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Member News

A Brief History of Women Supreme Court Advocates

By Maria G. Mendoza, Co-chair, Amicus Committee



Justice Ginsburg and Brooksley Born at the post swearing-in reception.

On January 22, 2013, the WBA sponsored its first ceremony for a group admission into the Supreme Court Bar. Brooksley Born served as the movant and 23 WBA members were moved into the Bar of the Supreme Court. Justice Ginsburg and Justice Kagan greeted WBA members during a private breakfast reception before and after the swearing-in ceremony.



The WBA Supreme Court Bar admittees, along with WBA leaders and Brooksley Born, after the swearing in ceremony.

Events

Tuesday, March 5, 2013

[The Business of Law](#)

Presented by: Tax & Business Law Forum

Practicing law not only requires legal expertise, but business expertise, since a legal practice of any size is also a business. Yet, many of us are lawyers first, and business women (and men) second. This discussion will focus closely on the business side of the law and what it takes to build a successful and profitable practice. Whether you are a solo practitioner, practicing with a private law firm of small or moderate size, or a government attorney or student contemplating your options, this discussion will be of interest to you.

Thursday, March 7, 2013

[Electronically Stored Information Management Techniques and Evidence](#)

Presented by: Solo & Small Practice and Tax & Business Law Forums
This program, featuring Jack Hubbert, Chief Information Officer of The Reliable Companies, will serve as an introduction to document management and electronically stored information (ESI) basics for those unfamiliar with ESI, as well as a refresher for attorneys currently working with ESI.

Thursday, March 14, 2013

[A Conversation with The Honorable Patricia Wald](#)

Presented by: Communications Law Forum

Join us during Women's History Month in honoring Patricia McGowan Wald, the first woman appointed as a judge to any of the United States Courts of Appeal. Judge Wald has received numerous honors to recognize her exceptional career as a jurist and her numerous

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Federal Judicial Nominations: February Update

By Amy Matsui, Senior Counsel & Director of Women and the Courts, National Women's Law Center

Now that President Obama's second term has officially begun, it's a good time to take stock of where federal judicial nominations stand. Unfortunately, 2012 ended on a disappointing note in terms of judicial vacancies, but 2013 presents the opportunity to move forward and make real progress both in reducing vacancies and increasing the diversity of the federal bench. ...

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[Women's History Month: A Luncheon with Judge Wald](#)



Judge Patricia McGowan Wald

Join us during Women's History Month in honoring the [Honorable Patricia McGowan Wald](#), the first woman appointed as a judge to any of the United States Courts of Appeals. Judge Wald has received numerous honors to recognize her exceptional career as a jurist and her numerous leadership roles in professional associations, national commissions, and legal reforms efforts in the U.S. and abroad, including the WBA's Women Lawyer of the Year (1984); the ABA's Margaret Brent Award (1994), which was established to salute women who have achieved excellence, influenced other women to pursue legal careers, and opened doors closed previously to women; the DC Bar's Thurgood Marshall Award (1998), and the ABA Medal (2008), its top honor, presented to an individual who has

leadership roles in professional associations, national commissions and legal reforms efforts in the U.S. and abroad, influenced other women to pursue legal careers, and opened doors closed previously to women.

Thursday, March 21, 2013

[Navigating Government Career Opportunities – Tips and Tactics for Success](#)

Presented by: Government Attorneys & Litigation Forums

Looking for a job in the federal government? This program is for you! The speakers will represent a diverse array of government agencies and will provide must-know tips on the application process. From navigating USAjobs.gov, to writing a successful resume, to nailing your interview, you will come away with valuable information to assist you as you navigate the government job market.

Wednesday, April 3, 2013

[Being a Nimble Job Seeker](#)

Presented by: Young Lawyers Committee

Learn from leaders in recruiting, attorney placement, and career counseling about how to maximize your time spent job searching and being creative about building your career. Panelists Mary W. Legg, Kate Neville and Michelle Nash will bring their career-building expertise and ideas to give you a fresh perspective on your job search. A networking reception will follow the panel.

Thursday, April 11, 2013

[WBA Foundation Grant Awards Reception](#)

Tuesday, May 7, 2013

[A Consumer Electronics Show & Tell](#)

Presented by: Communications Law Forum

Just in time to get a head start on purchasing a Smartphone for a relative's birthday or even a 3-D television for yourself. Join us for this Consumer Electronics Show and Tell. The 2,000 members of the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) bring you the devices and services that make your work more efficient, your home life more enjoyable, and your travel less stressful. CEA experts can demonstrate a device or service you

rendered exceptionally distinguished service to the cause of American jurisprudence. ...

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Speed Mentoring Reception

By Roya Vasseghi, Law Clerk, Doumar Martin PLLC; Co-chair, Solo & Small Practice Forum

Every new attorney needs a mentor, right? It even seems that these days, multiple mentors are required. So where does one find a mentor? The WBA's Speed Mentoring Reception, presented by the Mentoring Committee, was a great place to start. The event was held at BakerHostetler's offices on December 13, 2012. There were over 20 mentors participating, representing the private sector, academia, and the government, including a judge from the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Each mentee had the opportunity to sit with a potential mentor for three minutes before moving on to the next mentor. The mentee could talk about herself, ask questions of her potential mentor and her experiences, or a combination of both. ...

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Insurance Law Forum Hosts Happy Hour

By Rachel Alexander, Associate, Wiley Rein LLP; Co-Chair, Insurance Law Forum

The Insurance Law Forum kicked off 2013 with a networking happy hour (or two) at Fujimar Lounge on January 31. The gathering included representatives from multiple areas of insurance law including coverage, mediation, and claims administration. In setting the forum's 2013 agenda, the co-chairs determined that continuing to meet and network with others throughout the industry was a priority. Stay tuned for more happy hour events from the Insurance Law Forum! ...

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have not seen previously or answer your questions about other consumer electronics you have seen, but not mastered yet.

President's Column

By Laura Possessky, WBA President

Pizza v. Ice Cream, or The Case for Leadership Parity

During a recent field trip to the **National Portrait Gallery** with my daughter's class, the docent led us to a bronze bust of Susan B. Anthony. She asked the class,

"How many of you want ice cream? And how many of you want pizza?"

Most of the girls voted for ice cream and most of the boys voted for pizza. After tallying the votes, the docent announced,

"Since only the boys can vote, pizza wins!"

...

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WBA Foundation

By Kirra Jarratt, WBAF President

On February 28, the Women's Bar Association Foundation will host our annual **Wine Tasting and Silent Auction** to benefit the Founders Fellowship. It's not too late to **join us!**

Our theme this year is **Signature Wines of the World**. Representatives from **The Curious Grape** will introduce us to some great wines, including a Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand, a Gruner Veltliner from Austria, a Malbec from Argentina, and a Cabernet Sauvignon from California. As in past years, they will offer a discounted price for wines purchased that evening and donate a portion of their proceeds to our fundraiser. We love The Curious Grape for their unwavering support of the Foundation! There will also be nonalcoholic beverages available. ...

[read more](#) 

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The WBA Supreme Court Bar admittees, along with WBA leaders and Brooksley Born, after the swearing in ceremony.

Women advocates before the Supreme Court have come a long way. In the 1870s, when **Belva Lockwood**, one of the first female attorneys, sought admission to the Supreme Court Bar, she was denied because the Court did not permit women to join. Ms. Lockwood petitioned Congress to be granted admission to the Supreme Court Bar and became the first woman extended this privilege. In the years following Lockwood's admission, the number of women admitted to practice before the Supreme Court gradually increased.

Still, by the mid-20th century, very few women regularly argued before the Court. Among the women who made regular Court appearances, **Beatrice Rosenberg** of the Department of Justice argued dozens of cases in the 1950s and 1960s. Her contemporary, **Bessie Margolin**, who served at the Department of Labor, similarly argued many cases from the 1940s through the mid-1960s. Over time, female Supreme Court advocates became less of a novelty. At one pivotal moment, on November 1, 1978, two of the three arguments before the Supreme Court had women advocates appear for both the petitioners and the respondents.¹ In 1993, the Supreme Court finally installed a restroom for women near the lawyers' lounge.²

Currently, women lawyers argue about 15 percent of the Supreme Court's cases.³ In 2011, **Lisa Blatt** of Arnold & Porter LLP argued her thirtieth case before the Supreme Court, and current WBA member **Patricia Millett** of Akin Gump has argued 31 cases before the Court. Other prominent women attorneys like **Kathleen Sullivan** at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan and **Maureen Mahoney** at Latham & Watkins have joined the ranks of regular Supreme Court advocates. The WBA celebrates the progress made by women who have argued before the Supreme Court and seeks to improve the representation of women among

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Supreme Court advocates by providing opportunities such as this swearing in.



Justice Ginsburg and Brooksley Born at the post swearing-in reception.

¹ Hon. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, *Women at the Bar—A Generation of Change*, 34 SEATTLE U. L. REV. 649, 655 (2011).

² Tony Mauro, *Diversity Increases Among High Court Practitioners*, Nat'l L.J. (June 9, 2011) available at www.law.com.

³ Debra Cassens Weiss, *Women Lawyers Argue About 15% of Supreme Court Cases: Do They Dislike the Verbal Jousting?* (January 20, 2011).

Congratulations to the WBA's Supreme Court Admittees

Vanessa Allen
Kanya Bennett
Amy Bess
Kerri Castellini
Indra Chalk
Jill Dash
Kathleen O'Brien Ham
Nausheen Hassan
Christina Hsu
Irena Karpinski
Tara Kelly
Judith Kim

Melonie McCall
Janet McIntosh
Michelle A. Miller
Daria Neal
Monica Parham
Lori Ruk
Carolyn Stennett
April Tabor
Kerry Brainard Verdi
Jennifer Whitsitt
Pamela Whittaker

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Federal Judicial Nominations: February Update

By Amy Matsui, Senior Counsel & Director of Women and the Courts, National Women's Law Center

Now that President Obama's second term has officially begun, it is a good time to take stock of where federal judicial nominations stand. Unfortunately, 2012 ended on a disappointing note in terms of judicial vacancies, but 2013 presents the opportunity for real progress, both in reducing vacancies and increasing the diversity of the federal bench.

A determined minority of senators refused to allow timely confirmation votes on President Obama's nominees throughout 2012, and effectively shut down the confirmation process months before the November elections. Although the Senate voted on and overwhelmingly confirmed a number of district court nominees during the lame duck session, the Senate adjourned without voting on 11 judicial nominees who had been waiting for a vote before the full Senate, including four circuit court judges. The nominations of 22 other individuals that had not yet been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee also lapsed at the end of 2012.

On January 3, President Obama renominated all 33 individuals, including [Caitlin Halligan](#), nominated to the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, and [Ketanji Brown Jackson](#), nominated to the district court for the District of Columbia. Many of these nominees have been waiting for months: for example, Ms. Halligan was initially approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee in March 2011.

There are 89 vacancies on the federal bench, 34 more than existed at the beginning of President Obama's administration. Thirty-one of those vacancies have been designated "[judicial emergencies](#)" by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. In addition, a number of key courts, like the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, have an unprecedented number of vacancies. It's time for the Senate to make a fresh start on nominations.

There are 17 women among the 33 current nominees — including Ms. Halligan and Ms. Jackson. These nominees represent President Obama's ongoing commitment to diversifying the federal bench. The Obama Administration has nominated more women and people of color for judgeships than any previous Administration in history. Overall, of the President's confirmations, approximately 43% have been women, more than twice the rate under the previous Administration. The Obama Administration also broke gender barriers by confirming six women as the first woman judges to serve on their respective district court, and five more as the first woman circuit court judge in their respective state. In fact, more women have been confirmed to the federal bench in President Obama's first term than during President George W. Bush's entire presidency. In addition, President Obama already has appointed more women judges of color than the two previous Administrations. As a result, the percentage of active women judges on the federal bench has increased from slightly above 25% in 2009 to over 30%.

Nevertheless, much work remains to be done. Although the federal bench resembles ever more



Amy Matsui

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the diverse face of our nation, it is remarkable that, in 2012, there are still over a dozen federal district courts to which a woman judge has never been confirmed. Furthermore, more women are needed on our courts of appeal: for example, there is only one active female judge on each of the Eighth Circuit (although **Jane Kelly** was nominated in January 2013 to another seat on that court) and the Tenth Circuit. Women are also underrepresented on the Third Circuit (where they make up approximately 15% of judges) and the Fourth Circuit (where they make up about 27% of judges). And there have only ever been five women to sit on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals.

On a recent conference call with leaders in the women's legal community, White House Counsel **Kathryn Ruemmler** conveyed President Obama's commitment to continuing to increase the diversity of the federal bench in terms of gender, racial and ethnic background, sexual orientation, and legal experience. It is imperative that the Senate move nominees expeditiously through the confirmation process in 2013. When federal courts are not working at full capacity, people around the country are forced to wait for justice.

For more information:

- On women in the federal judiciary, see www.nwlc.org/resource/women-federal-judiciary-still-long-way-go-1.
- On the diversity of the federal judiciary more generally, see www.whitehouse.gov/infographics/judicial-nominees.
- On how to make your voice heard in Washington, see www.nwlc.org/what-you-can-do/act-online

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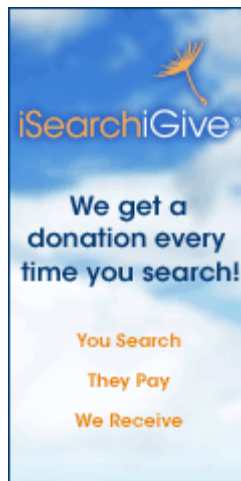
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WBA Foundation President's Letter



By Kirra L. Jarratt, WBAF President

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Our theme this year is **Signature Wines of the World**. Representatives from **The Curious Grape** will introduce us to some great wines, including a Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand, a Gruner Veltliner from Austria, a Malbec from Argentina, and a Cabernet Sauvignon from California. As in past years, they will offer a discounted price for wines purchased that evening and donate a portion of their proceeds to our fundraiser. We love The Curious Grape for their unwavering support of the Foundation! There will also be nonalcoholic beverages available.

This is our 10th year hosting this event, and it promises to be exciting and different! We are introducing new software so that you can bid on your favorite items directly from your phone or tablet. No more hovering over a bid sheet, calculating the right bid increment, or fighting for a pen. Using this software, you can pursue your favorite items with discretion and finesse.

Don't have a smartphone? No problem. We will have bidding stations throughout the room. Petrified by new technology? Fear not. We will have plenty of folks on hand to help you use the program and emerge the successful bidder.

Wondering what you might want to bid on? Many of the hotly contested items from prior years are back, including Redskins tickets, an in-home meal catered by Federal City Caterers, a one-week stay in Bethany Beach, an executive coaching session, and fabulous themed baskets prepared by the Foundation's Board members.

If you do not see anything you like or you get outbid, consider making a donation directly to the **Founders Fellowship**. Each year, we award a stipend to an area law student to work with a local legal services provider on a project to benefit women and girls in our community. The Founders Fellowship rotates to a different school each year, and this year a student at the **American University Washington College of Law** will receive a \$7,500 fellowship.

Founders Fellowship experiences have been valuable to our past recipients. Margot Dankner, the recipient of the **2011 Fellowship**, when she was a third year law student at Georgetown University Law Center, said of her summer internship with the Tahirih Justice Center: "The Women's Bar Association Foundation Founder's Fellowship not only enabled me to do challenging, interesting, and satisfying work with a population that I am very passionate about,

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but it also helped me to confirm that this is the work I want to do as an attorney.”

There are many women and girls in our community who are struggling, who need access to the legal system to fight discrimination, to preserve custody of their children, or to escape domestic violence or human trafficking. As a client of one 2012 WBAF grantee said of the legal assistance she received, “It makes it a fairer fight for the future.”

We recognize that you support many causes, but what makes the WBAF different is that the assistance goes **directly to nonprofits** providing legal services to improve the lives of women and girls right here in our community. **Please donate**, and help give local women and girls a fairer fight in the future.

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WBAF 2012-2013 Donors

Many thanks to our supporters! The following donors made a gift the WBA Foundation between December 1, 2012 and January 31, 2013. These gifts will be used to support nonprofits that serve the legal and related needs of women and girls in the DC Metropolitan community. For a list of all fiscal year donors and recognition of giving levels, visit www.wbadcfoundation.org.

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Women's History Month: A Luncheon with Judge Wald

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Judge Patricia McGowan Wald

During this luncheon, former WBA past president [Lorelie S. Masters](#) will interview Judge Wald, who has been an extraordinary role model for a generation of lawyers. When she served as a clerk for Judge Jerome Frank of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, she was the only woman to clerk on that Circuit that year. She later worked at Arnold & Porter LLP, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Criminal Justice, the District's Neighborhood Legal Services Program, the Center for Law and Social Policy, and the Mental Health Law Project, among others. She served in the Carter Administration as an Assistant Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice before being appointed in 1979 as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, where she served as chief judge from 1986 until 1991. After 20 years on the federal bench, Judge Wald accepted an appointment to serve as a judge for the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague and served a two-year term on the court charged

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with hearing cases for the former Yugoslavia. In 2004, President George W. Bush appointed her to the President's Commission on Intelligence Capabilities of the U.S. Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, an independent commission charged with evaluating the intelligence and policy decisions that led to the 2003 Iraq invasion. In 2012, Judge Wald resigned her Presidential appointment as a member of the Council of the Administrative Conference of the U.S. due to Senate confirmation of her appointment by President Obama as a member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

You can [register now](#) for "A Conversation with The Honorable Patricia Wald," which will be held Thursday, March 14, from noon to 2:00 PM. [Jenner & Block LLP](#) is the sole sponsor of this buffet luncheon, and it will be held at its offices at 1099 New York Avenue NW, in Suite 900, Washington, DC.

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Speed Mentoring Reception

By Roya Vasseghi, Law Clerk, Doumar Martin PLLC; Co-chair, Solo & Small Practice Forum

Every new attorney needs a mentor, right? It even seems that these days, multiple mentors are required. So where does one find a mentor? The WBA's Speed Mentoring Reception, presented by the Mentoring Committee, was a great place to start. The event was held at BakerHostetler's offices on December 13, 2012. There were over 20 mentors participating, representing the private sector, academia, and the government, including a judge from the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. There were almost 50 mentees in attendance; each

mentee had the opportunity to sit with a potential mentor for three minutes before moving on to the next mentor. The mentee could talk about herself, ask questions of her potential mentor, or a combination of both.

The reception gave newer attorneys an opportunity to meet more senior attorneys with diverse backgrounds and experiences to share. The event concluded with a networking reception where mentees and mentors had a chance to speak more freely. The event was a great way for new attorneys to meet a potential mentor and to get to know the women of the WBA.

If you missed the December event, not to worry—the Mentoring Committee will host this event again in the fall.

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Insurance Law Forum Hosts Happy Hour

By Rachel Alexander, Associate, Wiley Rein LLP; Co-Chair, Insurance Law Forum



l-r: Alexis Joachim (Jackson & Campbell, PC); Jennifer Holgado (PACE Claims Services); S. Knell Bumbalo (Jackson & Campbell, PC)



Suzan Charlton (Covington & Burling, LLP) and Dena Feldman (Attorney-Mediator)

The Insurance Law Forum kicked off 2013 with a networking happy hour (or two) at Fujimar Lounge on January 31. The gathering included representatives from multiple areas of insurance law including coverage, mediation, and claims administration. In setting the forum's 2013 agenda, the co-chairs determined that continuing to meet and network with others throughout the industry was a priority. Stay tuned for more happy hour events from the Insurance Law Forum!

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Member Spotlight:

Compiled by Anika Gzifa

A partner at Steptoe & Johnson LLP, **Brigida Benitez** is frequently called upon by clients to represent them in high stakes dispute resolution, including international litigation, arbitration, and internal investigations. Her legal practice spans the globe and has even led her to cases before the United States Supreme Court.

Ms. Benitez began her legal career in 1993, as an associate at Ropes & Gray LLP in Boston. In 1994, she joined Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering (now WilmerHale). By January 2001, she was promoted to partner — the first Latina to make partner at WilmerHale. She was part of WilmerHale's team representing the University of Michigan in lawsuits that challenged the constitutionality of its admissions procedures. The case ultimately made it to the Supreme Court, where Ms. Benitez second-chaired the oral argument. The Supreme Court upheld the University's right to consider race and ethnicity in admissions procedures in order to achieve a diverse student body.

Ms. Benitez left WilmerHale in 2010 to lead the anti-corruption agenda at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), where she headed the Office of Institutional Integrity. Ms. Benitez, who is fluent in Spanish, spearheaded compliance initiatives and oversaw investigations of fraud and corruption throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ms. Benitez earned her undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of Florida, and her law degree from Boston College Law School, where she was editor-in-chief of the *Boston College Law Review*.

An avid runner, Ms. Benitez has completed marathons and other races on both coasts — Washington, DC and San Francisco — as well as internationally, such as in Lima, Peru. She makes time to mentor students as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center, where she teaches a course on international business litigation.

Why did you join the Women's Bar Association?

While I did not fully recognize it at the time, I joined the WBA out of a sense of "belonging." I joined the WBA many years ago, when I was still an associate. I was attracted to the WBA because I was impressed by WBA events — the quality of programs, the speakers, and the topics. I quickly found interesting and wonderful people who have helped shape my path in the legal profession. It is an amazing organization.

What committees/forums have you been involved in?

I was privileged to serve on the WBA board for three years, where I helped lead the association along with an impressive group of women. I had previously served as co-chair of the Litigation Forum, and I have been involved in the Initiative on Advancement and Retention of Women in the Profession since its inception. I also recently co-chaired the dinner



Brigida Benitez

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for female law firm partners.

What benefits do you get from being part of the WBA?

The WBA has been an important part of my professional development. I have been able to work on issues that are important to me, such as improving the retention of women lawyers in the profession. I am also fortunate that I have developed great friendships with some amazing and talented women I met through the WBA over the years.

Do you have a mentor or hero? What was his or her impact on your professional and/or personal life?

I have been fortunate to have had a number of mentors during my career, individuals who believed in me and gave me invaluable opportunities, including members of the WBA. I could not have accomplished what I have done alone. One great mentor was John Payton, a dear friend who sadly passed away last year. I worked with him for many years, including for six years on the University of Michigan cases. When I started at WilmerHale, John was randomly assigned as my mentor and we connected right away. I deeply admired and respected him. Mentoring takes many forms — formal and informal — and mentors can vary greatly, from supervisors to peers to individuals beyond your workplace. Lisa Ewart and Stephanie Wood, while younger than me, have helped guide me through difficult decisions. It is critical to seek out a diverse group of mentors to help guide you in your career.

What words of advice do you have for women new to the profession?

The legal profession can be extremely rewarding and I have loved being a lawyer. Your career can take many paths and I encourage young lawyers to take control of their careers and seek out opportunities to work with people who can be good mentors and teachers and to work on the types of cases and issues that interest them. It is important to be proactive and shape your career. I also have found it very rewarding to engage in public service and to become involved with bar associations and community organizations, especially those organizations dedicated to issues about which I am passionate. I encourage young lawyers to get involved, which will give them opportunities to network, to get to know different people, and to learn about different aspects of the legal profession. This not only contributes to your professional development, but it leads to a rich and fulfilling experience overall.

What other organizations are you involved in?

I have been involved with a number of organizations over the years, many of which are focused on diversity in the legal profession and providing legal services to those in need. I am also active with organizations that are significant to my practice. I currently serve on the Board of Governors of the DC Bar, as well as on the Board of Directors of the Hispanic National Bar Foundation and LatinoJustice PRLDEF. I have served as President of the Hispanic Bar Association of DC and I am currently active with the ABA International Business Law Committee in the Business Law Section.

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Three WBA members were elected to the Board of the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (**HBA-DC**) at its Annual Meeting and Elections in January. Maria Mendoza, co-chair of the WBA Amicus Committee, was elected Vice President for Internal Affairs. Holli Feichko, co-chair of the Environmental Law Forum, and Iris Gonzalez were elected as Board members.

HBA-DC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, voluntary legal association representing the interests of Hispanic attorneys, judges, law professors, law students, and legal professionals within the greater Washington, DC area. Its mission is promoting the professional development of Hispanic lawyers and law students; promoting equal justice and opportunities for all Hispanics; and promoting the appointment of Hispanics to leadership positions in Federal, state, and local governments, in the judiciary, and in other leadership positions.

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Castellini Elected to ABF Fellows

Kerri Castellini, of Feeney & Kuwamura, P.A. was elected to the Fellows of the American Bar Foundation. Ms. Castellini currently serves as the WBA Board Secretary. The Fellows of the American Bar Foundation is an honorary organization of lawyers, judges, and legal scholars whose public and private careers have demonstrated outstanding dedication to the welfare of their communities and to the highest principles of the legal profession. The Fellows support the research of the ABF through their annual contributions and sponsor programming of direct relevance to leaders of the legal profession.



Kerri Castellini

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Edwards Elected to ELI Board and Published by ABA

Amy L. Edwards, a Partner at Holland & Knight, was recently elected to a second term on the **Environmental Law Institute's** (ELI) Board of Directors. ELI fosters innovative, just, and practical law and policy solutions to enable leaders across borders and sectors to make environmental, economic, and social progress.

In addition, in June 2012, the American Bar Association published the second edition of Ms. Edwards' "**Implementing Institutional Controls on Brownfields and Other Contaminated Sites.**"

The Roundtree Residences

The Roundtree Residences have been named in honor of Dovey Johnson Roundtree, the WBA's first African American member, and the recipient of the 2011 Janet Reno Torchbearer Award.

The Roundtree Residences is a 91-unit senior housing development in southeast Washington, DC. The residences are owned in partnership with Vision of Victory CDC (VOV), which is a part of Allen Chapel AME Church. Among her many accomplishments and contributions, Ms. Roundtree was one of the first women to receive full ministerial status in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The WBA will be represented by current and past leaders at the ribbon cutting on March 10.

Tucker Honored by NCBP

Marna Tucker, a Senior Partner at Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell LLP, received the National Conference of Bar Presidents Fellows Award at the ABA Mid-Year Meeting in February. Ms. Tucker is a past WBA Star of the Bar and was Woman Lawyer of the Year in 1985.

The Fellows Award honors an outstanding past president of a bar association who has demonstrated a lifetime of achievement or exceptional service to lawyers or the public.



Marna Tucker (holding crystal bowl), surrounded by fellow DC leaders at the NCBP awards luncheon

Welcome New Members

Janice Bashford
Kanya Bennett
Mandisa R. Berry
Aisha Bond
Gina Brewer
Rachel Browder
Jennifer A. Butler
Margaret M. Cassidy
Susan Cassidy
Indra Chalk

Lori Kalani
Sarah L. Knapp
Charlotte A. Kuenen
Laura Laemmle-Weidenfeld
Rebecca LeGrand
Debora Lyon
The Honorable Kathleen Maria MacPherson
Aimee Meacham
Laura Morris
Julia H. Perkins

Emily S. Costin
Michele Craythorn
Danielle M. Diaz
The Honorable Catharine Easterly
Nkechi Ezekwe
The Honorable S. Pamela Gray
The Honorable Andrea Harnett
The Honorable Leroy Harriott
Veronica Harsley-Dean
Shannon Hayes
Tanikia R. Head
Ilisa Horowitz Heyman
Ashley James

Kasia M. Preneta
Courtney M. Rusin
Sydney Smith
Jenifer Stach
Kerry B. Verdi
Mary Katherine Vigness
Alison Villarivera
Abby Weinstock
Kristin Wells
Jennifer Whitsitt
Abigail Wolf
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President's Column



By Laura Possessky, WBA President

Pizza v. Ice Cream, or The Case for Leadership Parity

During a recent field trip to the [National Portrait Gallery](#) with my daughter's class, the docent led us to a bronze bust of Susan B. Anthony. She asked the class, "How many of you want ice cream? And how many of you want pizza?"

Most of the girls voted for ice cream and most of the boys voted for pizza. After tallying the votes, the docent announced, "Since only the boys can vote, pizza wins!"

The girls shifted uncomfortably, hesitating to speak out about the great injustice. As the docent told the class about the accomplishments of Susan B. Anthony and the other women of the suffragist movement represented in the

gallery, I was impressed by the dramatic shift in societal and legal perspectives on women in just 100 years.

Although women have come a long way in closing the gap on equality in less than a century, news reports in the early part of 2013 have underscored the depth of ongoing disparities. Already this year, pundits have debated vehemently over [women in combat](#), while a photograph of the [President's male advisory team](#) (and Valerie Jarrett's leg) in the *New York Times* created a stream of public commentary about the dearth of women in key cabinet positions. (Did this photo conjure up Oscar night 2012 for anyone else? [Angelina](#), darling, eat your heart out.)

Women attorneys have achieved quantifiable parity, securing the same education as our male counterparts and constituting roughly half of all law school graduates, for at least the past 20 years; yet we remain underrepresented in positions of authority and leadership in the legal profession. Many theories have been advanced to explain the gender gap: take, for instance, Professor [Joan C. Williams' research](#) on implicit bias, the [ForbesWoman survey](#) documenting the phenomenon of "opting out," or [Sheryl Sandburg's views](#) on the "ambition gap" (and her advice in the book, *Lean In* to be released March 11, 2013). While these explanations, and others, are important in identifying possible causes for the disparity, we must identify solutions to close it.

The Women's Bar Association has a long track record in developing solutions to gender disparity in the law and our work continues. The members of our organization work tirelessly to build - and to honor - models of success for women in the profession. Recent programs, like the [Supreme Court swearing-in ceremony](#) on January 22 and the annual Partners Dinner, are just a few of the WBA's initiatives dedicated to supporting women in their pursuit of professional advancement. This spring, the leaders of the several WBA committees and forums are working together to present a series of programs dedicated to identifying professional development tools and strategies for the [advancement and retention of women in the profession](#). The series kicked off with the Career Development Committee's program, **You 2.0**, on February 19. We will showcase our efforts in a joint committee symposium on achieving success, **Initiative 2.0: Creating Our Own Paths**, at [George Washington University Law School](#) on April 9.

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While we may argue about the why and the how, there is no debate: we can have our ice cream, and eat it, too.

Want to comment? Join me on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or email me at president@wbadc.org.

Laura Possessky
2012-2013 President

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