



# NCWBA NEWSLETTER

for the National Conference of  
Women's Bar Associations

Volume 21, No. 2

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

Winter 2004

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## NCWBA Co-Hosts 2004 Midyear Luncheon in San Antonio

The NCWBA, in conjunction with The National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL), honored Justice Alma L. López, Chief Justice of the Fourth Court of Appeals at the Midyear Luncheon in San Antonio, Texas on February 6, 2004. Justice López was presented with NAWL's President's Award. The luncheon was also co-sponsored by the Bexar County Women's Bar Association and Texas Women Lawyers.

The President's Award is one of NAWL's highest honors and is bestowed upon an individual who has achieved professional success, been a positive influence and made a valuable contribution to women in the law and in society. Justice López received this award in recognition of her commitment to women in the profession and her outstanding achievements in the law.

When Governor Ann Richards appointed Justice López to the Fourth Court of Appeals in 1993, she became the first Hispanic woman to serve on the Fourth Court. She was elected to a full term of six years on November 8, 1994, and was re-elected to a second term in November 2000. In 2002 Justice López was elected Chief Justice after the then current Chief Justice Hardberger retired. She is on the board of many associations, foundations and groups including the Bexar County Women's Bar Association, Texas Women Lawyers, Texas Migrant Council, Family Violence Prevention Serv-

ices, Inc. and St. Mary's Hispanic Law Alumni Association.

The NCWBA joins the NAWL in congratulating Justice López in the receipt of this prestigious award.

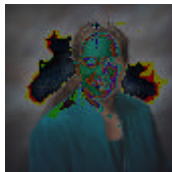
### Women's Bar Leadership Summit 2004: "THE SECRETS OF OUR SUCCESS"

August 6, 2004  
The Commerce Club  
34 Broad Street, N.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia

The National Conference of Women's Bar Associations is currently planning an exciting all-day program for women bar leaders. The Women's Bar Leadership Summit is scheduled to coincide with the American Bar Association Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in August.

The event will consist of panels and speakers focusing on successful practices of women bar associations and will include such topics as membership recruitment and retention, foundations and community service, unique programs, fundraising and sponsorship and strategic planning.

The Summit will take place on **Friday, August 6, 2003, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Commerce Club**, located at 34 Broad Street, Atlanta, Georgia.



## President's Message

by Lori E. Deveny

Are you a giant? Is your organization one?

No, this is not the NCWBA version of a pop-up ad for a new diet pill. It is a reminder. . . to all of us.

Personally, I have always viewed my success (position, reputation, accomplishments) as evidence that I stand on the shoulders of giants. I am so fortunate to be the recipient of the efforts of all the women who were groundbreakers in the legal profession, especially in Oregon. The time and talent from mentors who freely coached me. Board members, committee members, family and friends who provided encouragement, assistance or suggestions.

If you look back, I am sure you will see the same. Often, we forget to look back. Do so now. Thank one of your giants. Make sure others know you benefitted from their influence.

Now, look forward. You are the "giant" to newer lawyers. By your position in your respective organization, you are a role model, like it or not. Have you mentored a new lawyer? Have you encouraged one of your members that is going through a rough time? Did you send an "atta girl" recognizing an accomplishment of one of your colleagues? Take the time to do

that as well. We are all busy, but we wouldn't have that privilege if someone had not encouraged or supported us.

Your organization is also a giant. I am impressed with how freely women's bar associations share ideas and information. I just received the "It's About Time: Part-Time Policies and Practices in Atlanta Law Firms" from the Georgia Association of Women Lawyers. The project was begun after GAWL reviewed a similar project from another state. When the NCWBA held its Networking Breakfast in Seattle in February 2003, we heard about the efforts of Washington Women Lawyers, who credited their project to the assistance of other women's bar organizations.

It is important for us to continue that on an organizational level as well. In August we will hold our Annual Summit entitled "The Secrets of Our Success." As with all our prior Summits, we will provide a dynamic forum to continue the exchange of ideas, programs and support between our members. We hope you will be able to attend. Bring information from your organization to share. Take home with you help, guidance and ideas.

Now walk taller, because you are truly a giant in your own right and as a leader of your organization.

### NCWBA FOUNDATION PRESIDENT HONORED AS HUMANITARIAN

NCWBA Foundation President Martha Jane Patton was presented by the Birmingham Bar Association with its L. Burton Barnes III Public Service Award at its annual meeting in December 2003. This award recognizes members of the Association who have given freely of their time and energy in public service for the benefit and betterment of the general public.

Ms. Patton, who is currently the Executive Director of the Birmingham Legal Aid Society and Chair of the Women's Section of the Alabama State Bar, was honored for a life dedicated to serving the public.

In 1971, shortly after graduating from college and several years before she attended law school, Ms. Patton joined the staff of the Selma Interreligious Project, an organization committed to helping the poor in Alabama's Black Belt. Her priest, the Reverend Francis Walter, recounts one of her experiences:

Martha Jane's work resulted in a short stay in jail in Camden, Wilcox County. It draws smiles to recount the story today, but was frightening at the time. She and another SIP worker sort of drifted into joining one of the many demonstrations in Camden relating to the horrible school system. At that time the Wilcox County Board of Education was the most litigated board of education in the United States. The two women

*Continued on page 7*

## Registration Open for The Midwest Regional Conference for Women in the Law

The Minnesota Women Lawyers are hosting the *Midwest Regional Conference for Women in the Law* on April 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 at the Marriott City Center in downtown Minneapolis. Women attorneys, judges, students and legal employers from 15 states are invited to attend this biennial event, last held in Kansas City, Missouri. Invited participants include attorneys from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

The 2004 Midwest Conference theme, “*Defining Success, All Ages, All Stages*,” reflects the diverse opportunities available for women in the legal profession today, regardless of practice, length of experience, work schedule or regional location. Throughout the Conference, the seminars will explore the meaning of “success” and how it has become as much a matter of personal definition as well as an externally defined measure.

Planning for the Midwest Conference has been in full swing for nearly two years. This three-day event will feature national speakers, regional and local leaders, and even a few surprises! Keynote speakers include:

**Carol Moseley Braun**, Esq.; Former 2004 Presidential Candidate; Ambassador to New Zealand, 1999-2001; United States Senator, 1992-1998.

**Kathy Buckley** “America’s favorite hearing impaired comedienne, actress and humanitarian.”

**Mara Liasson**, White House Correspondent for National Public Radio. Ms. Liasson will deliver the keynote address at MWL’s Annual Meeting on the evening of Thursday, April 22nd.

**Judge Ann Williams**, United States Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit. Judge Williams will be interviewed by Robyne Robinson of Fox 9 News.

**Diane Yu**, Chair of the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession; Chief of Staff and Deputy to the President, New York University.

**Lori Deveny**, President of the National Conference of Women Attorneys.

The Midwest Conference was conceived at the American Bar Association’s 1995 Annual Meeting, and was created to focus on issues and interests particular to women attorneys in the Midwest region.

MWL encourages all its members, and attorneys from throughout the Midwest, to “mark their calendars” and make plans to join them for this unique event. The Midwest Regional Conference for Women in

## Nominations for ABA Awards Due

Nominations for a variety of ABA Awards are **due on April 9, 2004**. Please consider nominating worthy individuals from your organization for the following Awards. Specifics as to eligibility and the forms for specific nominations can be found on the ABA websites 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>

## NCWBA Welcomes Two New Board Members

Mary Sharp and Jennifer Sawyer were approved as new NCWBA Board members at the August 2004 Annual Meeting. Both Mary and Jennifer are new to the organization but have provided many ideas and enthusiasm in their service so far. Hailing from South Carolina and Maine, Mary and Jennifer demonstrate the geographic and practice diversity that is represented on the NCWBA Board.

- ◆ **MARY E. SHARP** is a partner with Griffith, Sadler & Sharp, P.A., in Beaufort, South Carolina. She practices in the areas of automobile liability, premises liability, products liability, general tort liability, construction litigation and insurance disputes.

Mary received her undergraduate degree from North Carolina State University and her law degree from the Wake Forest University School of Law. She has taught introductory law and ethics and legal research and writing classes to paralegals in training at the Technical College of the Lowcountry in Beaufort, and currently serves as a Municipal Court Judge for the City of Beaufort. Mary has tried numerous cases to verdict in both state and federal courts. She is licensed to practice in North Carolina and South Carolina.

Mary is a member of numerous bar associations and professional organizations. She currently serves as President of the South Carolina Women Law-

yers Association. She is active in the South Carolina Bar Association, and currently serves on its Judicial Qualifications Committee, and also as coordinator for Community Law Week, under the Young Lawyers Division. She is also active with the Beaufort County Bar Association, and from 2000-2002, served as the Secretary of its Young Lawyers Association. She is a member of the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys' Association and the Defense Research Institute.

- ◆ **JENNIFER SAWYER** is a member of the Education Law and the Employment & Labor Law practice groups at Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer & Nelson in Portland, Maine. Jennifer concentrates on advising institutions of higher education and independent secondary schools on various matters including student privacy, affirmative action, Internet abuse, copyright matters, and tenure issues. Jennifer also concentrates on handling employment litigation matters for both educational institutions and corporate clients. Jennifer is a principal in Advanced Educational Solutions, an educational consulting division of the firm.

Jennifer earned her J.D., cum laude, from the Boston University School of Law, where she was named a Paul J. Liacos Scholar. Jennifer earned her M.S., summa cum laude, in College Student Development and

Administration from Northeastern University in 1996 and her B.A. from the State University of New York College at Oswego in 1993. Jennifer is admitted to practice in Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

Prior to joining Bernstein, Shur, Jennifer was a law clerk in the Boston University Office of the General Counsel and in the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Jennifer was also worked in Residence Life and Judicial Affairs at the University of New Hampshire and Northeastern University. Jennifer has lectured widely on various legal issues facing Student Affairs professionals, and has recently taught an on-line course on Legal Issues in Student Affairs for StudentAffairs.com.

Jennifer is a member of the American Bar Association, Labor and Employment Section, the Maine Trial Lawyers Association, and the Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts Bar Associations.

**Member associations are invited to nominate candidates to the NCWBA board for a term beginning in August.** For more information, please contact President-Elect Ellen Kearns at [ekearns@ebglaw.com](mailto:ekearns@ebglaw.com) or (617) 342-4000. You may also obtain a nomination form on the website at [www.ncwba.org](http://www.ncwba.org). **Nominations should be submitted by June 1.**

## INTERESTED IN GETTING MORE INVOLVED WITH THE NCWBA?

*The following article, written by NCWBA Board member Kathleen McDowell, summarizes her experiences serving on the NCWBA Board. The Board has diverse members from across the country. Each year, Board positions become available when terms end in August. If you are interested in exploring becoming a NCWBA Board member, contact any of the current Board members or Executive Director Pam Nicholson for more information.*

One of the unexpected aspects of becoming president of WLALA (Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles) was serving on the board of the NCWBA. The NCWBA, an organization of women's bar associations from across the country, is the "voice of the women's bar," and serves to provide a national forum for exchanging ideas and information to develop and strengthen local women's bar associations. It was established in 1981 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and serves to focus the collective strength of women's bar associations to advocate for equality and justice for women.

Through the NCWBA, I have learned that WLALA has sister organizations all across the country, and that women's bar organizations are about as different and diverse as they can be. From the "little bitty bars" (with less than 100 members) to other mega-bars (with over 1000 members), the NCWBA serves as a common meeting ground for its nearly 50 constituent members from nearly 30 states.

The NCWBA meets three times per year: at the ABA annual meeting, at the ABA mid-year meeting, and at a board retreat. It

maintains a presence in the ABA; the NCWBA is an affiliate of the ABA, with a vote in the ABA House of Delegates. I have traveled to Washington, D.C.; Tampa, San Francisco; Portland; and Seattle as a NCWBA board member, and I am planning to attend upcoming meetings in San Antonio and Atlanta. It has been a delight to get to know the remarkable women who serve on the board and simply to listen to their regional accents (I have become quite enamored of the Southerners' drawl and the references to "y'all").

Through the NCWBA, I have learned of programs and projects of other bar associations, and am constantly in awe of the energy and creativity of the leaders of these women's bar associations. I have also been shocked at the issues and challenges that other bar associations are facing. I have heard, for example, of jurisdictions in some states where there is not a single women judge on the bench, and of medium to large size law firms lacking any women partners. I was surprised to learn that only a handful of the local women's bar associations took a position on the issue of choice or other so-called "political" issues. It made me realize that WLALA and its members have made great progress in California in promoting full participation of women in the judicial system and in our profession.

Each year the NCWBA honors a women's bar association for an innovative program that uses our knowledge of the legal system to benefit women and children. WLALA is a past recipient of the NCWBA's Public Service Award for the public action grants that WLALA awards to law students. Last year's recipient was the

North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys, which produces a monthly television program called "Laying Down the Law." Other programs that have been recognized by the NCWBA include Oregon's "Race Judicata" annual run/walk, Tennessee's truancy early intervention project, and Maine's breast cancer awareness project.

The public service awards are presented at the NCWBA's Women's Bar Summit held annually in August. At the Summit, bar leaders of various local and state women's bar associations share ideas for improving organizational structure, programming, and effectiveness. Inspired by the NCWBA national Women's Bar Summit, WLALA has proposed hosting a Southern California "mini-summit" – in which leaders of the various women's bar associations in the Southern California area would meet to compare notes and discuss common areas of interest.

If you would like more information about the NCWBA, check out its website: [www.ncwba.org](http://www.ncwba.org). (Make sure to type in the "org" suffix; [www.ncwba.com](http://www.ncwba.com) will get you to the website of the North Carolina Women's Bowling Association, which I'm sure is a fine organization, but probably not what you had in mind.)

### Midwest Conference Continued from Page 3

the Law will offer an extraordinary opportunity to highlight both women attorneys and the legal community in Minnesota and the entire region. Complete information is available at [www.mwlawyers.org](http://www.mwlawyers.org).

## Women Under-Represented in CLE Speaking Slots

*By Rebecca Godbey\**

I used to quickly scan the many mailings from ICLE – the not-for-profit educational service of the State Bar of Georgia – looking for seminars in my practice area and throwing the rest of the agendas in the trash. But since becoming President of the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers (“GAWL”), I started looking closely at the mailings from ICLE (and other providers of CLE) to take note of women lawyers on the list of speakers. I am always looking for opportunities to raise up our members by recognizing their achievements. I suppose I expected that nearly half of the speakers would be women. If not half, I expected that we would be represented in numbers commensurate with the percentage of the practicing profession who are female. I was wrong, and we need to fix it.

I began setting aside the CLE brochures from ICLE in August. In all, I saved the agendas for 31 seminars between September 21 and November 22, 2003. Of those 31 seminars, five were special seminars with one featured speaker – of those, 100 percent were men. Of the remaining 26, only six were chaired by women. Men chaired 20 (77%) of the programs.

Whether the CLE is chaired by a man or woman is likely to make a difference in the gender of the speakers who are invited to present. Of the 82 speakers invited by women 50 of 82 were men – a rate of about 61 percent men to 30 percent women in programs chaired by women. For the 70 percent of programs chaired by men, an astonishing 77 percent of the speakers were men, compared with 23 percent women. That means in almost three-quarters of continuing education programs during this time period, nearly 4 out of every 5 speakers were men. According to my rudimentary calculations, overall 75 percent of ICLE speakers in these programs were men, and 25 percent were women. By the way, this is consistent with the ICLE statistics which indicate that approximately 75 percent of ICLE speakers are men. Simply put, women do not make up half of the CLE speakers in Georgia. And, even though we constitute 31 percent of active lawyers in Georgia, only 25 percent of speakers at

ICLE seminars are women. This is not an insignificant gap.

Why are these statistics important? Because public speaking leads to increased credibility, which leads to increased referrals, a bigger book of business, more income and a better chance at partnership and power. Additionally, public speaking increases one’s profile among colleagues in the practice area, potentially leading to referrals and invitations to serve as a section or bar leader, which, in turn, leads to increased exposure and greater opportunities to advance in the profession.

There were some bright spots – one program on Adult Guardianships and one program on Adoption Law and Practice in Georgia included panels that constituted a majority of females. Of course, these were the only two of the 31! There were also some very imbalanced seminars with the vast majority of the speakers being males – Municipal and County Tort Liability, Representing the Small Business Owner, Professional and Ethical Dilemmas in Litigation and the Business Law Institute.

This last one is especially troublesome because it was co-sponsored by one of the biggest sections of the State Bar of Georgia – Business Law. According to ICLE, the chairs of the seminars are generally determined by the sections and the chair then invites the speakers. For the record, ICLE has tracked the percentage of women speakers at its seminars for any years now, and encourages program chairs to invite women to speak in the standard letter sent to chairs. There isn’t much ICLE can do, however, once a chair turns in a speaker list lacking diversity.

GAWL has long recognized the need to increase speaking opportunities for women and it regularly sponsored programs featuring women as experts. For example, at a symposium last year entitled *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise: Estate and Financial Planning*, GAWL had over 30 women speakers on a wide range of topics. GAWL’s seminars, however, tend to be geared for an audience of women and so it

is important that the broader profession has the benefit of female leadership and expertise.

This problem can be remedied. Members of GAWL: commit to call or e-mail the officers of your practice section the next thirty days. Describe your area of expertise and express your interest in speaking at upcoming programs. Send a copy to ICLE. In that same letter, volunteer to get involved with section leadership. If ICLE consults section boards regarding program chairs, we need to be sitting on those section boards. If your practice area does not fit neatly into one of the sections, call ICLE and propose to chair a seminar on a specific topic.

At the same time, we need to encourage all program chairs to consider diversity when putting together their panels. I am certain that all program chairs are not reading this column, so it is important that we broach the topic of diversity with our partners, associates, colleagues and mentors who are planning seminars. If a program chair needs assistance finding a qualified woman speaker on any given topic, please direct him/her to the GAWL website ([www.gawl.org](http://www.gawl.org)) where our member database can be searched by practice area and where each member can include a practice profile. If that does not yield sufficient results, we will include an announcement in our weekly e-mail blasts or make phone calls to identify appropriate presenters.

In the next year, I want to see the percentage of women speakers rise from 25 to 31 percent. And, as our profession moves toward a gender ratio that is reflective of society at large, I want to see CLE speaking slots move in that direction as well. You are a part of the solution – join us in advancing the profession. The first step is to speak.

*\*Rebecca Godbey is a partner at Bird & Godbey LLP in Atlanta. She practices in the areas of estate planning and probate and she mediates civil disputes. This article first appeared in the GAWL October 2003 newsletter and is reprinted with permission.*

## Thank You for Your Prompt Renewals

*The following organizational members have renewed membership for 2004*

- ◆ Arizona Women Lawyers Association
- ◆ California Women Lawyers
- ◆ Colorado Women's Bar Association
- ◆ Hawaii Women Lawyers
- ◆ Lawyers' Association for Women – Marion Griffin Chapter (Nashville, TN)
- ◆ Lawyers Club of San Diego
- ◆ Nebraska Women's Bar Association
- ◆ New Hampshire Women's Bar Association
- ◆ North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys
- ◆ Ohio Women's Bar Association
- ◆ Oregon Women Lawyers
- ◆ South Carolina Women Lawyers Association
- ◆ Texas Women Lawyers
- ◆ The Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.
- ◆ Washington Women Lawyers
- ◆ Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles
- ◆ Women Lawyers of Sacramento
- ◆ Women's Bar Association of Illinois

**Please Contact  
Membership Chair  
Leslie Altman at  
[lmaltman@riderlaw.com](mailto:lmaltman@riderlaw.com)  
or Executive Director  
Pam Nicholson at  
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for Information on  
Membership in the  
NCWBA**

## Martha Jane Patton Continued from Page 2

joined the manager of the Freedom Quilting Bee in the sheriff's office since the jail and a nearby football field were crowded with arrested demonstrators. It was the City of Camden that had arrested them, but the Wilcox County Sheriff was friendly to the demonstrators. So he gave the women his office. They soon turned it into a command post, answering the phone and sending out for groceries for a jail full of kids. As one of our lawyers was hurrying down from Tuscaloosa, I made the first call to the sheriff and learned that the three women were busy cooking and doing just fine. I think they ended up paying a \$5.00 fine to the City of Camden. Thanks to Martha Jane, we did get a fine day care center, licensed the Freedom Quilting Bee's Martin Luther King Sewing

Center. The quilters and other mothers below the poverty line could use this facility and over the years many thousand nutritional meals were served to hungry children.

Recently, Ms. Patton founded the Friends of Avondale Park, a group that restored a city park which had been a haven for drug abuse and crime and turned it into a gathering place for the nearby community.

In 1998, Ms. Patton gave up private practice for the Birmingham Legal Aid Society. In addition to serving on the NCWBA Foundation, Ms. Patton is also a former board member of the NCWBA.

*-submitted by Judge Caryl P. Privett*

## 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 6, 2004 are now available. A complete set of instructions and an application was mailed out to all members in January. 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 underserved. 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 2, 2004.**

## SAVE THE DATE!

Women's Bar Leadership  
Summit 2004:  
"THE SECRETS OF  
OUR SUCCESS"

**August 6, 2004  
Atlanta, Georgia**

# It is time to renew your membership for 2004

Look for the membership form  
inside this issue

or at

[www.ncwba.org/WhyJoin.html](http://www.ncwba.org/WhyJoin.html)



National Conference of  
Women's Bar Associations

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