



NAWL NEWS

National Association of Women Lawyers®
The voice of women in the law.™

January-February, 2007

Welcome to NAWL News! This is a free newsletter, and we encourage you to pass it on to others who would be interested. To unsubscribe, please hit “reply” and put “unsubscribe” in the subject box.

Welcome to Our New Sponsors

NAWL’s voice is expanding! A number of **new** law firms have joined us as sponsors, for which we are extremely grateful. We welcome:

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Thank you all for your support!

New NAWL Mentoring Program

men • tor - [men-tawr, -ter] -*noun*

- 1. a wise and trusted counselor or teacher.**
- 2. an influential senior sponsor or supporter.**

NAWL launched its new law student mentor program as part of its Mid-Year Meeting in Miami, Florida. The program, was developed by Caroline Morgan, a NAWL law student member from the Wake Forest University School of Law, and Kristen Albertson, a NAWL Executive Board member and senior counsel at Tyson Foods, Inc., will operate on a national level, pairing experienced lawyers from NAWL's membership with law students around the country.

Over the coming weeks, Albertson will be working with the thousands of NAWL members nationwide to identify those who are ready, willing and able to act as mentors. Morgan will focus on attracting law students from around the country. Once all the applications are in, the mentor-student pairings will be made and training will be made available to help facilitate the relationship and make sure that both parties find the program useful and engaging.

Many of us have been lucky enough to have a strong, capable mentor in our lives. The lessons learned and experience gained is always invaluable, and often this mentoring can truly launch a career, or turn a career gone sour in a positive direction. More details on the program will be available to members soon.

On A Sad Note - Mahala Ashley Dickerson, the first black president of the National Association of Women Lawyers, (1983-1984) died at the age of 94 on February 19 at her homestead in Wasilla, Alaska following a previous stroke. Ms. Dickerson, a friend of Rosa Parks, was the first African-American female lawyer to be admitted to the Alabama Bar, was Indiana's second black female attorney admitted in 1952, and Alaska's first black attorney, admitted in 1959. She wrote a book about her life, "Delayed Justice for Sale," in 1998, in which she outlined her path lifelong love of learning instilled in her by her parents, country schoolteachers. Ms. Dickerson practiced law into her nineties and was considered an advocate for the poor and underprivileged.

In My Opinion:

This is a new column for the *NAWL News*. We will solicit opinions on issues pertinent to women from our readers, and publish them here. If you have a question you'd like to see opinions on, please contact louiserothery@comcast.net.

In this issue, Margaret McHugh of Townsend and Townsend and Crew, and Diane Ambler of K&L Gates responded to the following questions.

NN: What do you feel is the biggest challenge facing women in the law?

MMcH: From a private law firm perspective, it's the hours and time requirement and trying to balance between personal and professional life, especially when you also have children.

DA: One of the major benefits of a career in the law is the vast array of options available for potential success. To wade through all this, it's critical to understand where the decision points and the career snags are. It's important to actively manage your own career, and all the more so if you have competing demands on your life - which is often a particular challenge for women. You need to figure out what your goals are and keep renewing and adjusting them. If you keep your goals firmly in mind, daily stresses take on a different perspective and it becomes easier to stay grounded in your decisions.

NN: What has happened in your career that you were not prepared for, or that has surprised you?

MMcH: I know this will sound funny, but the money. When I was about to start in a law firm in 1987, coming from a clerkship, the market rate for beginning attorneys unexpectedly jumped up, and I got a significant increase in salary before I even started my new job. It was a very pleasant surprise!

DA: I really wasn't prepared for how much I would enjoy having a law firm career. This is too much fun to be a job! There's interesting work, great people, and constant change. That being said, there have

certainly been periods of time I questioned whether it was worth the stress and hard work. Many of the challenges related to what seemed to be unending demands that didn't seem to recognize or appreciate my efforts. I had no model for dealing with it all and am now pleasantly surprised to find out I actually am capable of managing it, with good planning and lots of support.

NN: Are there areas of law that you feel are better suited to women?

MMcH: I come from an IP practice area, and there are very few women patent litigators, I think women have more of an impact here due to sheer scarcity value. A jury may connect better to a woman, or perhaps would pay more attention.

NN: In summer of 2006, NAWL challenged law firms and corporate law departments to cure the inequity of women to men at the top level, hoping that by 2015, 30% of all equity partners and CLOs will be women. Do you think this is reasonable?

DA: I think it's reasonable, but I'm not sure it's obtainable. Retention is a real issue, and not just for women. It's hard for me to imagine, though, that someone having gone through the rigors of law school wouldn't still have the drive to build a career from that training. One of the issues, it seems to me, is the disconnect between what law school teaches and what the job demands. Another issue - which complicates the leadership landscape - is the competition for a person's time and the multiple demands of a high-pressure career, beyond simply providing legal advice. Challenges to meet leadership goals are important aspirations, particularly in an historically male-dominated environment such as the law. But getting there requires the dedication and hard work of both the institution and those aspiring to leadership.

NN: Do you have any advice for women considering law school?

MMcH: Law is a great field for women. Students should consider all different areas of law and not necessarily the ones that are on TV all the time. There are so many others students should think about. And you don't have to be in the forefront - I know people who are very happy doing tax work, or family law. You don't need to be in a large firm. Keep an open mind.

DA: Go for it! One of the great pleasures of law school is analyzing and figuring out how the laws operate to keep things in order. There's a lot of power in that, a sense of control and a great deal of freedom that comes from understanding the rules of the road and seeing the possibilities for making a difference in our society.

NN: If you weren't going to be a lawyer, what would you be?

MMcH: A psychologist or a movie director!

DA: I'm one of the lucky people who really like what I do, so I don't dream of other careers. Before I went to law school I taught sailing, and that was lots of fun, but I didn't see a long-term future in that!

Margaret McHugh is a partner in the Trademark & Copyright Practice Group at Townsend and Townsend and Crew. Diane Ambler has been a lawyer for 30 years, and is a partner in the investment management group. She began her career as a litigator, but realized that as a middle child, her skills were more suited to bringing people to a common goal.

NAWL's MidYear Meeting:

Early February saw NAWL's MidYear Meeting, with a half day MBA program sponsored by BDO Seidman LLP and a gala luncheon featuring keynote speaker Presiding Justice Kay Cobb from the Mississippi Supreme Court.

Over 100 people attended the program, and 150 were at the lunch, which sold out weeks in advance. Justice Cobb's address, entitled "Mentoring: If Not You, Who? If Not Now, When?" encouraged strong audience participation, and highlighted the rewards of mentoring. Many of the audience learned ways they could mentor others throughout their careers, rather than at one particular point, and it is hoped that all will begin to put these skills into practice.

Mid-Year meeting Chair Dorian Denberg, senior in-house counsel at AT&T, was very pleased with both the content and the turnout for the Mid-Year event. "We had a sell-out crowd at our luncheon," she stated, "and only wish that we could have found more room to fit in everyone who wanted to come. "I feel that NAWL truly captured the interest of a wide ranging audience, women and men, law students to senior practitioners." This was confirmed by a thank-you email she received following the meeting from a law student, who stated: "I wanted to thank you for your time and effort into putting together the event and for making my fellow students and me feel welcome. I am a first year law student at the University of Miami, and I was nervous to attend my first networking event with professionals. However, the women who I met were very encouraging and I greatly enjoyed chatting with them. I was impressed with NAWL as an organization and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about the organization- I even filled out the membership application. Again, I would like to thank you for putting on the event, because it allowed law students like me to be inspired by successful women professionals in the field of law."

Upcoming Events – Check the NAWL Website for Details

March 14, 2007 Argyle Executive Forum's 2007 Leadership Forum Harmonie Club, 4 East 60th Street, New York, New York

Argyle Executive Forum will be presenting its 2007 CLO Leadership Forum on March 14, 2007, at the Harmonie Club in New York City. The event brings together the legal leadership of approximately 175 public and private large cap and mid cap corporations, complementary areas of executive leadership (CEOs, CFOs & COOs), members of the endowment and plan sponsor community, select legal advisory firms, and select founders / senior managing partners of investment firms. NAWL President Cathy Fleming will be one of the keynote panelists.

NAWL members are entitled to a discounted rate, which reduces the normal \$875 ticket price to \$437.50. Visit <http://www.execforum.net/events/eventimages/03.14.07/main.html> for more information. To register, go to <http://www.execforum.net/clo2007> and click on the first blue button on the right. Enter Invitation Code LEGAL and Discount Code NAWL.

March 30, 2007 Ms. JD Launch Yale Law School, New Haven, Connecticut

The national blog, Ms. JD, teams with Yale Law School for its first national conference, entitled "Legally Female: What Does It Mean To Be 'Ms. J.D.?'". For more information on this conference, which is open to both working professionals and law students, click [HERE](#).

March 30, 2007 **Backpack to Briefcase**

Robins Kaplan Miller & Ciresi, Minneapolis, MN

One of our most popular programs, co-sponsored with the Minnesota Women's Bar. Details will follow on the NAWL website!

NAWL China Trip:

Travel this Summer to China with Women Lawyers.

June 21st ~ July 5th 2007

Optional Extension to Hong Kong, July 5-8, 2007.

Fifteen-day excursion of Classic China and the Yangtze River, complete with CLE sessions of cultural exchange with members of the Chinese business and legal communities. Trip availability is limited, so reserve your spot soon! To see a detailed itinerary, complete with pricing and terms and conditions, please click [here](#). To make your reservation, please contact Kelly Reese at reesek@nawl.org or fill out the form found [here](#).

Wit and Wisdom:

"Having family responsibilities and concerns just has to make you a more understanding person."

- Sandra Day O'Connor

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