

**EMBARGOED NEWS**  
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**HONORABLE NELSON A. DIAZ TO JOIN  
COZEN O'CONNOR**

**PHILADELPHIA – May 29, 2007** - The Honorable Nelson A. Diaz, former City Solicitor of Philadelphia, General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”), and Administrative Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia, will join Cozen O'Connor as Of Counsel on May 29.

In private practice for more than 10 years with Blank Rome, Diaz concentrates his government relations and dispute resolution practice on public and affordable housing, representing a variety of clients ranging from public housing authorities to non-profit organizations, developers, mortgage and lending companies, and banking institutions including Banco Popular, the country's largest Latino bank.

“I have long admired the work of Cozen O'Connor. My respect for the firm dates back to my days on the bench when Steve Cozen presented his client's case during the Meridian fire litigation,” said Diaz. “I watched the firm grow over the years and attract top legal and judicial talent. I am very excited to join so many respected trial lawyers and colleagues including Justice Sandra Schultz Newman at this very dynamic firm. I've also been impressed with the firm's top level commitment to enhancing diversity both within the firm and the profession. And of particular importance to my clients, Cozen O'Connor's offices along the Northeast corridor will provide valuable support for my government relations practice from New York to Washington, D.C.”

The youngest judge elected in Philadelphia to the Court of Common Pleas, and the first Latino judge in Pennsylvania's history, Diaz served the court until 1993. He went on to become the first Latino to be confirmed and named to a General Counsel position in a Presidential administration, when President Clinton appointed him as General Counsel for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. There he developed opinions that reformed public housing and mixed-use housing programs. He was then appointed by the Mayor as City Solicitor of Philadelphia. Diaz was instrumental in increasing the number of women and minority lawyers at both HUD and the City Solicitor's Office.

“Nelson is a terrific guy, a great lawyer, and a dedicated public servant,” said firm Chairman Stephen A. Cozen. “He will help us continue to build the best government relations group around.”

An active corporate and civic leader, Diaz is on the Board of Directors of Exelon Corporation, one of only 46 Hispanics to serve on a Fortune 100 Board. He also serves on the Advisory Board of PNC, and is on the Board of Directors and the Executive

Committee of Temple University, where he served with Patrick O'Connor on Temple's last Presidential Search Committee. Executive director of the Spanish Merchants Association of Philadelphia, he is a former chair of the Hispanic Caucus for the Democratic National Committee and was a member of Andrew Cuomo's Transition Committee for Attorney General of New York.

Diaz was special assistant to Vice President Walter F. Mondale as a White House Fellow. Also a Fulbright Scholar and a Japan Fellow, Diaz is a champion of civil rights and international human rights and has received five honorary degrees. A resident of the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia, Diaz is married to Deputy Secretary of State Sara Manzano-Diaz and has three children.

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*Editor's Note*

**Education:**

- 1969 – St. John's University, B.S.
- 1972 – Temple University School of Law

**Awards:**

- 100 most influential Hispanics in America, Hispanic Business
- 2007 Award of Excellence, Thurgood Marshall College Fund
- 2001 Spirit of Excellence Award, American Bar Association
- Most Influential Hispanic in the Delaware Valley, Impacto Latin News and the Multicultural Affairs Congress of Philadelphia
- Pennsylvania Super Lawyer

**Memberships:**

- Pennsylvania Bar Association
- National Bar Association
- Hispanic Bar Association

**Multimedia Elements:**

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