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## WBA Kicks Off the Year with Stars of the Bar

By Kerri Castellini, Feeney & Kuwamura, P.A.

Stars of the Bar was once again a successful kick-off for WBA's year. The event bustled with over 200 attorneys, judges, law students, and other members of the metropolitan legal community. The Hogan & Hartson building at Columbia Square was a beautiful setting for a night of networking and honoring community service leaders. Current and prospective members alike shared in the complimentary hors d'oeuvres and beverages while learning more about the upcoming WBA program year.

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## President's Column: Answering a Call to Share

By Consuela Pinto, WBA President

The WBA and the [American University Washington College of Law](#) (WCL) came together on October 29, for an annual celebration of our shared history. The theme for the evening, Domestic Violence and Immigration, was a timely one—October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

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Communications Law Forum  
Holiday Tea — SOLD OUT

Thurs., Jan. 28, 2010  
WBA Foundation  
Value Vino: Finding Great Wines for Less

## Working Women and Delayed Child Bearing: Technological Advances Now Offer Women More Options

By Mindy Berkson, Founder, Lotus Blossom Consulting, LLC

No doubt, infertility is on the rise. One in five couples today will struggle with infertility—the biological inability to conceive or carry a pregnancy to full term. Many factors can contribute to this staggering and continually growing statistic. Most common are delayed child bearing, advanced maternal age, medical conditions, sexually transmitted diseases, obesity, and environmental factors. As women continue to work and delay having children, their needs with regard to infertility treatment have also continued to grow.

[read more](#)

## Support the WBA Foundation's Founders Fellowship

By Diana M. Savit, WBA Foundation President

The WBA Foundation established its Founders Fellowship in 2006, on the occasion of our 25th anniversary, in memory of the WBA's founders, Ellen Spencer Mussey and Emma Gillett. The first Founders Fellowship was awarded to a student at American University's Washington College of Law, in recognition of the WBA's close ties with that school, which was also founded by Ms. Mussey and Ms. Gillett.

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## WBA Kicks Off the Year with Stars of the Bar

By Kerri Castellini, Feeney & Kuwamura, P.A.



Stars of the Bar was once again a successful kick-off for WBA's year. The event bustled with over 200 law students, judges, and members of the metropolitan legal community. The Hogan & Hartson building at Columbia Square was a beautiful setting for a night of networking and honoring community service leaders. Current and prospective members alike shared in the complimentary hors d'oeuvres and beverages while learning more about the upcoming WBA program year.

*WBA Co-Chairs met with members to discuss their plans for the coming year and recruit volunteers for their efforts*

Co-chairs from each of the WBA's committees and forums were present to showcase upcoming events and answer questions regarding the mission and history of the WBA. Co-chairs have prepared a number of events ranging in topic areas to address both substantive and lifestyle concerns of the legal community. Current members were encouraged to bring prospective members to the event so that they may learn more about the WBA. More information about upcoming WBA events can be found at the WBA's website, [www.wbadc.org](http://www.wbadc.org).



*WBA President Consuela Pinto addresses the crowd*

materials about their respective programs to event participants.

WBA President **Consuela Pinto** introduced this year's theme of community service with a brief program that honored attorneys who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to helping the community. The honorees graciously accepted their star shaped awards, and expressed appreciation for the WBA's attention to their work. In addition, the honorees had the opportunity to present

**Shantelle D. Wright** was honored for her work founding and heading the Achievement Prep Academy. Once an attorney for Pillsbury

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Winthrop Shaw Pittman, Ms. Wright founded the tuition-free public charter school with a focus on college through a concentration by concentrating on math and literacy, and a low student to teacher ratio. [www.apreacademy.org](http://www.apreacademy.org)



**Jenny Brody, Karen Barker Marcou, and Marla Spindel** were recognized for founding the DC Volunteer Lawyers Project (DCVLP). Ms. Brody, Ms. Marcou, and Ms. Spindel had found themselves without adequate resources to continue pro bono work when they each took time off from their careers to care for their families. DCVLP provides office space, training, mentoring, malpractice insurance, and other resources to attorneys not associated with a law firm but who still wish to provide pro bono assistance. [www.dcvlp.org](http://www.dcvlp.org)



**Doran Flowers, Tina Hsu, and Jason King** were honored for founding Turning the Page, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a link between DC public schools, families, and communities by hosting community nights and providing parent and teacher leadership training, child mentoring, and book giveaways. [www.turningthepage.org](http://www.turningthepage.org)

Continuing with the theme of community service, this year's Stars of the Bar kicked off the WBA **Community Projects Forum's** three-month long food and donation drive to benefit the Capital Area Food Bank Children's Program. The Community Projects Forum collected an abundance of nutritious, kid-friendly, non-perishable food items and over \$400 in monetary donations. The drive will continue through the Holiday Tea to be held December 16. Food items and donations are being collected at each fall WBA program.

Stars of the Bar could not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. We would like to thank each of the following sponsors for helping the WBA gather the legal community and recognize the significant community service contributions of this year's honorees.

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in its efforts to promote the advancement and retention of women in the legal industry

## President's Column: Answering a Call to Share

By Consuela Pinto, WBA President

The WBA and the [American University Washington College of Law](#) (WCL) came together on October 29 for an annual celebration of our shared history. The theme for the evening, Domestic Violence and Immigration, was a timely one—October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The evening was marked by a series of inspirational speakers, including **Leslye E. Orloff**, Immigrant Women Program, Legal Momentum; **Amy Myers**, WCL Domestic Violence Clinic; **Elizabeth Keyes**, WCL Practitioner-in-Residence with the International Human Rights Law Clinic; and keynote speaker, the Honorable **Vanessa Ruiz**, District of Columbia Court of Appeals. The evening culminated with closing remarks by **Billie Jo Kaufman**, Associate Dean for Library and Information Resources. Dean Kaufman challenged the attendees to share all that we learned that night. I am answering that call by sharing all that I learned with each of you.



As we all know, domestic violence is a significant problem nationwide and DC is no exception. Consider the following key statistics:

- One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2005, the DC Metropolitan Police Department received 27,401 domestic-related crime calls—one every 19 minutes, including 11,053 calls to report domestic violence crimes (30 calls per day) and 16,348 calls to report family dispute crimes (45 calls per day).<sup>2</sup>
- A study in New York City found that 51 percent of intimate partner homicide victims were foreign-born, while 45 percent were born in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Immigrant women's citizenship status often makes it more difficult for them to escape abuse than U.S.-born victims. Their abusers threaten to kidnap their children or have them deported, prohibit them from learning English, isolate them from family, friends and medical care, and deny them access to money. They are also less likely than U.S.-born victims to seek help or report abuse because of cultural and religious beliefs. Immigrant women who are able to escape their abusers have difficulty getting access to adequate domestic violence services because of a language barrier.

[The Violence Against Women Act](#) (VAWA) provides special protections for immigrant

domestic violence victims. VAWA allows battered immigrants to petition for legal status in the United States without relying on their abusers to sponsor them. The purpose of the VAWA program is to allow victims the opportunity to “self-petition” or independently seek legal immigration status in the United States. If a VAWA self-petition is approved, the immigrant victim may file an application to become a lawful permanent resident.

VAWA's protections are useless if victims can't get access to legal representation, bilingual shelters, and other necessary services. The economic downturn has made the plight of domestic violence victims in DC, foreign and U.S.-born, significantly worse. Two of DC's main domestic violence service providers, [WEAVE](#) and [House of Ruth](#), are struggling to keep their doors open as a result of funding cuts.

As you read this response to Dean Kaufman's call to share, think about what you can do in response — take on a pro bono domestic violence matter, volunteer for a domestic violence provider, make a donation, or plan a fundraiser— and with whom you will share what you have learned from this letter.

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<sup>1</sup> National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, [www.ncadv.org/Files/Newsletters/2009-2010/DomesticViolenceFactSheet\(National\).pdf](http://www.ncadv.org/Files/Newsletters/2009-2010/DomesticViolenceFactSheet(National).pdf), citing Patricia Tjaden & Nancy Thoennes, U.S. Dep't of Just., NCJ 181867, *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence*, at iii (2000), available at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/181867.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/181867.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Center Against Domestic Violence, [www.dccadv.org/statistics.html](http://www.dccadv.org/statistics.html), citing Metropolitan Police Department, 2004-2006.

<sup>3</sup> [www.abanet.org/domyviol/statistics.html#immigrants](http://www.abanet.org/domyviol/statistics.html#immigrants), citing New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *Femicide in New York City: 1995-2002* (2004), available at [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/ip/femicide1995-2002\\_report.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/ip/femicide1995-2002_report.pdf).

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## Support the WBA Foundation's Founders Fellowship

By Diana M. Savit, WBA Foundation President

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The WBA Foundation established its Founders Fellowship in 2006, on the occasion of our 25th anniversary, in memory of the WBA's founders, Ellen Spencer Mussey and Emma Gillett. The first Founders Fellowship was awarded to a student at American University's Washington College of Law, in recognition of the WBA's close ties with that school, which was also founded by Ms. Mussey and Ms. Gillett. The fellowship is a stipend that allows its recipient to donate his/her time to a local nonprofit organization dedicated to helping women and children. We award it each year in the hope that it will encourage law students to consider spending their summers pursuing public service, knowing that the salary most nonprofits would have trouble paying them will be funded from another source.

Since it was first established, there have been two additional Founders Fellows — students at, respectively, Howard University School of Law and George Washington University Law School. All three of our fellows have undertaken worthy projects of which both the WBA and the WBA Foundation should be proud:

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- AU's **Ana Ayala** spent her fellowship summer as an intern with Ayuda, Inc., where she helped attorneys represent victims of domestic violence, most of them Latinas.
- Howard's **Courtney Dixon** used the Founders Fellowship to support her summer work as a legal intern with the Sexual Assault Legal Institute. SALI is one of the only programs in the country devoted solely to providing direct legal services to victims of sexual assault.
- GW's **Jennifer Rodrique** donated her time to two organizations: as an intern with the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, and as the student volunteer coordinator for WomensLaw.org, a domestic violence resource website.

Our Founders Fellows select their projects independently; our only requirement is that the nonprofits that receive the benefit of their service be dedicated to helping women and children.

It is therefore both notable and praiseworthy that each fellowship recipient to date has used her stipend to benefit some of society's most vulnerable and desperate persons: victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Your dollars make this happen. Since 2007, the WBA Foundation has raised the money to fund the Founders Fellowship at its annual wine tasting and silent auction, currently the sole fundraising event devoted exclusively to supporting the Foundation. We will join together again soon, to support the 2010 Founders Fellowship and its recipient, a student at the University of the District of Columbia's David A. Clarke School of Law, on January 28, 2010 for a wine tasting and silent auction at the offices of WilmerHale. I urge everyone to join the Foundation in doing good while having fun that night.

We continue to grapple with a difficult economy, which tempts us to ignore the needs of others as we focus on our more immediate concerns. But those of us who have achieved success in the legal profession have a moral obligation to help others who have not come quite so far. The WBA Foundation's wine tasting and silent auction provides an opportunity to do just that in a convivial atmosphere. Our presenters always teach us something new about wine and this year's theme — *Value Vino—Finding Great Wines for Less* — recognizes that we live in austere times. Nevertheless, our current situation, while somber, is not mournful. Nothing prevents us from putting the best face on things. Some of the greatest Hollywood comedies and musicals emerged during the years of the Great Depression; we can, on a much more modest scale, forget a skittish stock market and our 401(k)s for one night to lift a glass (or two) of wine to a good cause and to help others. And for the teetotalers, as well as the rest of us, there is always the prospect of finding the perfect gift, household item, or getaway opportunity among the varied auction items. We welcome your attendance, your sponsorship and your donations. We hope to see you there!

## 7th Annual Wine Tasting & Silent Auction

### 7th Annual Wine Tasting & Silent Auction

Mark your calendar for the 2010 Women's Bar Association Foundation Annual Wine Tasting and Silent Auction. This year's event will be held on January 28, 2010 at the law firm of WilmerHale at 6:30 p.m. As in years past, guests will mingle and taste a unique assortment of wines and crudites from around the world. Keeping with this year's theme, *Value Vino—Finding Great Wines for Less*, the wines will be specially selected by our connoisseur to highlight wines that truly offer value across a wide price range. The event will also feature the ever-popular silent auction which will include items from local restaurants, service providers, and vendors. Tickets for the event are available online on the [WBA/WBA Foundation website](#). Register before December 18 and receive a \$10 discount off the regular ticket price. You do not want to miss this popular networking event!

## Grantee Honored by Ebony Magazine

**Dr. Shireen Lewis**, Executive Director of DC nonprofit and WBA Foundation grant recipient [EduSeed](#), and founder of its [SisterMentors](#) program, has been honored *Ebony* Magazine as an "Unsung Hero" who is making a difference for children, schools and communities.

As the Founder of EduSeed's SisterMentors program, Dr. Lewis has helped 32 women of color to earn doctorates and two groups of girls of color to get into college, including to Duke University, Goucher College, and Bates College. Many of the women graduates now serve in many roles in communities in the United States and abroad, including as leaders of nonprofits and professors at universities.

SisterMentors women and girls are African Americans, Latinas, Asian Americans, and immigrants. SisterMentors helps women of color doctoral candidates to complete their dissertations and get their doctorates. The women in turn, while in the program, give back by mentoring girls of color from disadvantaged backgrounds, inspiring girls to stay in school, do well and go to college. The girls are in elementary, middle and high school in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The women serve as role models—women of color who have achieved academic success despite the odds.





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## Committee & Forum Highlights:

### Career Development Committee Offers Career Coaching

Are you a WBA member who is currently unemployed (or facing unemployment) and looking for a new job? Through the generous offers of local career coaches, the **Career Development Committee** is offering complementary group career coaching sessions for WBA members who have lost their jobs. If you are interested in receiving these services, e-mail the WBA office at [admin@wbadc.org](mailto:admin@wbadc.org) with your name, e-mail, phone number, current employment status, preferred time for coaching sessions (morning, afternoon, or evening), and your background/areas of interest.

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*The Communications Law Forum*  
of the  
*Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia*  
Invites You to a

**HOLIDAY TEA**

December 16, 2009  
3:00 – 5:00 PM

**Carolyn Lamm**  
President of the American Bar Association  
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*Law Student \$40*  
*Non-Members \$50*  
Register at [www.wbadc.org](http://www.wbadc.org)

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## Event Wrap Ups

### Negotiating & Understanding the Pros and Cons of Flexible Work Arrangements

By Gaby Longworth, Sterne Kessler Goldstein & Fox PLLC

This summer, the **Working Parents Forum** held a panel discussion on, "Negotiating & Understanding the Pros and Cons of Flexible Work Arrangements." The discussion was put into context and moderated by **Kate Neville** of Neville Career Consulting, and panelists included WBA President **Consuela Pinto**, then of Work Life Law and currently of the U.S. Department of Labor; WBA Board member **Linda Chanow** of the Project for Attorney Retention; and

**Melissa Bianchi**, an attorney at Hogan & Hartson who made partner while working a reduced hours schedule and who continues to succeed in her role at the firm on a part-time basis.

Each participant provided guidance based on her own experience negotiating workplace flexibility as well as research on the topic. Issues addressed included: how to prepare for the initial conversation and propose a flexible schedule; who in the office to approach first; and what an employee can leverage in these types of negotiations. Additionally, panelists identified what they consider to be the most significant challenges in maintaining a flexible schedule and strategies that can be used to overcome them.

The group also discussed the biases that employees who work flexible schedules can encounter and how to handle them so that others in the workplace understand that employees who work flexible schedules remain committed professionals who are available when needed. While negotiating workplace flexibility has received less attention with the dampened economy, many employers continue to recognize the value of retaining experienced talent and realize that such arrangements often prove to be a bargain for the employer in any cost-benefit analysis.

## Health Careers Panel

By Sarah Kaput, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.

Law students and attorneys learned about potential paths into and within the field of health care law at the **Health Law Forum's** Health Careers Panel. The event was held in September at the law offices of Power Pyles Sutter and Verville PC.

The panel included experienced practitioners who offered several different perspectives: **Ivy Baer**, Director and Regulatory Counsel, Association of American Medical Colleges; **Robyn Whipple Diaz**, Associate Counsel, MedStar Health, Inc.; and **Robert Portman**, Principal, Power Pyles Sutter and Verville, PC.

The panelists discussed how their health law practices differ from the others and the many avenues of pursuing health care law. Given the climate of increasing regulation of the health care industry, attendees were advised of the many career options for those interested in entering into health care law.

Attendees used the experience to help determine the skill sets needed for the different types of practice, whether as in-house counsel at a corporation, as counsel or in regulatory affairs at an association, a lawyer in a law firm, or as counsel in the government. The event also served as a great networking opportunity for attendees. After the panel concluded, there was a flurry of business cards exchanged as new connections were made.

## A Guide to Family Planning: Egg Banking, IVF, Surrogacy and Donors

By Gaby Longworth, Sterne Kessler Goldstein & Fox PLLC

The **Working Parents Forum** presented a program entitled "Guide to Family Planning: Egg Banking, IVF, Surrogacy and Donors" in September. The program was designed to discuss issues such as the right time to start a family, waiting to have children and/or having difficulty conceiving, having a child while single, options when experiencing infertility, and being a gestational carrier, to name a few.

The program featured infertility consultant **Mindy Berkson**, an infertility specialist who



*l-r: Panelists Christina Ayiotis, Andrianna Ayiotis and Carol Montova: Working Parents*

guided the audience through infertility and its countless complicated issues, two working moms, **Christina Ayiotis** and **Carol Montoya**, and Tina's daughter **Andrianna**.

Ms. Ayiotis shared her personal story of taking matters into her own hands and working with a reproductive endocrinologist to create her greatest work product and labor of love, her now teenage daughter, Andrianna. Andrianna shared with the audience how she feels about how she came into the world. Finally, we heard from Ms. Montoya, the mother of a 5-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son, who became a gestational carrier for a local couple who could not carry their own child. The program was very well received by the attendees and a great deal of useful information was shared with the group.

*Forum co-chair Gaby Longsworth; and moderator Mindy Berkson*

## Landing a Non-Profit Job in This Economy

**By Carlean Ponder, The Ponder Law & Advocacy Group PLLC**

In early November, the **Non-Profit Organizations Practice Forum** presented "Landing a Non-Profit Job in This Economy." Panelists included moderator **Monica Parham**, WBA Board Member and Diversity Chair for Crowell and Moring LLP; and **Karen Hendricks**, Executive Director, Trust for America's Health; **Bob Skelton**, Chief Administrative Officer, the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE). Interest in the topic was evidenced by the standing-room only crowd.



*l-r: Moderator Monica Parham, Non-Profit Organizations Practice Forum co-chair Carlean Ponder; and panelists Bob Skelton and Karen Hendricks*

The practice forum's events are geared toward lawyers who currently work for non-profits, lawyers who wish to transition to non-profits, and non-profit attorneys interested in connecting with a more diverse body of attorneys through the WBA. Upcoming events include presentations and workshops on non-profit legal careers as a practitioner, policy professional, or administrator. These events will provide opportunities to sharpen your legal skills through non-profit volunteer activities, and developments in partnerships between non-profits and law firms.



We invite you to join the list-serve for the Non-Profit Organizations Practice Forum by visiting the Google Groups website: <http://groups.google.com/group/WBA-DC-nonprofits>. To the right, you will see an option to "Join this Group." If you already have a Gmail account, simply log-in as normal and opt to join this group. Otherwise you can create a Gmail account and join immediately.

## Upcoming Events

### **Transforming Negative Career Experiences**

By Bronwen Blass, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP

Looking to turn over a new leaf for the New Year and make positive changes in your career? Join the **Career Development Committee** for a program on "Transforming Negative Career Experiences" to help you reframe past negative career experiences.

Are you scared of being asked about THAT job, the one where you had a conflict with your boss? Maybe you were fired. Maybe you left after only six months. In this workshop you will learn how to be honest AND make a good impression.

- Be more relaxed in interviews
- Communicate clearly and confidently
- Turn your bad experiences into assets
- Never again fear that dreaded topic arising in social situations

We are presenting this brown bag program with **Anna Rappaport**, business coach and former attorney. It will be held on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 from 12:00-1:30 pm, at WilmerHale, 1875 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Visit [www.excellerationcoaching.com](http://www.excellerationcoaching.com) for more information about Ms. Rappaport and her services.

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## WBA Members Honored by the Bar Association of the District of Columbia

Three WBA members were recognized at the BADC 138th Annual Banquet, a black tie event held on December 5, 2009.

### Annice M. Wagner Pioneer Award

*Karen M. Lockwood*

The Lockwood Group LLC

### Judicial Honoree

*The Honorable Paul L. Friedman*

U.S. District Court for the District Of Columbia

Introduction by WBA Member **Jamie Gorelick**

### Constance L. Belfiore Quality of Life Award

*Deborah Luxenberg*

Luxenberg Johnson & Dickens PC

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## Brooksley Born to Receive ABF Outstanding Service Award

**Brooksley Born**, Arnold & Porter LLP, has been selected to receive the **American Bar Foundation Outstanding Service Award** at the [ABF Fellows Annual Awards Reception and Banquet](#) on February 6, 2010. The award recognizes a Fellow who has, in his or her professional career, adhered for more than 30 years to the highest principles and traditions of the legal profession and to the service of the public.

Ms. Born currently serves as the State Chair for the DC Fellows of the American Bar Foundation. WBA named her Woman Lawyer of the Year in 1981.



## Council for Court Excellence Honors Deborah Luxenberg

**Deborah Luxenberg**, Luxenberg, Johnson & Dickens, PC, was honored by the Washington DC Council for Court Excellence with its Charles A. Horsky Award. The award is named after the Council's founder, who devoted his career to extensive public service and pro bono activities, including arguing landmark civil rights cases before the Supreme Court and assisting in the prosecution of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. Ms. Luxenberg was selected for her exemplary contributions to the Council as the chair of CCE's Children in the Courts Committee from 2001 to 2009. From 2002 to 2009, she also served on the CCE Executive Committee.



## Welcome New WBA Members!

Mujadala Abdul-Majid  
 Emily Allenbach  
 Alexandra Amourgis  
 Alexia Baiman  
 Kenita Barrow  
 Jennifer Beatty  
 Ann Berkowitz  
 Rene Blocker  
 Jami Bloomgarden  
 Karolyn Blume  
 Ebonie Branch  
 Megan Brown  
 Rebecca Cary  
 Lulu Cheng  
 Erin Chlopak  
 Allison Cohen  
 Lisa DiMonte  
 Tiane Doman  
 Iris Drimmer  
 Megan Eisenman  
 Diana Epps  
 Anna-Lisa Evans  
 Lisa Ewart  
 Katia Fano  
 Caroline Farrell  
 Madeleine Findley  
 Lisa Fine  
 Angela Floyd

Kristen Hulse  
 David Hurwitz  
 Adriane Jemmott  
 Noel Johnson  
 Sasha Kalb  
 Mariatu Kargbo  
 Kirsten Keating  
 Altomease Kennedy  
 Chaya Kundra  
 Gbenga Longe  
 Deepali Lugani  
 Valaree Moodee Lockman  
 Maria Manon  
 George Marcou  
 Betsy McIntyre  
 Gretchen McMullen  
 Lorraine Montgomery  
 Stacey Moye  
 Nancy Murphy  
 Heidi Pease  
 Rachel Pilloff  
 Lucy Plovnick  
 Linda Priebe  
 Megan Renfrew  
 Jessica Ritsick  
 Mackenzie Schoonmaker  
 Arushi Sharma  
 Joyce Slocum

Stamo Georgiou  
Susan Giller  
Paige Gold  
Cherita Gonzales  
Kara Gorski  
Crystal Gray  
Shannon Gulley  
Claudia Gwilliam  
Brenda Harkavy  
Allison Hester-Haddad  
Laurie Horvitz

Justice Sonia Sotomayor  
Terry Stenerson  
Pamela Strauss  
Delia Stubbs  
Tricia Su  
Deborah Tang  
Emily Tuck  
Brenda Wagner  
Laura Yaffe  
Mara Zimmerman

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## Events

[Wed., Dec. 16, 2009](#)

Communications Law Forum  
Holiday Tea — SOLD OUT

[Thurs., Jan. 28, 2010](#)

WBA Foundation  
Value Vino: Finding Great Wines  
for Less

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## Working Women and Delayed Child Bearing: Technological Advances Now Offer Women More Options

By Mindy Berkson, Founder, Lotus Blossom Consulting, LLC

No doubt, infertility is on the rise. One in five couples today will struggle with infertility—the biological inability to conceive or carry a pregnancy to full term. Many factors can contribute to this staggering and continually growing statistic. Most common are delayed child bearing, advanced maternal age, medical conditions, sexually transmitted diseases, obesity, and environmental factors. As women continue to work and delay having children, their needs with regard to infertility treatment have also continued to grow.

The infertility diagnosis can be devastating and demoralizing. Unable to become pregnant or carry a pregnancy to term, women often feel inadequate, alone and depressed. Infertility treatment is costly and invasive. Success rates are not guaranteed and insurance benefits are often limited. The emotional, physical, and financial stressors associated with the infertility process are often challenging and overwhelming.

While infertility affects the male and female populations at almost identical percentages, it is typically the woman who undergoes the vast majority of invasive and costly medical procedures. These procedures require intense daily monitoring over the course of several weeks, and sometimes months, thus making it necessary to miss work for such treatments as pre-scheduled ultrasound and blood draws, followed by daily injections of hormones. Adding insult to injury, these treatments then cause increasing mood swings, physical bloating and discomfort. It is no wonder that undergoing infertility treatment has been labeled a full-time job.

Age matters in many aspects of life and definitely in the creation of life. Women are most fertile between the ages of 20 to 28 with their fertility decreasing in half by the time they reach 35 years of age. By age 45, only a 1% chance remains each month of conceiving naturally. This is a startling fact considering the average age a woman has her first child has risen to a record high of 25.1 years with 20% of women waiting until they are 35 years old to begin their family.

An increasing number of women choose to delay childbearing due to further schooling, career choice, or waiting to find their perfect partner. Many individuals are choosing to be single parents. While those choices are understandable and personal, as women naturally age so do their ovaries, affecting their fertility. Oocyte cryopreservation, commonly known as egg banking, generally provides women up to the age of 38 a chance to stop their biological clock and effectively plan and preserve their fertility for the future.

This fertility preservation is advantageous because as women mature the quality and quantity of their given lifetime supply of eggs decreases, resulting in eggs that are more prone to genetic abnormalities. Chromosomal abnormalities can lead to increased incidences of infertility, miscarriage and birth defects. Since pregnancy is possible at later ages, egg freezing increases opportunities for biological offspring and pregnancy in women beyond 35 years of age.

Egg banking is also an option that is highly recommended for women diagnosed with cancer prior to starting medical treatments that may negatively impact their fertility. While treatments such as radiation and chemotherapy are lifesaving, they can potentially leave women infertile. The ability to freeze viable eggs before undergoing cancer treatments instills hope for a family in the future.

Egg banking, the newest technology available in the fertility arena increases options and

opportunities for women who plan to delay child bearing for personal reasons or for medically induced situations. Because women do not continually reproduce more eggs over a lifetime, the availability and advancement of egg banking technology allows women to protect a precious limited resource and helps to ensure their fertility until such time that they are ready to begin a family.

***About Mindy Berkson and Lotus Blossom Consulting***

One of the first infertility consultancies in the United States, Lotus Blossom Consulting, LLC was founded by Mindy Berkson in 2005. With more than a decade of experience at physician's offices, and egg donor and surrogacy agencies, Ms. Berkson assists individuals working through the often-challenging roadblocks of infertility, by providing the best information and resources available to them from around the world. Ms. Berkson is a sought-after infertility expert and has appeared on countless media programs and speaker panels educating audiences on the topic of infertility, egg banking, and surrogacy. She moderated the Working Parents Forum September program. For more information about Lotus Blossom Consulting, LLC, call 1-877-881-2685, email [mindy@lotusblossomconsulting.com](mailto:mindy@lotusblossomconsulting.com) or visit [www.lotusblossomconsulting.com](http://www.lotusblossomconsulting.com).

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