

# NCWBA NEWSLETTER

for the National Conference of  
Women's Bar Associations

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Volume 20, No. 3

*"The Voice of the Women's Bar"*

Winter 2003

## Seattle Networking Breakfast A Success — February 7, 2003

Seattle provided a beautiful backdrop to the NCWBA networking breakfast held on February 7, 2003 in conjunction with the Mid-Year meeting of the American Bar Association. Our event this year was hosted by the law firm of Perkins Coie and did they roll out the red carpet for our attendees! Perkins Coie provided a continental breakfast for all attendees as well as graciously allowed us to use their spacious conference room, which overlooked Seattle's downtown district.

Our focus was on continuing efforts to shatter the glass ceiling. This year we highlighted the recently released Final Report entitled "Self-Audit for Gender and Racial Equity" issued by The Washington Glass Ceiling Task Force. Speaking to a standing-room only capacity crowd at our breakfast were Eileen Concannon, the current chair of the Washington Task Force, and Judith Ramseyer, the immediate past chair of the Washington Task Force. Both women spoke about the formation of the Glass Ceiling Survey in 2001. Its mission was to objectively determine whether in fact the subjective view that women attorneys believed a "glass ceiling" existed, preventing them from reaching the highest levels of status and compensation in the legal profession. Seven areas were targeted for the survey: hiring, compensation, work life and firm culture, firm governance, discrimination and harassment policies and practices, professional growth, and promotion and retention.

The speakers reported that the results of the survey bore out the subjective view of its originators: while progress has been made in the status of women attorneys, they have not reached the level of compensation, participation in firm governance, and professional attainment of men. Women of color similarly lag behind whites in the indicia of power and control within the legal profession.

Some areas of improvement were noted. Most firms appear to take seriously issues of sexual harassment and race and sex discrimination. Firms also increasingly take into account attorneys' attitudes toward women and people of color, with most assessing gender and ethnic bias at some point in a lawyer's tenure with the firm. Additionally, a significant number of firms have parental leave policies or accommodate alternative schedules.

After the speakers concluded their presentation, a lively discussion took place among the attendees, who represented many states from around the country. Attendees shared ideas and resources to help us all achieve real gains for women professionals. To that end, the Glass Ceiling Task Force is planning to produce a handbook to assist legal employers in finding solutions to the various areas a concern raised in the report. Turning a sobering report into a positive action plan is a step all agreed is necessary to significantly change the status of women lawyers. If interested, contact the Washington Women Lawyers for a copy of the Final Report or to check on the status of when the handbook will be published.

The event would not have been successful without the generous financial support of Perkins Coie, LLP. In addition, we would like to thank our co-sponsors the National Association of Women Lawyers and Oregon Women Lawyers.

### THANK YOU

Many thanks to Perkins Coie,  
LLP for its generosity in  
hosting this year's NCWBA Net-  
working Breakfast



## President's Message

by Dawn Siler-Nixon

Events of the past years, including the space shuttle Columbia disaster, have made me reflect and take stock of my life and the people I know (or those I think I know). There are so many powerful and influential women admired and adored by many – Maya Angelou, Marian Wright Edelman, Rosa Parks, Susan B. Anthony, Florence Rae Kennedy, just to name a few. Yet, there are many more unknown women who sit next to you on a plane, who you may know from work, school, church or even your family; women who, heretofore, you may never have thought of as heroes, someone special or worth admiring.

I discovered recently that there are women I have known for years, some my whole life, who I never revered or thought had qualities worth aspiring to. On a recent mission trip to Haiti, I “met” a woman I never knew, although I had “known” her for years. I “knew” her as a worker bee, a person who was not really seen or heard, someone who had never been anywhere or done anything. I was wrong! Once I really got to know her, and spent time asking her questions about her life, I found a strong, courageous, tenacious woman that any woman would aspire to emulate. This is a woman who – at a time when it was not customary for women to do such things – left home, traveled across the country on her own, and made a life for herself in California, with no one’s help. This is a woman who was mar-

ried, had three beautiful girls, and was abused by her husband. Yet, she had the courage to take her children and leave that situation, with no job, money, or a future, and make it! This is a woman who took a stand for herself and all women, without even knowing she was doing so; a woman who has the qualities any woman would aspire to have.

I have also had an opportunity, over the past couple of years, to “meet” another such woman -- one I had “known” all of my life -- or so I thought. This woman lived quietly and humbly, doing those things that women are “supposed to do.” I vowed I would not be that type of woman (we must use caution when saying what we will not do or be, for we may live to eat our words). The woman I met, after her children were grown and husband died suddenly (leaving her with household responsibilities, financial and otherwise), is a strong, courageous woman. This woman’s mother died when she was a child, and her older sister died several years later, leaving her to care for four brothers and an alcoholic father. This woman had such a burning desire for a higher education that she worked all day, took care of her siblings and father and walked for miles to attend college. Although she was not able to complete college because of the pressures of her life, she encouraged and empowered her daughters to be and do what their hearts desired. This remarkable woman now runs a 20-acre house-

hold and manages multiple properties, while still taking care of her two remaining brothers, and visiting, on a regular basis, her extended family and friends who are in assisted living facilities. This is a woman who, 20 years ago, I would not have thought I would want to be. She is a woman of courage, vision and foresight, who dared to dream that a woman could do and be whatever she wanted to be. She is the woman I am proud to call “Mother.”

I encourage all women to not only look for female role models among the famous women trailblazers, but look at the woman sitting next to you at your next meeting. Get to know the women in your office -- legal assistants, managers, staff and colleagues. Talk to family members and neighbors, whom you have “known” a lifetime. You may be surprised at the women you “meet” who you have never really known. Share your experiences with younger women -- your daughters, nieces, and grandchildren. Take your daughter to work day is April 24, 2003. Take that opportunity to let a young woman get to know you. If you do not have a daughter, get involved in a program, sponsor a program, or mentor a child. Contact the NCWBA at [www.ncwba.org](http://www.ncwba.org) for more information about programs in your area.

## Meet the NCWBA's New Executive Director

In November 2002, after a nationwide search, Pamela Ly Nicholson was selected to be the new executive director of the National Conference of Women's Bar Associations. Although Pam works part-time, those seeking her help will find that her commitment to women's bar associations is more than full time. Pam's own experiences as a new associate at a large Portland law firm and as a young mother balancing the demands of a growing family and law practice have convinced her of the value of women's bar associations and the services they can provide to lawyers at every step of their careers. Pam comments, "Women's bar associations and women bar leaders are not just special groups to have around. They are a necessity, especially for young women looking for role models in this profession."

Pam is a 1997 honors Business Eco-

nomics graduate of Willamette University, in Salem, Oregon and a 2001 law graduate of the Northwestern School of Law of Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She served as associate editor of her school's *Journal of Small and Emerging Business Law*. As a summer clerk in 2000 and as an associate at the Portland firm of Bullivant Houser Bailey after law school graduation, Pam's work focused on products liability and general litigation. Before becoming an attorney, she served for many years as a legal assistant to a solo practitioner whose practice emphasized personal injury and worker's compensation. Her association memberships include the American Bar Association, the Oregon State Bar Association, Oregon Women Lawyers, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance and Education First, a non-profit organization dedicated to pro-

viding need-based scholarships to exceptional seniors attending high schools with historically low percentages of college applicants.

Pam's predecessor, Diane Rynerson, served as NCWBA executive director from July 1997 until November 2002. Although Diane will be missed, she promises to continue her volunteer work with women's bar associations and hopes to stay in touch with the many colleagues and friends she made during her years with NCWBA.



### Congratulations To . . .

The North Carolina Bar Association and the Durham County Bar Association recently presented NCWBA Board Member, **LYNNE TOWNSEND ALBERT**, with the 2002 Centennial Award. The Centennial Award is given annually to an attorney for outstanding and exemplary community service. Lynne won the award for her work as producer and moderator of the legal TV show, "Laying Down the Law." This is the first time this award has been won by a woman.

NCWBA Board Member **CARYL P. PRIVETT** was appointed to the trial court bench in Alabama during the last week of Governor Don Siegelman's administration. Judge Privett was the first female U.S. Attorney in Alabama and the founding chair of

the Women's Section of the Alabama State Bar. In addition, she was the first white to join the pioneer civil rights law firm of Adams Baker & Clemon.

A 1973 graduate of NYU School of Law, Judge Privett will hear civil cases in the Tenth Judicial Circuit of Alabama which is located in Birmingham. After leaving the U.S. Attorney's office in 1998, after 22 years of federal service, Judge Privett opened her office as a solo practitioner doing alternative dispute resolution and prosecuting for the City of Mountain Brook, a suburb of Birmingham. She is also an adjunct professor at Cumberland School of Law at Samford University, teaching trial advocacy.

Judge Privett has been active in bar association activities with the Bir-

mingham Bar Association, serving on the Executive Committee, the Grievance Committee and the Board of the Women Lawyers' Section of that bar. She is a past president of the Birmingham Bar Foundation and the Birmingham Chapter of the Federal Bar Association.

In his last six weeks in office, Governor Siegelman appointed three women to the bench in the Tenth Judicial Circuit Court, including the first two women to ever serve in that court's civil division. Under Alabama law, Judge Privett will have to run for election in 2004.

# TIPS AND IDEAS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM PLANNING

*by Kathleen M. McDowell, Esq.  
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Member meetings and programs are the lifeblood of any bar organization, particularly women’s bar organizations that are sensitive to their members’ desires for personal and business networking opportunities outside of the established male-dominated network. For the bar leaders responsible for organizing meetings and programs, however, coming up with new ideas and making the programs successful can be a challenge. Here are some tips and suggestions gathered from NCWBA member organizations:

*\* Set objectives and goals for the program*

Define success. Not all programs can be or will be blockbusters that will bring in a substantial portion of your membership. That does not mean the programs are not successful. If the goal of a program is to educate, attract new members, or give members a chance to get to know other members, a program does not necessarily have to draw a crowd to be successful. Success can be measured by a mentoring relationship that develops between women attorneys who met each other at a women’s bar event, or by a new member who joins the organization after attending a meeting or program.

If your goal is to reach a defined financial target, you can plan and market the program using that goal as the primary guide. Look for sponsors who will underwrite some or all of the cost of the program or for local businesses that will make an in-kind donation to an event. Get members invested in the success of the program by asking them to bring a friend to the events or to work at some defined task at the event. Explore all avenues to keep the costs low. Be creative –

perhaps a networking program could be potluck or bring-your-own-brown-bag lunch. Make whatever financial goal you set realistic based on past experience in your organization. If the financial result is better than the year before, you’re a success.

*\* Market and publicize the program*

Reach out beyond the “usual suspects.” Consider having programs marketed to or co-sponsored, if appropriate, by other professional women’s groups, such as a local chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners, the American Association of University Women, a local group of women doctors, or other specialty bar associations. Market a program on “attracting or retaining associates” or “why women leave the legal profession” to law firm managing partners, law school placement directors, and other bar associations. If you have a law school, college, or university in your area, consider publicizing some programs to students if the topic is something that may attract students.

Programs can be publicized and marketed by personal invitation to all or to a few very important guests, flyers, newsletters, articles or announcements in local newspapers, e-mail group distribution, and on websites of your organization or sister organizations (e.g., the local county or state bar). Word-of-mouth to colleagues and friends is probably still the most effective way of increasing attendance.

If the program qualifies for continuing legal education credit, tout that fact in your marketing materials. If the proceeds of the program will benefit a

specific project or pro bono activity, make sure that feature is prominent. Consider making an event “for members only” to encourage non-members to join the organization so that they can attend the event. Of course, if there is no cost to attendees, the words “free” or “complimentary” will be a real attention getter. The invitations or flyers should also tell members and invitees whether beverages and food will be served or available at the program. Serving food, or providing “goody bags” with donated items from local law-oriented business, provides even more incentive to attend.

*\* Figure out what attracts your members*

In planning programs, look to the past for guidance, and analyze which prior programs were the most successful (however defined), and why they were successful. Perhaps your members are looking for programs on topics outside the law, such as women’s health, money management, empowerment, balancing work and career, communication skills, women’s sports, raising children, or opportunities for non-law-related community service. Perhaps your best events have been ones featuring notable or interesting non-lawyer speakers, or successful lawyers who have shared their personal

*Continued on page*

### Tips and Ideas Continued from Page 4

experiences and career tips. The Southern Arizona Chapter of the Arizona Women Lawyers Association had a packed audience for a program called "The Dow on Sex: Getting As Serious About Sex as You Do About Your Money."

Coming soon to [www.ncwba.org](http://www.ncwba.org)  
...  
**A Bulletin Board**

Some organizations have found great success with programs featuring politicians, with programs designed to "get to know the political candidate" or to "hear what's new from your elected official." Programs where both or several candidates for the same prominent office square off against each other can be very good draws for the entire legal community and the general public. Consider a program to hear from, talk with, or honor women politicians in your community.

Members invariably want to see programs that will help them in their careers or that focus on issues particularly of concern to women. The Women's Section of the Alabama State Bar sponsored a very successful program entitled "How to Deal with the SOB Litigator," that featured a long question and answer period with the panelists. Women Lawyers of Utah has an annual luncheon called "Banter with the Bench" where any topic can be raised or discussed with several local women judges. It provides a great networking opportunity, and the informal nature of the discussion draws a lot of interest. Even a program like the one put on by the Association for Women Attorneys in New Orleans, entitled "May I See the Wine List, Please ... Tips for Entertaining Clients," can be marketed as career oriented.

\* *Have an annual "signature event"*

Many women's bar associations have an annual awards dinner to honor a female legal pioneer in the community or to recognize an outstanding member of the local bar. Attendance at these events has been outstanding, as they attract not only the friends and supporters of the honoree, but also members of the legal community at large. Judges, local community leaders, and other distinguished guests should be invited to these award events. The Oregon Women Lawyers has a silent auction of donated items before its annual awards dinner and the proceeds benefit the OWL Foundation.

If an annual dinner seems too formal or intimidating, consider a reception. The Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia has a "Stars of the Bar" reception that attracted over 600 women lawyers, and has resulted in dozens of new members joining the organization under a special reduced dues promotion in effect only for that event.

Many organizations have found success in having annual holiday parties, both formal and informal. The Black Women Lawyers in Los Angeles has an annual dress-up "cocktail sip" the night before Thanksgiving at an upscale hotel, and the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers has an annual catered holiday party at the home of a judge or state representative.

\* *Give it a purpose*

Many women's bar organizations have scholarship programs and sponsor specific programs each year to raise money for their scholarship programs. The organizations make sure the invitees know that all of the proceeds from the event will go directly

to the scholarship program. For example, the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers holds an annual gala art exhibit and auction as a fundraiser for its scholarship program. Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles has joined with Black Women Lawyers and Latina Lawyers to sponsor an annual "mentoring lunch" to highlight their partnership with mentoring programs for middle-school, high-school, and college women students. The mentors and mentees attend the lunch. The proceeds from the lunch are funneled into the mentoring programs.

\* *Try something new*

Each women's bar association has its own culture and history of "how things are done around here." Respect that sentiment, but don't be afraid to try something new for your organization. Use NCWBA to learn what other women's bar associations have done and are doing, and draw inspiration and fresh ideas from them. Here are some thoughts to get you started:

- Organize an outing to a sporting event featuring women athletes
- Have a mentoring outreach day
- Put on a self-defense demonstration and workshop
- Have a support group session for working mothers
- Have a golf tournament
- Karaoke, anyone?



## Local Women's Bar Associations Activities

### California Lawyers Focus on the "Glass Ceiling"

The California Women Lawyers have formed a special Employment Equity Committee to focus on reducing barriers to women lawyers in private law firms, corporate legal departments and government agencies. The focus of the Committee is on breaking the glass ceiling so that women lawyers may reach the top levels of power in all areas of the legal field. The Committee intends to initiate a program for corporate counsel to encourage the movement of women lawyers into in-house counsel positions. The Committee is also developing a CLE program to educate lawyers about issues of management and client development as they relate to the retention and promotion of women lawyers. The Committee will also assist in gathering data and developing a protocol for part-time employment and will study the relationship between family leave and the glass ceiling. The highlight of the year will be an Affiliate Conference on May 10, 2003 in San Francisco, featuring leading judges, law professors, and lawyers speaking on issues confronting women lawyers as they seek to become effective leaders despite any visible or hidden obstacles they may encounter. For more information about the Committee or Affiliate Conference, contact Karen Goodman at 916-858-2260.

### Involve Your Members In Community Programs

Three California women's bar associations – the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, the Black Women Lawyers and the Latina Lawyers – have joined forces to get their members involved in mentoring pro-

grams aimed at middle school girls as well as college women. Through various community mentoring programs, mentors are assigned on a yearly basis. The mentor is expected to take her mentee to her work place or a work-related and to also introduce her mentee to at least one other professional woman in the field of her mentee's interest.

At the conclusion of the year, the bar associations host the Lanterns Award Luncheon, which raises funds to further mentoring and scholarships. Many of the mentees are invited to the luncheon, where they describe how mentoring has had a profound impact on their lives. The luncheon also honors notable women who have made contributions to mentoring other women. Past honorees have included Marian Wright Edelman, Lisa Fernandez, pitcher of the two-time U.S. Olympic Women's Softball Team and this year's honoree, Christy Haubegger, the founder of Latina Magazine. To find out more about the event or mentoring programs, contact the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles at 213-892-8982.

### New Ideas for CLE Programming

The Georgia Association for Women Lawyers (GAWL) has used its creativity in offering a CLE in a nontraditional setting to attract new members and provide networking opportunities for its current members. To that end, the GAWL came up with the innovative idea of holding a CLE in a spa setting.

The GAWL's first "Healthy, Wealthy and Wise Estate Planning and Financial Wellness Symposium" is now scheduled for May 16-17, 2003 at the

Chateau Elan Resort and Spa. The two-day program targets women lawyers, accountants, life insurance professionals and financial planners. Dr. Tom Stanley, author of "The Millionaire Next Door" and "The Millionaire Mind" is one of the keynote speakers. Northside Hospital and New York Life Insurance Company have agreed to be Presenting Sponsors to underwrite the cost of the event. The program will allow for approximately 10 hours of continuing education credit through speakers and panels throughout the day on Friday and Saturday morning to an estimated 200 women who seek to enjoy the spa, network and earn education credits. Please contact Mary B. Galardi (mary@galardilaw.com) for more information or ideas on planning a similar event for your bar association.

**Submit Your  
Newsworthy Articles For  
Publication**

Does your organization have any articles or news to share with the NCWBA regarding women in the legal profession? If so, please email any items to Executive Director Pam Nicholson at pnicholson@ncwba.org for publishing consideration in the newsletter. Articles or news items can include activities that your organization is involved with, legal actions or any issues concerning women that you may want to highlight. The deadline for submission for the Spring



## Surveying Your Members

By Charmagne A. Padua, Esq.  
Sutterfield & Webb, L.L.C.  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Are you unsure what needs and desires your members have as to the direction of your bar association? Why not ask them?

This very idea was implemented in November 2002 by the New Orleans Bar Association (NOBA). The NOBA initiated an e-mail survey to get an idea of the professional demographics of its female members and to get a read on their ideas on such topics as mentoring and so-called "women's issues." An e-mail survey is cost-effective and provides a relatively painless means for members to quickly respond. The following questionnaire can be tailored to your specific organization's goals and needs.

### I. Demographics

1. You have been practicing law or a licensed female lawyer for: (please X one of the following)

- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- 20-30 years

2. You are currently employed as a :

- Partner
- Associate
- Summer Associate
- State Court Judge
- Federal Court Judge
- In Private Practice
- Public Interest Sector
- Staff Attorney

3. What issue is most interesting to you as a female lawyer?

4. What percentage of your business is generated as a result of your relationships with women?

### II. Women as Mentors

Mentors play a key role in women's professional advancement, but many women lack the mentors they want and need. The Women's Issues committee is interested in your perspective regarding your understanding of women and mentor relationships, who is a good mentor, and how mentors should be chosen. Please answer the following questions.

1. Do you believe that a mentor ensures career success? Why or why not?

2. Do you find that as a female lawyer your mentor should be a woman? Why or why not?

3. Do you believe that if you are a good lawyer a mentor will find you? Why or why not?

4. Do you believe that in order to have a mentor your mentor should be your friend? Why or why not?

5. Does your firm have a mentoring program? How does it work? Is it effective?

6. Who controls the mentoring relationships, mentors or mentees?

7. Do you believe that a mentor must be older than the mentee? Why or why not?

8. Do you believe that mentoring takes more time than you can afford to allow? Why or why not?

9. Have you mentored a female lawyer? Describe your role.

### III. Alternative Work Schedule

Statistics show that 94.5 percent of large firms as a matter of policy or on a case by case basis reported during a 2000 survey that they have a part-time option

for experienced attorneys. However, only 3.2 percent of attorneys use this option. NOBA is not aware of any survey done in the New Orleans Metropolitan area market to determine which firms have a part-time policy and the scope of the policy. Therefore your answers to these questions would be helpful.

1. Does your firm have an alternative work schedule policy? Is it written?

2. Who is eligible to participate in the alternative work schedule plan?

3. Does time spent on the alternative work schedule count as a part of the progression towards partnership? If so, how?

4. Do attorneys who work on an alternative work schedule have the opportunity to receive bonuses tied to performance and production?

5. Do you have a system in place to review whether the alternative schedule arrangement is being honored and whether any adjustments should be made?

6. What purposes may be given by an attorney seeking to switch to an alternative work schedule?

7. How long has your alternative schedule policy been in place?

8. How many lawyers have opted to use the alternative schedule policy and for what period of time?

9. Overall, which lawyers seek to use the alternative schedule policy?

## IBA Planning World Women Lawyers Conference in July 2003

The NCWBA has recently become a member of the International Bar Association (IBA). The IBA serves as a voice for its Member Organizations. Each national/regional law society or bar association, which belongs to the IBA as a Member Organization, has an opportunity to discuss issues and problems facing its own organization's members in an international forum. This forum, made up of leaders or elected representatives of law societies and bar associations from more than 150 countries, is the IBA Council.

The IBA hosts a number of conferences throughout the world to fulfill one of the IBA's most important objectives - the promotion of useful contacts and an interchange between lawyers throughout the world - as well as providing a forum for the dissemination of specialist information on all areas of the law.

The IBA has recently announced it will again be hosting the World Women Lawyers Conference on Monday, June 30, 2003 - Tuesday,

July 01, 2003 in London, England. The conference has been designed to encompass topics relevant to lawyers from all walks of life and for lawyers throughout the world. The content has a balance between learning how women lawyers are contributing in various different ways to public interest work and how they can widen their role in this area. By attending the various academic sessions, delegates will be able to gain continuing legal education credit while at the same time networking with attorneys throughout the world.

The Conference will cover two days of focused working sessions and networking events. The main sessions will focus on "The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution" and "Economic Empowerment of Women." Working session will include a variety of topics including Insolvency/Litigation, Employment/Immigration Law, Family Law/Succession Issues, Multicultural Business Negotiations, and Privacy versus Public Good.

If interested in details of the conference, check the IBA website at <http://www.ibanet.org> or send an e-mail to [emma.hands@int-bar.org](mailto:emma.hands@int-bar.org).

The last conference, also held in London, was attended by NCWBA Past President Mary K. Wolverton. There, she reported on a wide variety of topics covered, including "The Importance of Women's Rights Being Part of the Foreign Policy Initiatives of Developed Countries" with Keynote speaker U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to panel discussions giving women an opportunity to meet other women who have been able in their legal careers to successfully combine their professional work with pro bono and public interest work to make a difference in supporting women's rights.

## Join Our Board

Member associations are invited to nominate candidates to the NCWBA board for a term beginning in August. For more information, please contact President-Elect Lori E. Deveny at [ledeveny@att.net](mailto:ledeveny@att.net) or (503) 225-0440

You may obtain a copy of the nomination form on [www.ncwba.org](http://www.ncwba.org)

## Planning Underway for the NCWBA's 2003 Summit

The NCWBA is proud to present its annual Women's Bar Leadership Summit and Public Service Award Luncheon in San Francisco on August 8, 2003, at Golden Gate University School of Law. The 2003 Summit, entitled "Building Our Future," will be a full day of exhilarating and educational discussion among women's bar leaders from all across the country. Panels will address a range of topics from mentoring, to marketing, to getting more women on the bench, to

changing the world. We are especially honored and delighted to announce that this year's Summit will feature a very special guest, Ms. Stella Odife, a Nigerian barrister and co-founder of the Women's Organization for Gender Issues of Lagos, Nigeria. **SAVE THE DATE: August 8, 2003** - you won't want to miss it! Registration materials will be mailed and available in the next few months.

## Deadline for Nominations for ABA Awards Nears

Nominations for a variety of ABA Awards are due on **April 3, 2003**. Please consider nominating worthy individuals from your organization for the following Awards. Specifics as to eligibility and form of nominations can be found on the ABA website listed below.

- ? The Dorsey Award recognizes exceptional work by a public defender or legal aid lawyer. The Award was established in 1995 as a tribute to the late Charles H. Dorsey, Jr., long-time Executive Director of Maryland's Legal Aid Bureau, Inc., a champion of the poor and underprivileged and, at the time of his death, the Chair-Elect of the Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division. Eligible recipients are lawyers who serve indigent persons, in the employ of legal aid bureaus, indigent defense, or Legal Services Corporation funded legal organizations providing legal service to the disadvantaged. To be eligible, nominees must be employed by an entity that receives government funding. For nomination information, go to <http://www.abanet.org/govpub/dorsey.html>
- ? The Nelson Award was established in 1994 as a tribute to the late L. Clair Nelson, who served as a Council member of the Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division. He

contributed his loyalty, time and extraordinary talent to ABA activities and held numerous leadership positions within the ABA. The Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the ABA by a government or public sector lawyer, and all government and public sector lawyers are eligible nominees. The Division will consider an individual's specific extraordinary accomplishments as well as sustained superior contributions to the ABA over a number of years. For nomination information, go to <http://www.abanet.org/govpub/nelson.html>

The Jefferson Fordham Award was established by the ABA Section of State and Local Government Law in 1998 to recognize and honor the accomplishment of practitioners and institutions active in the varied areas of practice associated with State and Local Government Law. The Award honor outstanding attorneys and law offices that have achieved professional excellence within this area of the profession. For nomination information, go to <http://www.abanet.org/statelocal/brochure.html>

## Charting Our Future: Hearings on the Status of Women in the Law

In 1988 and 1995, the ABA Commission on Women held hearings for women to relay their positive and negative experiences in the legal profession. The testimony experiences were recorded and reported to the ABA House of Delegates. Fifteen years later, the Commission is undertaking to explore the extent to which barriers have or have not been eliminated since the Commission's first report in 1988.

If you are interested in sharing your experiences in the legal profession, they would like to hear from you!

The Commission on Women will conduct a series of hearings on the status of women in the legal profession throughout this year.

The first hearing was held on February 6, 2003 in Seattle at the ABA Midyear Meeting.

Other hearings are scheduled in 2003 at the following locations: Miami on March 14, Scottsdale, AZ on April 25, and San Francisco on August 8 and 10. If you are unable to attend one of these hearings, you can still provide input. We ask that you submit your statement via mail to the Commission on Women in the Profession, American Bar Association, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, 10th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60611 or email your statement to [abacwp@abanet.org](mailto:abacwp@abanet.org).

For more information, please contact Jasamyn Roberts at (312) 988-5692 or [robertsj@staff.abanet.org](mailto:robertsj@staff.abanet.org). Registration for these hearings is also available online at [www.abanet.org/women/hearing\\_reg.html](http://www.abanet.org/women/hearing_reg.html).

**Let your voice be heard!**

**Share your experience of working in the legal profession!**

## Thank You for Your Prompt Renewals

The following organizational members have already renewed their membership for 2003:

- ◆ Arizona Women Lawyers Association
- ◆ Association for Women Attorneys, New Orleans Chapter
- ◆ Association for Women Lawyers (Milwaukee, WI)
- ◆ Association for Women Lawyers of Greater Kansas City
- ◆ Brooklyn Women's Bar Association
- ◆ California Women Lawyers
- ◆ Chicago Bar Association
- ◆ Colorado Women's Bar Association
- ◆ Dallas Women Lawyers Association
- ◆ Florida Association for Women Lawyers
- ◆ Georgia Association for Women Lawyers
- ◆ Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys
- ◆ Hawaii Women Lawyers
- ◆ Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers
- ◆ Iowa Organization of Women Attorneys
- ◆ Kansas Women Attorneys Association
- ◆ Lawyers' Association for Women (Nashville, TN)
- ◆ Lawyers Club of San Diego
- ◆ Maine State Bar Association, Women's Law Section
- ◆ Minnesota Women Lawyers
- ◆ New Hampshire Women's Bar Association
- ◆ New York Women's Bar Association
- ◆ North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys
- ◆ Ohio Women's Bar Association
- ◆ Oregon Women Lawyers
- ◆ The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.
- ◆ Washington Women Lawyers
- ◆ Women Lawyers Association of Greater St. Louis
- ◆ Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles
- ◆ Women Lawyers Association of Michigan
- ◆ Women Lawyers of Sacramento
- ◆ Women Lawyers Section of the Birmingham Bar Association
- ◆ Women's Bar Association of Illinois
- ◆ Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts
- ◆ Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia
- ◆ Women's Bar Association of the State of New York
- ◆ Women's Organization for Gender Issues (Nigeria)
- ◆ Women's Section, Alabama State Bar

## Welcome to Our Newest Members!

Marin County Women Lawyers  
 South Carolina Women's Bar Association  
 Tennessee Lawyers' Association for Women  
 Women Lawyers of Santa Cruz County

## Submit Your Nomination for NCWBA Public Service Award

WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ALL THE WONDERFUL THINGS OUR MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOING. Applications for the Public Service Award presented by NCWBA at its Summit on August 8, 2003 are now available. A complete set of instructions and an application was mailed out to all members this month. An application is also included in this newsletter.

The community of lawyers has a long-standing commitment to providing pro bono legal services to the poor and under-served. The members of women's bar associations individually, and often as a group, strive to provide their legal expertise to help those most in need. Recognizing that the needs of the community extend beyond those for legal services, many women's bar associations engage in a variety of charitable activities, ranging from clothing and food drives, educational support and fundraising for battered women's shelters. The NCWBA Public Service Award selects one or two great projects of member organizations as a way of thanking the associations involved for their work and as a way of showcasing ideas that might be suitable for adoption by other groups.

The nomination form, along with complete instructions, history of the award, and a description past award recipients, is also available on the NCWBA website. **The deadline for submission of applications is April 4, 2003.**

For more information, visit the Public Service Awards page at [www.ncwba.org](http://www.ncwba.org).

**Thanks for your Support**

*We would like to give special thanks to the following people for sending in their individual support for 2003:*

- Stella A. Odife
- Paula Hudson Holderman
- Katherine H. O'Neil

**Contact  
 Ellen Kearns at  
[ekearns@ebglaw.com](mailto:ekearns@ebglaw.com)  
 for Information on  
 Membership in the  
 NCWBA**



## Update on Title IX

Making sure that the playing field is level for female athletes is a priority for the National Women's Law Center. Active since the 1972 enactment of Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education, the Center has worked hard to ensure that women and girls get their fair share of athletic opportunities -- from challenging colleges and universities to distribute athletic scholarships fairly and schools to provide female athletes with equal access to athletic resources, to urging policymakers to require institutions to disclose information regarding athletic equity.

The Center now has reported extensively on the proposals to change Title IX as approved by the Department of Education's Commission on Opportunity in Athletics. Although Title IX applies to all aspects of education, the law is especially well known for expanding opportunities for women and girls in athletics. Title IX has been responsible for important increases in women's access to athletics opportunities -- and to the health, social, academic, and financial benefits that accrue as a result.

Since the law was passed in 1972, the number of girls playing high school sports has increased by more than 800%; the number of women playing college sports has increased by 400%. Even so, women and girls are still subject to discrimination in athletics. Although women and 53% of the student body at Division I colleges, the Center reports that they get only 41% of the opportunities to participate in sports, 36% of overall athletic operating budgets, and 32% of recruiting dollars. At the high school level, inequities for girls are even greater.

Despite the fact that Title IX's job is far from finished, the Commission on

Opportunity in Athletics approved recommendations that would dramatically reduce the participation opportunities and scholarships to which women are entitled. Some key provisions summarized by the National Women's Law Center include:

- While women are now 56% of undergraduates, one of the Commission's proposals (included in the report after a 7-7 vote) would assume that women are 50% of the student body at all schools -- regardless of the facts.
- Another proposal would not count "non-traditional" students, who are overwhelmingly women.
- A third proposal would allow schools to pretend that they are giving female students athletic opportunities by counting "ghost slots" on teams -- slots never actually filled by any female student. Still another would allow schools to pretend that they are *not* giving athletics opportunities to men by not counting walk-ons -- who are actually receiving the benefits of sports participation at the school.
- The Commission would also authorize the establishment of "variances" to permit schools to offer even fewer athletics opportunities to women under current law or new formulas.
- The Commission would allow the use of "interest surveys" to limit women's opportunities by forcing them to prove they are interested in sports before giving them a chance to play.
- The Commission would authorize

private slush funds that increase the financial support for men's teams at the expense of women's teams.

- The Commission gave a blank check to the Secretary of Education to identify "additional ways of demonstrating compliance with Title IX" that could include new ways to weaken Title IX that were not even presented to the Commissioners.

From the outset, the Commission's process was flawed. The composition of the Commission was unbalanced as ten out of fifteen Commissioners were affiliated with Division I-A schools -- the schools with the greatest institutional interest in weakening Title IX. The Commission included *no* representatives of high school athletics programs -- despite the fact that its recommendations will affect close to three million girls playing sports in high school.

The witnesses invited to testify were also skewed. Panelists hand-picked by the Department of Education testified two-to-one against current Title IX standards. At least five panelists represented schools sued for failure to comply with Title IX. *None* represented plaintiffs who were victims of discrimination or women whose teams had been cut.

To learn more about proposals for measuring compliance with Title IX, visit the National Women's Law Center website at <http://www.nwlc.org>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ◆ ABA Commission on Women – Changing Our Future: Hearings on the Status of Women in the Law (March 14, 2003)
- ◆ Article Submissions to the NCWBA Newsletter due April 1, 2003
- ◆ ABA Awards (The Dorsey Award, The Nelson Award, The Jefferson Fordham Award) nominations due on April 3, 2003
- ◆ NCWBA Public Service Award nominations due April 4, 2003
- ◆ IBA World Women Lawyers Conference in London, England (June 30 – July 1, 2003)
- ◆ NCWBA's 2003 Annual Summit in San Francisco, CA (August 8, 2003)

MORE DETAILS INSIDE ...



National Conference of  
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