

Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Stephen Vasciannie, will deliver the keynote address at the third annual Jamaican American Bar Association (JABA) Awards and Scholarship Gala, in New York, on Saturday, March 16.

In addition to benefiting students attending law school in Jamaica and the United States, money raised from the event will go towards establishing a Jamaican Legal Defence Fund (JLDF), to help overseas nationals in need of legal representation.

The black tie gala will take place at the LaGuardia Plaza Hotel in Queens, New York.

According to President of JABA, Joan Pinnock, “the organization continues to address issues that are unique to our nationals, through seminars and legal advice.”

She noted that in 2010, JABA prevented several Jamaicans from being deported, and was successful in returning one Jamaican national to the US after he was deported.

The organization will recognize three persons for exemplary service, including Judge, Stephen Drummond - Magistrate’s Award; Attorney-at-law, Wayne Bennett - Barrister’s Award, and Paulette Willoughby - Community Leadership Award.

Ms. Willoughby is Chair of the Jamaican Independence Celebration Foundation Inc., organizers of the annual Jamaica Independence Ball in New York.

A major plank of the organization’s core mission is to serve the Jamaican- American community by providing scholarships, co-ordinating the development of educational programmes, mentoring, career assistance for its members and service to Jamaica.

This year’s theme for the gala is: ‘Promoting Health, Wealth and Prosperity’.

By Derrick Smith, JIS Reporter