corporation that provides education, policy analysis, and advocacy for misclassified workers, such as "permatemps," and is a member of its Board of Directors.



Mr. Strong has also been a partner/shareholder in Bendich, Stobaugh and Strong since 1975, with a civil litigation practice at all levels from trial courts to the Washington State Supreme Court and U.S. Supreme Court. Since the late 1980s his practice has emphasized employment class-action claims for compensation and benefits against major employers. He is a former editor of the *University of Washington Law Review*, and participated in a legal aid-program for prisoners.

Mr. Stobaugh and Mr. Strong have worked together on a number of *pro bono* projects besides the CRTRA and the Attorney Lien Bill, including promoting and helping to draft the Public Employee Misclassification Bill (codified as RCW 49.44.160, 170), which makes it an unfair practice for public employers to misclassify employees when that misclassification results in a denial of benefits; successfully opposing, through lobbying and financial support, the Temporary Industry Payrolling Bill, which would have overridden the established common-law test for employment applied to tax laws; and assisting the Center for a Changing Workforce in successfully opposing a bill to allow temporary employment firms not to pay business and occupation taxes.

### **About Bendich, Stobaugh and Strong, P.C.**

Bendich, Stobaugh and Strong, P.C., is a Seattle-based law firm that brings claims for benefits or pay on behalf of employees, including class actions. The firm was founded in 1975 by Judith E. Bendich, David F. Stobaugh, and Stephen K. Strong. The firm received the Public Justice Award for 2000 from the

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Washington State Trial Lawyers Association, and the three founders were named “Lawyers of the Year” for 1997 by a Boston, MA, legal newspaper, *Lawyers Weekly USA*. The University of Washington School of Law faculty recognized the firm in 2001 through a Resolution of Commendation.

### **About the Washington State Bar Association**

The Washington State Bar Association is a private, nonprofit organization authorized by the Washington Supreme Court to license the state’s 28,900 lawyers. The WSBA both regulates lawyers under the authority of the Court and serves its members as a professional association—all without public funding. As a regulatory agency, it administers the bar exam, provides record-keeping and licensing functions, and administers the lawyer discipline program. As a professional association, the WSBA provides continuing legal education for attorneys, in addition to numerous other educational and member-service activities.

The governance of the WSBA is vested in its 14-person Board of Governors. There are three governors from the seventh congressional district; one from each of the other eight districts; and three at-large members, one of whom represents the Young Lawyers Division. The president is Ronald R. Ward of Seattle. The board meets every six weeks at various locations around the state, and its meetings are open to the public. Much of the work of the WSBA is carried out through its 23 standing committees, 24 sections, and a Young Lawyers Division.

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