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Pontiac native, MSU graduate receives award from New Jersey State Bar Association

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Bobby Conner, a Pontiac native and Missouri State University graduate, has received the 2010 Professional Achievement Award from the New Jersey State Bar Association (NJSBA) Young Lawyers Division for his achievements spearheading the ACLU-NJ's Open Governance Project.

Conner graduated from MSU in 1999 and Rutgers Newark School of Law in 2006, where he was selected as a government fellow at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.

Conner's award recognizes a young lawyer in the state who has demonstrated excellence in a particular area of law, argued for a significant verdict, or won a game-changing decision, among other distinctions, according to a press release from the ACLU.

Early in his career, Conner served as an intern for the late Missouri Gov. Mel Carnahan, where he recommended gubernatorial appointments for state boards and commissions. Conner also worked for the Missouri Office of Administration, Division of Budget & Planning, where he monitored the Missouri House of Representatives and reviewed the fiscal impact of legislation passed by the legislature.

In 1999, Conner traded one capital for another, to work as a legislative aide in the White House Office of Legislative Affairs, where he monitored the United States Senate and drafted legislative reports for President Bill Clinton and senior White House staff.

Conner has established the Open Governance Project as a powerhouse for transparency, ensuring that government agencies uphold and enforce the Open Public Records Act and Open Public Meetings Act (the "Sunshine Law") throughout New Jersey. He regularly helps members of the public seeking access to their government and teaches public officials how to better comply with New Jersey's open governance laws. He has worked closely with New Jersey Senator Loretta Weinberg to draft amendments she has introduced to update both the New Jersey Sunshine Law and the Open Public Records Act, according to the release.

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