



WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION
of the District of Columbia

Stars of the Bar

D.C. BAR | SEPTEMBER 11, 2025 | 6-8 PM

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

Welcome and Remarks

Jennifer Mammen, Counsel, Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP; President, WBA

WBA Foundation

Mary Ellen Kleiman, President, WBA Foundation; Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel, Disability:IN

Mussey-Gillett Shining Star Award

Michelle Webster, Counsel, Thompson Hine LLP; Board Member, WBA

Presented by Mary Blatch, Immediate Past President, WBA;
Associate General Counsel, Global Regulatory and Data Privacy, CFA Institute

Stars of the Bar

Nancy Aliquo Long, Nonprofit Attorney; President, WBA (1996-1997),
President, WBA Foundation (2018-2020)

Presented by Consuela Pinto, Partner, PintoBrown PLLC; President, WBA (2020-2021)

Susan M.C. Kovarovics, Partner, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP; President, WBA (2015-2016)

Presented by Sonia Murphy, Partner, Gilbert LLP; President, WBA (2016-2017)

Honorable Deborah J. Israel, Associate Judge, Superior Court of the District of Columbia;
President, WBA (2001-2002) & President, WBA Foundation (1996-1998)

Presented by Jill Dash, Civil Rights Attorney; President, WBA (2019-2020)

Bridget Bailey Lipscomb, Chief, Camp Lejeune Unit, Environmental Torts Litigation, Torts Branch, Civil Division, U.S. Department of Justice; President, WBA (2021-2022) & President, WBA Foundation (2018-2020)

Presented by Kirsten Wilkerson, Director, Torts Branch, Civil Division,
U.S. Department of Justice; President, WBA Foundation (2022-2024))

Amy Bess, Shareholder, Vedder Price P.C.; President, WBA Foundation (2013-2015)

Presented by Sadina Montani, Partner, Crowell & Moring LLP; President, WBA (2020-2021)

Closing Remarks

Jennifer Mammen, President, WBA



WBA MISSION:

The Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia was founded in 1917 to maintain the honor and integrity of the profession; to promote the administration of justice; to advance and protect the interests of women lawyers; to promote their mutual improvement; and to encourage a spirit of friendship among members.

WBA VISION:

The WBA envisions a world in which all women lawyers are empowered to achieve personal and professional success and satisfaction, where all members are meaningfully connected, engaged, and mentored, and where diversity, equity, and inclusion are hallmarks of our programming and leadership. Through our efforts, we will enhance our advocacy voice and community service to improve the legal profession and our society as a whole, and promote the rule of law.

THE WBA:

- Organizes substantive legal, educational, and personal enrichment (particularly for women lawyers) programs and provides significant opportunities for networking
- Promotes its members as leaders of the legal community and supports candidates to the federal and local bench and high-level executive positions through executive and judicial endorsements
- Publishes a bi-monthly newsletter on upcoming events and announcements, spotlights members' accomplishments, and highlights current issues and trends of interests to women lawyers via social media and website blogs
- Provides a powerful network that will yield lasting friendships and valuable professional contacts
- Engages in and promotes community service activities
- Supports the WBA Foundation, which leverages the generosity of lawyers and friends to support nonprofits that serve the legal and related needs of women and girls in the DC metropolitan community



STARS OF THE BAR

Each year, the WBA selects star-quality honorees to recognize at this event, which also kicks off our program year. This year, in support of our 2025-2026 bar year theme, "Leading Together," we are recognizing past WBA leaders for their mentorship and support as they provided meaningful connections and opportunities for leadership for other WBA members. Selected for their history of service and leadership to the WBA and the WBA Foundation, we asked our honorees a series of questions, asking them to share leadership insight and advice. Their answers and insights can be found [here](#).

BRIDGET BAILEY LIPSCOMB

Chief, Camp Lejeune Unit, Environmental Torts Litigation, Torts Branch, Civil Division, U.S. Department of Justice; WBA President, 2021-2022; WBA Foundation President, 2018-2020



Bridget Bailey Lipscomb is the Chief of the Department of Justice, Civil Division, Torts Branch, Camp Lejeune Unit. She supervises teams of attorneys that litigate the multi-trillion-dollar scientific cases filed pursuant to the Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022.

Prior to being selected as Chief of the Camp Lejeune Unit, Ms. Lipscomb was an Assistant Director in the Department of Justice, Civil Division, Environmental Torts Section, where she supervised teams litigating multi-billion dollar scientific cases that presented complicated legal issues, which typically involved historical records and discovery databases that were often multiple millions of pages of documents.

Before serving as a Civil Division Assistant Director, she was a Senior Trial Counsel in the Department of Justice, Civil Division, Torts Branch, Federal Tort Claims Act ("FTCA") Office. There, she commonly served as lead counsel defending the United States in complex tort litigation, including medical malpractice, law enforcement, and maintenance of federal lands, and provided guidance to Assistant United States Attorneys on complicated FTCA matters.

Before joining the Department of Justice, Ms. Lipscomb served as Legislative Counsel for United States Senator Lamar Alexander from Tennessee, where among other duties, she advised on all legal issues. Prior to working in the United States Senate, Ms. Lipscomb was a Partner at Lewis, King, Krieg & Waldrop, P.C. (currently Lewis Thomason), where she successfully tried primarily civil lawsuits in federal and state courts in various areas of the law.

Ms. Lipscomb was the first African-American partner in a major law firm in Knoxville, Tennessee. Among other honors in the last few years, Ms. Lipscomb received the 2024 United States Department of Justice Civil Division Training and Professional Development Award, 2023 Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award, 2023 United States Department of Justice Civil Division Stuart E. Schiffer Memorial Award, 2023 United States Department of Justice Civil Division Perseverance Award (Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022), 2023 Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division, National Bar Association Charlotte E. Ray Award, 2022 Department of Justice Association of Black Attorneys Member Spotlight Recognition, 2022 United States Department of Justice Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award, 2022 American Bar Foundation December 2022 Fellows Spotlight Recognition, 2022 Bar Association of the District of Columbia Annice Wagner Pioneer Award (150th Anniversary Gala), and the 2022 National Bar Association Women Lawyers Division Outstanding Woman Lawyer In Public Service Award (50th Anniversary)



AMY BESS

Shareholder, Regional Lead, Labor and Employment, Washington, DC Vedder Price PC;
WBA Foundation President, 2013-2014



Amy L. Bess is the immediate past Chair of the Labor and Employment practice area at Vedder Price and currently serves as Chair of the group's D.C. practice. She also recently completed a three-year term of service on the firm's Board of Directors. Ms. Bess currently serves as the managing shareholder for the firm's D.C. office.

Her employment litigation experience includes the representation of employers before U.S. state and federal courts and administrative agencies, defending against claims of race, sex, disability and age discrimination; sexual harassment; whistleblower retaliation; restrictive-covenant disputes; wrongful termination; and wage and hour violations.

She regularly counsels clients in all of these areas, drafts and negotiates employment and severance agreements, conducts on-site workplace investigations, presents training seminars and speaks to employer groups on avoiding workplace problems. Ms. Bess is an author and frequent speaker on a variety of employment topics, most notably on the impact of the #MeToo movement and anti-harassment laws and best practices that organizations should undertake to prevent and resolve harassment concerns, as well as the wide variety of workplace legal challenges presented by the global pandemic.

In 2024 and 2025, *The Legal 500 United States* recommended Ms. Bess in the Labor and Employment: Workplace and Employment Counseling category. The *Legal 500 United States* guide recommended Ms. Bess in the Labor and Employment—Labor and Employment Litigation category in 2014. Since 2018, the *Legal 500 United States* guide recommended her in the Labor and Employment Disputes (including collective actions): Defense category, and in 2021 she was editorially recommended in the Employment Labor-Management Relations category. Ms. Bess also has been listed in *Washingtonian Magazine's* "Best Lawyers" edition (December 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2020 and 2022) in the category "Employment Defense." Ms. Bess was selected by *The Best Lawyers in America*[®] in the categories of "Employment Law – Management" and "Litigation – Labor and Employment" since 2023.

Ms. Bess is actively involved in a number of nonprofit and charitable organizations. For over fifteen years, she served as a board member and general counsel for Everybody Wins!, a charity in the District focusing on promoting children's literacy. She currently serves as a Board Member and Secretary of the District of Columbia Coalition Against Domestic Violence. In 2019, she was awarded the "Tom Nees Award for Exceptional Service" by Community of Hope. Ms. Bess was elected to serve two terms as a member of the District of Columbia Bar's Board of Governors from 2008 to 2014. She served on the D.C. Bar's Pro Bono Committee from 2012 to 2018, and as the Committee's Chair from 2015 to 2018. Most recently, she has been appointed to serve as a Commissioner on the District of Columbia Commission on Judicial Disabilities and Tenure.



SUSAN KOVAROVICS

Partner, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP; WBA President, 2015-2016



Susan is a leading international trade lawyer and strategic advisor to global clients in the private and public sectors. Her practice encompasses a wide range of trade matters, including providing counsel on export controls & economic sanctions, investigations and other trade and regulatory compliance issues.

Ms. Kovarovics focuses her practice on matters involving the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), sanctions administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and U.S. antiboycott laws, among other regulations.

She leverages this deep experience to play a vital role in making complex regulations accessible to organizations and helping clients evaluate risk related to export, sanctions and antiboycott compliance. Ms. Kovarovics routinely assists clients with all aspects of export license applications and trade regulatory processes. She also guides clients through commodity jurisdictions and commodity classification requests for exports and ruling requests related to import matters.

By working with her clients to minimize hurdles, Ms. Kovarovics is able to structure compliance programs that integrate into their businesses. This approach makes compliance with the policies routine and not a hindrance. She counsels her clients on day-to-day compliance, collaborates with them to implement best practices through internal audits and investigations and, when needed, strongly advocates on their behalf before government enforcement officials.

Ms. Kovarovics received her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center and her B.A. from Drew University, Madison, NJ. She has been recognized by *Chambers Global*, International Trade: Export Controls & Economic Sanctions, USA, 2021-2022, 2024-2025, *Chambers USA*, International Trade: Export Controls & Economic Sanctions, 2021-2025, *The Legal 500 US*, International Trade: Customs, Export Controls and Economic Sanctions, 2024-2025, *The Best Lawyers in America*, International Trade and Finance Law, 2019-2024 and *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2019-2024.



HONORABLE DEBORAH J. ISRAEL

Associate Judge, Superior Court of the District of Columbia; WBA President, 2001-2002 & WBA Foundation President, 1996-1998



Deborah Israel is a distinguished judge and legal leader whose career spans decades of service, advocacy, and excellence in both private practice and the judiciary.

Judge Israel has been a steadfast member of our legal community here in the District of Columbia for her entire legal career – and a member of the Women’s Bar Association since her very first year of practice.

Her early years in private practice quickly evolved into leadership roles at major law firms. She served as a partner at DLA Piper and later at Womble Bond Dickinson, where she led the Washington, DC office’s trial group. Her strategic acumen, and commitment to excellence earned her a seat on Womble’s Management Committee, where she served as Chief Operating Partner for the entire firm.

Throughout her career, Judge Israel has been recognized for her expertise in real estate, land use, and zoning litigation, and high stakes “Bet the Company” trial matters. Yet among her many accolades, she is most proud of her *pro bono* work in the landmark Black Creek Case. Her tenacious advocacy led to the protection of an historic Native American site in New Jersey, containing artifacts evidencing over 10,000 years of recurrent use and reflecting our collective human heritage. For this achievement, she and her team received the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Award – the first time the honor was bestowed upon attorneys.

In 2019, Judge Israel was appointed as an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Beyond the bench, Judge Israel is an advocate for the advancement of women in the law. She has served as President of the Women’s Bar Association and President of the WBA Foundation, as well as Co-Chair of the Community Projects Committee. Her leadership extended to the DC Bar Lawyers Assistance Committee, where she supported the well-being of our legal professionals.

Judge Israel’s career reflects commitment to excellence, leadership, and public service – helping shape a more inclusive and capable legal community.



NANCY ALIQUO LONG

Nonprofit Attorney; WBA President, 1996-1997; WBA Foundation President, 2018-2020



Nancy Aliquo Long is a seasoned nonprofit attorney with extensive experience advising mission-driven organizations on legal, governance and compliance matters. With deep commitment to the nonprofit sector Ms. Long has dedicated her career to empowering charitable organizations, foundations, and associations to navigate complex legal landscapes while advancing their public service mission.

Over the years Ms. Long has built a reputation for her strategic counsel in nonprofit formation, tax-exempt status, board governance and regulatory compliance. She works closely with nonprofit leaders to craft sustainable legal frameworks that support transparency, accountability and impact.

Ms. Long is a 35 year member of the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia, having served as its President 1996-1997, and its Executive Director from 2004-2007. Ms. Long also served as President of the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia Foundation from 2014-2016. Ms. Long supports the advancement of women in the legal profession and broader community. She regularly speaks in nonprofit law and governance, and is committed to mentoring the next generation of women attorneys dedicated to public service.



MUSSEY-GILLETT SHINING STAR AWARD

The Women's Bar Association established the Mussey-Gillett Shining Star Award in 2007 to recognize WBA members who, through their vision and sustained and unflagging dedication to the WBA or to WBA committees and forums, have made extraordinary contributions that have advanced the mission of the association in the best tradition of leadership exemplified by the WBA's Founders, Ellen Spencer Mussey and Emma Gillett. Each year, our immediate Past President selects a member who has epitomized the principles set forth by our founders.

MICHELLE N. WEBSTER

Counsel, Thompson Hine LLP; Board Member, WBA



Michelle Webster is an experienced litigation attorney with two decades of practice in BigLaw. She has extensive experience litigating claims involving 401(k) or 403(b) plans, ERISA Class actions, complex commercial litigation, antitrust, and internal and government investigations.

Ms. Webster has represented prestigious universities in 403(b) fee litigation matters. On ERISA questions, she litigates class-action disputes and advises clients on issues prompting such litigation, particularly as relates to ERISA's fiduciary standards.

Her involvement spans all areas of case development, including document discovery, written discovery, depositions, hearings, case strategy, expert discovery, and dispositive motions.

Ms. Webster's litigation experience encompasses a wide array of substantive areas, with frequent representation in matters involving antitrust, bank enforcement, and ERISA. She has advocated for clients as both plaintiffs and defendants in federal courts and in government investigations, domestically and internationally. Her work includes class actions and other complex controversies involving securities fraud, breach of fiduciary duty, breach of contract, anti-money laundering compliance, and civil fraud.

Ms. Webster's practice consists of litigating high profile and legally complex cases in trial courts. Her experience covers a broad range of substantive areas, and she frequently litigates cases involving antitrust, bank enforcement, and ERISA. She has represented clients as both plaintiffs and defendants, in federal courts and in government investigations throughout the country and abroad, in class actions and other controversies, on issues including securities fraud, breach of fiduciary duty, breach of contract, anti-money laundering compliance, and civil fraud.

In Ms. Webster's pro bono practice, she represents clients with the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, Legal Counsel for the Elderly, Southern Poverty Law Center, Whitman Walker Legal, American Immigration Council, Center on Gender and Refugee Studies, and the Center for Constitutional Rights.

In her spare time, Ms. Webster teaches Pilates and enjoys yoga, cycling, learning Spanish, and watching DC and Seattle sports. She is also a Trustee for Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, and member of the LGBT Bar of DC.



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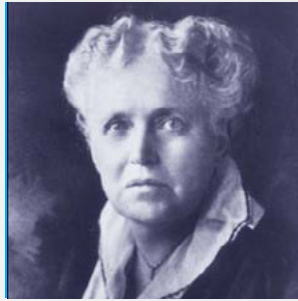




MUSSEY-GILLET FOUNDERS MEMBERS



**ELLEN SPENCER
MUSSEY**



EMMA GILLETT

Named after our founders, **Ellen Spencer Mussey** and **Emma M. Gillett**, this membership level provides dedicated individual members the opportunity to support the success and financial sustainability of the WBA. For those individuals who already give so much to the WBA, the Founders Membership provides a targeted giving opportunity, and a mechanism for the WBA to recognize its high contributing individuals.

THANK YOU TO OUR MUSSEY-GILLETT FOUNDERS MEMBERS (as of August 31, 2025)

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MEMBERSHIP

By joining the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia, you make a statement in support of advancing women in the legal profession and demonstrate your commitment to promoting the welfare of all women in the community. The WBA provides a synergy that can enhance your career on many levels.

Whether you are looking to increase your professional visibility through WBA leadership positions, to take advantage of the many personal and professional development opportunities, or simply to network with colleagues, the WBA can meet your needs. WBA memberships run on anniversary dates: your membership will need to be renewed one year from the date you joined.

Learn more at wbadc.org/join.

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