



WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION
of the District of Columbia

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 2021 | 5:30 PM

WBA TOWN HALL



WBA TOWN HALL

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Welcome Remarks, Recognition of Sponsors, Overview of Evening

Sadina Montani, WBA President

Committee Highlight

Young Lawyers Committee

Committee Highlight

Diversity Committee

State of the Association

Sadina Montani, WBA President

State of the WBA Foundation

WBA Foundation Grantee Video

Rachel Hardwick, WBA Foundation President

Announcement of Incoming Board

Passing of the Gavel

Sadina Montani, WBA President; Bridget Bailey Lipscomb, WBA President-Elect

Incoming President Remarks

Bridget Bailey Lipscomb, WBA President-Elect

Town Hall Concurrent Discussion Sessions

Membership: Sadina Montani, WBA President; Bridget Bailey Lipscomb, WBA President-Elect

Advocacy: Jill Dash, WBA 2019-2020 President; Latosha Ellis, WBA Secretary; Mary Blatch, WBA Treasurer-Elect

Networking Breakouts

Closing Remarks

Sadina Montani, WBA President

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THE WBA MISSION

Founded in 1917, the Women's Bar Association is one of the oldest and largest voluntary bar associations in metropolitan Washington, DC. Today, as in 1917, we continue to pursue our mission, which is as follows:

Maintaining the honor and integrity of the profession; promoting the administration of justice; advancing and protecting the interests of women lawyers; promoting their mutual improvement; and encouraging a spirit of friendship among our members.



HISTORY

The WBA was founded in 1917 by 31 visionary women lawyers at a time when women largely could not own property, could not vote, could not serve on juries, and could not join the local bar association. WBA Founders Ellen Spencer Mussey and Emma M. Gillett also established the Washington College of Law (now part of American University) after the law school of Columbia College refused to educate women as lawyers because they “did not have the mentality for law.” The Washington College of Law was the first law school in the world founded by women.

On May 17, 1917, Mussey and Gillett convened the group of 31 founding members to create the “Women’s Bar Association of the District of Columbia.”

For more information on the WBA and its history, visit wbadc.org/about/wba-history.



Emma M. Gillett



Ellen Spencer Mussey

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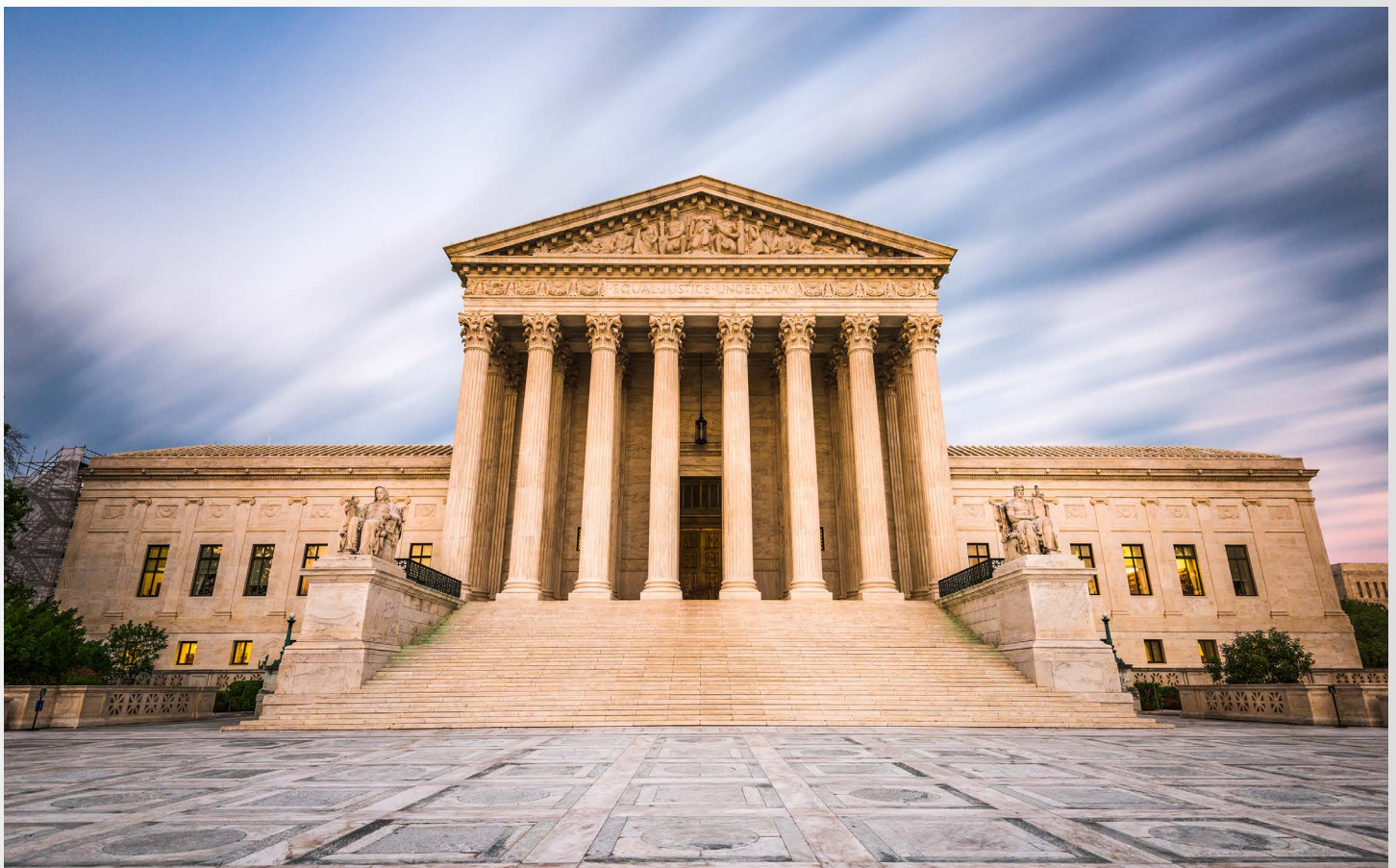
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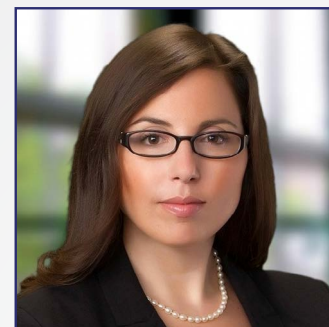
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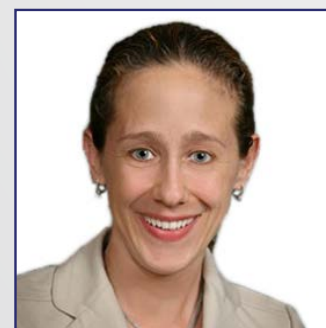
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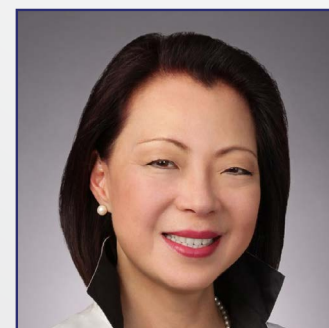
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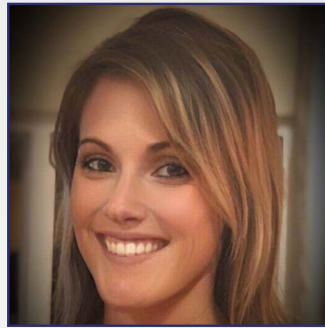


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OUR WORK, 2020-2021

20+ Years of Expertise Committee

Co-Chairs: Nancy Kuhn, Lorna MacLeod, Elizabeth Varner

In December 2020, the 20+ Experts Committee co-sponsored, with In-House Counsel Forum and the Career Development and Mentoring Committee, a Zoom discussion entitled "Receiving Feedback: Are You Ready for your Annual Performance Review?" Attendees received great advice regarding how to handle positive, constructive, and negative comments in annual reviews and in other settings. This spring, the committee organized and planned to host a Zoom discussion on Civility, which unfortunately has been postponed until next fall. The committee hopes it will be able to host this program, focused on civility in the workplace, as an in-person event.

The 20+ Years of Expertise Committee hopes to organize one or two outdoor happy hours this summer to re-engage and network with others and celebrate the ability to safely gather in-person once again.

Amicus Committee

Co-Chairs: Upnit Bhatti, E. Brantley Webb

During the 2020-2021 Bar year, the Amicus Committee reviewed several amicus briefs, recommending that the Board sign on to those that raised issues of great importance to the WBA, including: (i) ensuring that sexual harassment and abuse survivors are not silenced and predators are exposed; (ii) that basic non-discriminatory provisions and laws enacted by states remain intact and are not misconstrued; (iii) that folks who face discrimination in the health care system by powerful state actors are vindicated; (iv) that employers do not abuse employee designations and titles to avoid civil rights claims; (v) that police officers' gender-biased responses are exposed; and (vi) that the District of Columbia secures the right to full voting representation in Congress. These briefs were filed in state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, and raised arguments that promoted the advancement and protection of the rights of women and minorities. We are proud and always enthusiastic to participate in any efforts that advance these goals.

Career Development and Mentoring Committee

Co-Chairs: Serine Consolino, Miranda Hallett, Janine Herring, Bridget Richardson, Stephanie Schlatter, Michelle Spatz

During the 2020-2021 bar year, the Career Development and Mentorship Committee planned several meetings alone or in collaboration with other WBA committees. In the fall, the committee aided in the planning and presentation of "Countering the Potential Regressive Effects of the Pandemic on Women Lawyers" and the October symposium session, "Breaking In: Advocating for Yourself Early in Your Career." In the winter, we co-sponsored "Receiving Feedback: Are You Ready for your Annual Performance Review?" In spring 2021, the committee held a mentoring program, matching 16 mentor/mentee pairs. The mentoring program will be supplemented with the "Best Practices in Mentoring" panel before the end of this bar year.

This bar year presented some challenges but also allowed us to make meaningful connections. We were able to skip the commute and easily join meetings and events from our computers. Some of us suffered from video conferencing fatigue or were just mentally and physically exhausted by the suffering, hardships, and injustices we witnessed. Zoom breakout sessions allowed for networking, and sharing of hardships and tips to succeed at work and at home during a pandemic. Although we could not interact in person, Zoom and other video meeting platforms made for a fairly seamless transition to virtual mentoring. Building a mentoring relationship was a rewarding way to find connection with others in the profession during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Communications & Technology Law Forum

Co-Chair: Jessica Almond

The Communications & Technology Law Forum typically hosts the WBA's showcase Holiday Tea every December. Because of the pandemic, this event did not move forward. However, the forum partnered with a woman-owned business, Teatism, to offer holiday tea packages in lieu of the traditional tea event. The WBA supported a local woman-owned business, raised funds during a challenging year, and is optimistic our traditions will be restarting soon!

Diversity Committee

Co-Chairs: Rebeka Bautista, Upnit Bhatti, Ann Marie Duffy, Lesa Lawrence, Kate Neville, April Renee Randall, Aaron Szot, Avani Patel

The 2020-2021 bar year was eventful, to say the least. The nation was plagued by a global pandemic, which took the lives of many people, young and old. There was a monumental presidential election, which tested the limits of the country's and states' election laws. And we cannot forget the tragic murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, as well as the senseless racial attacks against Asians and Asian Americans.

Mobilized by WBA president Sadina Montani's theme for this bar year, "The Importance of Allies and Friends," and building upon the WBA's issue statement, "The WBA Condemns Systemic Racism: A Call to Action," the Diversity Committee sought to plan programs and activities that provided the WBA and the community at large with an opportunity to have courageous conversations about systemic racism, implied bias, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Here are a just a few highlights of what the Diversity Committee has accomplished this bar year:

- We co-sponsored "Do Not Silence My Voice! The Fight Against Voter Suppression," presented by the Government Attorneys Forum, which featured professor Gilda Daniels.
 - We helped develop and moderate a session at the fall Women and Leadership Symposium: "Passing It On: How to Be an Ally and Mentor in Senior Management."
 - We co-sponsored and developed a program with the Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association (GWAC) and the Washington Council of Lawyers, convening a panel of experts to look at "DEI Policies Across Businesses and Law Firms."
 - We hosted two book clubs, selecting books from the WBA's Anti-Racist Toolkit.
 - We also served as liaisons for other WBA committees and forums to ensure that the teams were considering diversity and inclusion every step of the way.
-

Employment Law Forum

Co-Chairs: Kelle Boulais Kruse, Aleksandra Rybicki

While 2020-21 was a challenging program year, the Employment Law Forum enjoyed the opportunity to charge ahead in unexpected ways and take advantage of the virtual environment. The Stars of the Bar event was unique and inspiring, offering an opportunity to network with colleagues that had been lacking during the pandemic. The Employment Law Forum looks forward to concluding the year with our program "Back to Work: Vaccinations, Vulnerable Employees, and Safe Workspaces," at which a panel of professionals will share their experience on considerations for employers as employees return to the workplace.

Energy and Environmental Law Forum

Co-Chairs: Marcia Stanford, Laura Yaffe

Ever adaptable and flexible, the committed folks in the Energy and Environmental Forum, with help from its allies and supporters, was able to pivot on its heels during this challenging year to deliver varied formats and timely education and support to engage those with interests in the energy and environmental space.

We began our year by taking a planned discussion with several top energy career coaches and creating a virtual “Business Hour” in which expert clean energy coaches shared their tips about entering or transitioning into this career area. We followed up on this act by inviting a star team of experts and entrepreneurs in renewable energy to discuss how they forged their careers, overcame barriers, and built partnerships as they pursued careers in this burgeoning field. They were able to share invaluable insights with those pursuing career interests in this area. Finally, we shook things up a bit by developing a salon-style discussion format for participants to engage in dynamic and lively discussions about upcoming trends and directions in the environmental and energy policy landscape.

We were not about to let the challenges of limited in-person social gatherings get in our way. We coordinated our efforts with the DC Energy and Environmental Associations to organize a wonderful and socially distant outdoor park clean-up event with the Anacostia Watershed Society for Earth Day this spring. Things are looking sunny, and we look forward to keeping this momentum going.

Executive and Judicial Endorsements Committee

Co-Chairs: Janine Herring, Mia Olsen, Caroline Ostro, Stephanie Schlatter

The Executive and Judicial Endorsements Committee and the Women in Public Service/Politics Committee hosted a virtual Presidential Appointments Panel in September 2020. The panel is one that the WBA typically holds each Presidential election year and featured bipartisan former political appointees, who collectively served in four administrations, and a representative of President Biden’s campaign. (A representative of former President Trump’s campaign was not able to attend.) The panelists provided important insight into the political appointments process and thoughtful advice for our audience.

The committee also reviewed its Executive Endorsements guidelines and accepted requests for endorsement for applicants seeking appointments to the Biden administration. The committee vetted 11 requests for endorsement, most of them in the last six months of the bar year. We received a wide range of requests for judicial endorsements, including those for appointment to local and federal DC courts, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. We also received requests for executive branch endorsements for appointments in the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and for the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. Notably, the WBA Board of Directors voted to adopt our recommendation to endorse the Honorable Anita M. Josey-Herring, a longtime WBA member, in her successful bid to become the Chief Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

In the spring of 2021, due to the volume of requests, the committee needed additional help in vetting requests for endorsement, and our fellow WBA co-chairs pitched in to help without hesitation. We are grateful for the dedication and comradery of our WBA leadership and members in an unusual year.

Government Attorneys Forum

Co-Chairs: Linda Goldwyn, April Renee Randall, Michelle Spatz

The 2020-2021 bar year was nothing short of memorable. The COVID-19 pandemic kept people indoors and closed schools. The presidential election kept us tuned in to the news outlets 24/7.

(continued on next page...)

Shocked by the insurgence that occurred on Congress, angered by the racial injustice and hate crimes levied against African Americans and Asian Americans, the nation mobilized. Against this backdrop, the Government Attorneys Forum forged ahead.

The forum hosted several pivotal programs, reflecting some of the national issues raised during this bar year and addressing WBA members' professional interests. At the beginning of the bar year, we hosted a speed networking event with Lourdes Olvera-Marshall, where attendees learned tips for virtual and in-person networking. In the fall, and prior to the election, they hosted a program featuring University of Baltimore School of Law professor Gilda Daniels, entitled, "Don't Silence My Voice! The Fight Against Voter Suppression," where people learned about the historical and current practices of voter suppression and suggestions on how to push back against these efforts. In the spring, we relaunched the "Acing the Application" program, featuring diverse panelists from federal government agencies and Capitol Hill. The forum wrapped up the bar year with a program featuring NYU Law School professor Rachel Barkow, University of St. Thomas School of Law professor Mark Osler, and Politico journalist Anita Kumar, entitled "Justice and Mercy: The Presidential Pardon and Clemency Process," where attendees learned about the presidential pardon power process, how it works and has worked, and how it can be improved. Additionally, one of the forum co-chairs, Michelle Spatz, served as a panelist for the WBA Spring Career Series program, "Making a Firm Exit – Transitioning to Government, In-house or Non-Profit Employment," and was able to provide attendees tips and insight on transitioning from the private sector to a government position.

Despite an otherwise challenging year, the Government Attorneys Forum pressed on and continued to provide riveting and professionally useful programming. Through our programming and the development of our programming, we hope we helped to create and strengthen a sense of community for our current and future WBA members during this turbulent year.

Immigration Law Forum

Co-Chairs: Leticia Corona, Pauline Schwartz

On March 24, 2021, the Immigration Law Forum was proud to co-sponsor an immigration law training and pro bono opportunity with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). This well-attended remote event resulted in a number of gracious offers to take on pro bono work with SPLC mentorship to represent vulnerable, recent immigrants. Through the WBA's mentoring program, since June 2020, the Immigration Law Forum has mentored two students from American University Washington College of Law, both of whom are immigration lawyers in training.

This past year has been a historic time of change within the field of immigration law. It has presented challenges such as the travel bans and tracking executive actions under the previous and current administrations. As this time of unprecedented change comes to a close, we look forward to new programs reflecting those changes in the new year.

In-House Counsel Forum

Co-Chairs: Lisa Brown, Meg Inomata

Our committee seeks to engage lawyers working in-house at all different types of institutions – nonprofits, corporations, think tanks, agencies, and many more. In-house work can be fast-paced and isolating, and we hope to build a community where we can discuss unique challenges and solutions, share best practices, and support each other. In December, our committee co-chair moderated a program on receiving constructive feedback, an important skill for in-house counsel as well as other lawyers that takes time and effort to develop. We also provided an in-house counsel perspective during the session planning for the spring Career Series. It's been a challenging year to engage and network and we look forward to hearing from our in-house colleagues about what would best support them in the coming months.

Litigation Forum

Co-Chairs: Ann Marie Duffy, Ana Jara, Chris Macchiaroli

The Covid pandemic did not stop the Litigation Forum from sponsoring, and cosponsoring, multiple events. Highlights include a panel discussion of three dynamic litigators who provided tips, cautionary tales, and best practices on how to succeed at every stage of your litigation career and a panel discussion of best practices in navigating the pitfalls and trenches of high stakes document reviews. Both of these panels were well attended, educational, and highlighted the expertise of certain of our members.

The WBA experience this past year was a crash course on learning to think outside of the box when common norms are turned upside down by an unprecedented pandemic, while at the same time, reminding us of the importance of offering events that can reach the various work and life experiences of our diverse and unique members.

Non-Profit Organizations Practice Forum

Co-Chairs: Taylor Harrison, Betsy Harned, Catherine Hedgeman, Anais Taboas

The Non-Profit Organizations Practice Forum had a quiet pandemic year. We enjoyed meeting new members at the annual Stars of the Bar program and look forward to more opportunities to connect in the new bar year.
Social Media Committee

Co-Chairs: Gaffar Chowdhury, Lindsey Collins, Sameena Kluck

With the help of Sameena Kluck in her new role as 'social media amplifier,' the Social Media Committee been working to increase the WBA's exposure on social media. We will be starting a new initiative to highlight a member every month and share more content around membership benefits and relevant third-party articles. Volunteers have been summarizing our virtual events in support of our newly launched Raising the Bar Blog, part of wbadc.org.

Solo and Small Practice Forum

Co-Chairs: Pratibha Agarwal, Sarah Fink, Amy Norris, Amelia Schmidt

The Small and Small Practice Forum trudged on during the pandemic! We had some lovely meetings on Zoom together with WBA Board liaison Roya Vasseghi, including a happy hour. We also held a virtual event with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) that attracted over 50 people. Through that event, SPLC has placed nine pro bono cases. It was so fun to work with SPLC remotely during the pandemic! The networking opportunities with other co-chairs has also been a highlight in a virtual year. We are so appreciative to President Sadina Montani, Roya Vasseghi, and the entire board of WBA.

Stars of the Bar Committee

Co-Chairs: Jennifer Mammen, Jen Mika, Daria Neal

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, Stars of the Bar honored champions in the fight for women's voting rights throughout history. The WBA recognizes that women's suffrage was not fully realized when the 19th Amendment was passed. The voting rights of Black women were not protected until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but even now the promise of the Voting Rights Act has not been fully realized. And today, returning and reintegrating citizens and District residents, among others, still face challenges exercising the right to vote. For their tireless efforts in advancing suffrage and voting rights for all, the WBA honored the following Stars of the Bar: Belva Ann Lockwood, Congressman John Lewis, and Kristen Clarke. A video of the Stars of the Bar event can be viewed [here](#) and the program materials from the event can be viewed [here](#).

Women and Finance Committee

Co-Chairs: Charlotte Kuenen, Anna Ratner

The Women & Finance Committee put on three informative and thought-provoking events in the 2020-2021 bar year. In the fall, financial planner Alexandra Armstrong, CFP®, CRPC® and psychologist Mary Donahue, Ph.D. presented on retirement planning and how to prepare financially and psychologically for such a major life change, while highlighting tips and advice from their co-authored book, "Your Next Chapter – A Woman's Guide to a Successful Retirement." WBA past president Liz Medaglia moderated the panel.

A second event explored the causes of and solutions to the trends affecting minority women and their historical and institutional lack of access to capital for building wealth, with a panel of distinguished speakers: Joseph Vaughan, senior diversity and inclusion policy advisor at The U.S. House Financial Services Committee; Gerri Walsh, president of the FINRA Foundation; and Anna N'Jie-Konte, CFP®, founder of Dare to Dream Financial Planning.

Women & Finance topped off its year with a program on ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) investing, discussing how it has changed over the past decade, what sort of impact it really has, and what sort of investments are available in this space. Panelists included Daniel J. Welch, CFP®, CIMA, senior vice president, impact investing specialist at Morgan Stanley Global Wealth Management; Lenore Reiner, CFP®, CSRICTM, vice president, senior responsible investment strategy specialist, Calvert Research and Management | Eaton Vance; and Jennie Morawetz, partner, Kirkland & Ellis LLP; with Katie Fleiss, associate portfolio manager at Brown Advisory moderating.

We look forward to continuing to offer useful and pithy programs on personal financial growth and well-being for the WBA membership during the next bar year.

Women in Public Service/Politics Committee

Co-Chairs: Bayliss Fiddiman, Nancy Kuhn, Daria Neal

The Women in Public Service/Politics Committee adjusted to our remote Zoom format, and co-sponsored several events, including the Presidential Appointments Panel in October. That event is a highlight every four years, and the event in October 2020 was enthusiastically attended. The panel discussed the presidential appointments process and the types of positions that are available in a new administration. In addition, for June 2021, we are planning a panel discussion with local elected officials (women) regarding their experiences running for office and their experiences being in office. Representatives from non-profits that support women candidates will round out the panel.

Young Lawyers Committee

Co-Chairs: Ashley Bouchez, Emily Lagan, Chiara Resta

The Young Lawyers Committee enjoyed an exciting revamp this year. Guided by its commitment to fostering connections amongst the WBA's junior members, the committee hosted two events—a Zoom Listening Session/Happy Hour in August and Galentine's Day Game Night in February. The Committee was also an integral part of the October Women and Leadership Series, taking an active role in the planning and facilitation of the interactive session focused on advocating for yourself early in your career. Internally, the committee collaborated to support the WBA's recruitment efforts and its soon-to-be-launched career toolkit. The Young Lawyers Committee looks forward to continuing to support and engage junior lawyers in the upcoming bar year.

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