

## THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS

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### THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS HOSTS THE SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL COUNSEL INSTITUTE: CAREER SKILLS FOR FEMALE IN-HOUSE ATTORNEYS

On October 26 and 27, the National Association of Women Lawyers<sup>®</sup> (NAWL<sup>®</sup>) hosted its Second Annual General Counsel Institute, a two-day program providing career skills to attorneys who serve as in-house counsel. The program, which took place at the Sofitel New York, included plenary sessions with directors, CEOs and general counsel as well as interactive small workshops led by professional consultants.

“We wanted to design a program focused solely on the needs of in-house counsel,” says Cathy Fleming, President of NAWL and a partner at Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP. “Last year was the first time we ran the General Counsel Institute, and it was a phenomenal success. This year, we have nearly 150 people in attendance, after making a conscious decision to keep the numbers low for maximum effectiveness. We couldn’t be more pleased with how the event has turned out.”

Lorraine Koc, Immediate Past President of NAWL and General Counsel/Vice President of Deb Shops, Inc., couldn’t agree more. “As an in-house lawyer, I know how difficult it can be to find professional development courses geared specifically to my concerns. The NAWL General Counsel Institute is truly unique, in that the agenda focuses on the particular skills and knowledge needed by *women* attorneys. This is precisely the kind of programming that women corporate counsel want and need.”

The presentations offered at the General Counsel Institute range from strategic decision making and relationship management to understanding financial statements and e-discovery issues, among others. Koc believes that these skills are critical if woman lawyers are to climb to the top of their profession. “NAWL is concerned about the number of women in leadership positions in all aspects of the legal profession, including in-house legal departments,” she says. “Yesterday, NAWL released findings from its 2006 National Survey on Retention and Promotion of Women in Law Firms that showed that women comprise a small number of equity partners in law firms, even though they constitute nearly 50% of incoming law school students. We wouldn’t be surprised if the same were true in-house. This is obviously not acceptable.”

Last July, the organization issued the NAWL Challenge, which challenges law firms, corporations and law schools to increase the number of women who are equity partners, chief legal officers and tenured faculty to 30% by the year 2015. “The NAWL Challenge encourages leaders in the profession to do their part to increase the number of women

lawyers in senior positions,” says Fleming, “but NAWL is also doing its part. By putting on programs such as the General Counsel Institute, NAWL helps women lawyers acquire the skills and the tools to advance in their careers, even up to the highest levels of the profession.”

NAWL is the leading national voluntary organization devoted to the interests of women lawyers and women's rights. Founded over 100 years ago, NAWL has members in all 50 states and engages in a variety of programs and activities to advance its mission. More information can be found at [www.nawl.org](http://www.nawl.org).

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