

Voices & Views



A NEWSLETTER FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA BAR ASSOCIATION COMMISSION ON WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION

Some thoughts for 2012

By Shira Goodman, co-editor

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe we're starting another year and that it's 2012. It seems like just yesterday we were worried our computers would all malfunction on 1/1/2000. Now, we're deep into this millenium — getting ready for its fourth presidential election.

Still, it's a time for reflection and resolutions. I'm sure many of us have made the same resolutions as usual about diet, exercise, better life-work balance, more time for marketing, etc. But I think it's time to make some new resolutions as well — resolutions that, if we keep them, might help us further our common goal of continuing to improve the experience of women in the legal profession.

There are a few things we can each resolve to do that will have an enormous ripple effect among our workplaces, our commission, our bar associations and our profession generally.

Let's start with mentoring. I propose that we each resolve to do two things. First, we should all make time this year to thank our mentors and let them know how much they have meant to us. It is so important to properly acknowledge and respect the valuable time, wisdom and guidance these mentors have given us. Second, we should each resolve to do more mentoring this year. Even if it's just an additional lunch with a more junior



colleague or some extra time taken to introduce ourselves to new faces at a Pennsylvania Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession (WIP) event, these actions are tremendously important. They not only help the individuals involved, but they help us grow and strengthen our WIP community.

I am fortunate to be able to work and interact with law students and young lawyers who volunteer for my organization. These are talented, committed, motivated young people who will be an asset to our profession. But the economy and legal market they face is discouraging and engenders fear, concern and even bitterness. I worry that we are graduating classes

and possibly a generation of lawyers who will not share our pride in the profession. The WIP and the entire PBA must step up and confront some tough questions: Are we failing the next generation of lawyers? What can we do to make things better and to help young lawyers weather this time? I certainly don't have the answers, but I hope we can resolve to start working together for solutions this year.

A final pair of resolutions for your consideration. I know that time and money are tighter for everyone, but the impact on those with the least and the legal organizations that serve them has been very severe. Please consider re-

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Save the Date to Join Us for the 2012 WIP Midyear Meetings



The Pennsylvania Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession's Midyear Meeting program will build upon the theme from the WIP Fall Retreat – "Optimizing Verbal Communications" – and focus on "Optimizing First Impressions." The program will help you to set yourself apart from the crowd and transform everyday introductions into meaningful messages that highlight your area of practice, project your presence and personality with professionalism, and comply with ethical standards.

The meetings will take place in the afternoon on the following dates and locations:

March 8, 2012

PBI – Mechanicsburg, 5080 Ritter Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-6903

March 15, 2012

PBI – Philadelphia, CLE Conference Center, The Wanamaker Building,
100 Penn Square East, 10th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 10107-2817

March 22, 2012

PBI – Pittsburgh, Professional Development Conference Center, Heinz 57 Building
(formerly Gimbels), 339 Sixth Ave., Suite 760, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2517

The editors of *Voices and Views* encourage our membership to contribute articles and announcements, including articles on your area of practice, topics relating to women and the law, book reviews, save the date notices, members in the news and photos of members at events.

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From the chairs

By Jane Leslie Dalton and
Melinda C. Ghilardi, co-chairs, PBA
Commission on Women in the Profession

Where does the time go? It is hard to believe that our Annual Retreat is over, and we are in the midst of planning for the Quality of Life Committee "The Year of You" Program in January, as well as the Midyear Meetings in March and Annual Conference in May!

Many, many thanks to retreat co-chairs Shelley Goldner and Susan Letterman White, who designed a wonderful program around the theme "Let's Talk! Optimizing Verbal Communications," as well as Public Service Committee co-chairs Liz Simcox and Lisa Watson, who planned an enormously successful service project for The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and the Harrisburg Humane Society.

Quality of Life Committee co-chairs Ellen Bailey and Maria Feeley have organized a program around "You." This afternoon session will be held on Jan. 12 at Pepper Hamilton L.L.P. in Philadelphia and is designed to get you to think about your personal wellness, health, fitness, financial well-being, personal image and appearance. It will bring together role models from the profession and experts from the health, beauty and financial industries to help "You" to rejuvenate and improve your

quality of life. Similar programs are anticipated at other Pennsylvania locations.

Midyear Meetings co-chairs Nancy Conrad, Megan Ott and Sarah Yerger have planned a wonderful program titled, "Let's Talk! Optimizing First Impressions." This program will continue the discussion we began at the retreat and bring it to the next level. We hope you will be able to join us on March 8 in Mechanicsburg, March 15 in Philadelphia and March 22 in Pittsburgh.

We are also in the midst of planning our Annual Conference to be held on May 9 in Lancaster. Co-chairs Andrea Tuominen and Bobbi Jacobs-Meadway have created a day of networking, learning and "Making a Difference." The keynote speaker will be Betty Ann Waters, author of *Conviction*. The remainder of the day will focus on how one can make a difference in the community by serving on both profit and non-profit boards, by getting involved in the political process and the public sector, and by participating in pro bono opportunities. All of these activities benefit both the profession and one's own career.

Since September, the PBA Commission on Women in the Profession has welcomed nine new members. They are Lindette C. Hassan, Kellyanne Parry, Erin Lynn Young, Kathleen Lincoln, Stephanie G. Johnson, Kathleen Kotula, Rachel Hadrick, Attorney General

Linda Kelly and Heather Vance-Rittman. We hope you will join one of our many committees and become active WIP members!

For the second year, the WIP's Mentoring Committee is involved with the Law School Mock Interview Outreach Initiative. The goals of this program are to assist law students in gaining the skills they need to successfully interview and to be better prepared when seeking employment by participating in a real-world setting mock interview, while at the same time exposing them, as future members of the profession, to the WIP and the benefits of membership.

With the beginning of a new year comes the planning for yet another Report Card. For 17 years, the WIP has prepared a Report Card focusing on the PBA membership and the position and numbers of women in the organization, as well as women in private law firms, district attorney and public defender offices and in the judiciary. Most recently, the Report Card expanded to include profiles of women in small firms, solo practice and government.

As you can see, the WIP had a very busy fall, and winter is shaping up to be just as exciting. We hope to see you soon at one of our programs, or better yet, sign up for one of our committees and get involved!



WIP member directory

The directory of the members of the Commission on Women in the Profession is available on the PBA Web site, www.pabar.org. You can reach the directory from the home page by entering your PBA membership number to log in to the members-only area, clicking on "Committees/Commissions" at the upper left and then clicking on the "Women in the Profession Commission" button. On the WIP page, click on the "Membership" button. The online WIP directory lists everything that appeared in the hard copy, including indices by county and area of concentration.

If you are not yet in the directory, you can simply fill out the form online. The button for the form is on the same Web page as the WIP directory. If possible, also send your photograph in digital format to patricia.graybill@pabar.org.

The directory is a great source for referrals to hundreds of women lawyers skilled in every area of the law. These women are also available to answer questions you might have about practice in other areas of the commonwealth. This network of friends can be of immeasurable help in enhancing your satisfaction with and success in the law.

Don't be afraid of technology

By Molly Barker Gilligan

In a recent ethics forum, titled "Lawyering, not technology, should drive the practice" by Samuel C. Stretton in the Sept. 13 issue of the *Pennsylvania Law Weekly* (34 PLW 836), Stretton discussed the ethics of maintaining electronic files without maintaining corresponding paper files. His article provided some sound ethical advice but included the logical leap that in order to make use of technology in a law office, lawyers will have to forego learning to practice law.

I wanted to share my view that lawyering and technology are not mutually

I wanted to share my view that lawyering and technology are not mutually exclusive.

exclusive. As a practicing attorney and a legal technology consultant, my daily use of legal specific software, computers, scanners and electronic files has made me a better, more effective advocate for my clients. Before you assume that I am some sort of early adopter of all things technological, understand that I am a traditionalist at heart. While in law school, I took exams in Blue Books although many of my classmates chose to use laptops. In fact, I did not use a laptop in class because I believed it would be distracting to me. I knew I would not lose what I wrote in a Blue Book.

When I began practicing three and a half years ago, I had the great fortune to start in a "Less Paper Office." We try to reduce the amount of paper we use, but we are fully aware that there will always be paper associated with every file. However, we scan and then shred the majority of the paper that comes into the office. We use our computers as our primary source for finding and viewing documents, rather than

searching for documents in paper files. While other attorneys may love the feeling of a deposition in their hands, I challenge them to find every instance of a search term in seconds as I can with deposition transcript software or a searchable PDF file.

I recognize that no office is ever going to be "paperless." There will always be the need for original documents. Although I would advise anyone who says they hate reading on computer screens to invest in a 25-plus-inch monitor and see what a difference

it makes, there are times when you want to see the hard copies, and it may be faster to shuffle the paper. In my experience,

those times are the exception. Unquestionably, reducing the amount of paper in your office reduces the time sifting through paper files and going back through the same file to find the letter you missed the first time around.

Some techno-phobes argue that using technology will take up all your time. I believe that is like saying you shouldn't have paper files because all you are going to do is spend your time re-organizing the files and coming up with more and more intricate labeling systems. Technology is a tool. Legal specific software was designed because someone encountered a problem and found a way to fix it. Over the years, the solutions have been refined, but at their essence, case management systems simply keep track of the same documents that paper files do, as well as calendars, deadlines, to-do's, and contacts — all the information critical to what we do as lawyers.

"Computerizing" an office is not something that attorneys should spend all of their time doing. That is why in-



formation technology consultants are available. Learning to practice law is a challenging and time-consuming endeavor. Three-and-a-half years in practice have taught me a great deal and also taught me how much more there is to learn. Electronic files merely make your computer your filing cabinet. Although it takes a mental shift, learning to use software (word processing, Adobe Acrobat Professional, Outlook, case management software, etc.), a smart phone and a scanner need not daunt even the most technophobic attorney. These tools permit attorneys to make better use of our scarce and precious resource — time. ☺☺☺

Molly Barker Gilligan is an associate with the Law Offices of Daniel J. Siegel L.L.C. and a legal technology consultant with Integrated Technology Services. She can be reached at mgilligan@danieljsiegel.com.

10 ways to annoy your biggest clients

By Lindsey Bierzonski

1. Failing to keep the client informed and failing to promptly return phone calls or e-mails.

This is always the biggest client complaint — yet the easiest to avoid. You already copy opposing counsel on documents. Get in the habit of similarly copying your client on every document and correspondence that concerns the client's matter. It's a relatively quick and easy way to always let the client know that you are working. Consider the act of a client calling you for a status update to be a major warning sign; you need to be more proactive about informing the client. For calls and e-mails, if you don't have time to give a full response, send a quick message saying exactly that and you will get back to the client at such and such a time. Otherwise, then the client follows up with a call, which makes you feel like the client is annoyingly disrupting your work, the client feels forgotten, and by that point, you are both annoyed.

2. Sending invoices several months after the work was performed or billing for every possible minute.

Don't let billing slide undone for months while your client forgets what you even did. Bill regularly. And don't bill for every possible expenditure — try to work short phone calls, postage, copies, etc., into your regular billable hour so that you don't have to bill separately for them. Also, throw the client a few freebies once in a while — put the time you spent sending an article of interest to the client on the invoice to reflect time worked, but don't bill for it. Your client will see that you are thinking of the client's interests even when not directly working on the client's matter.

3. Failing to listen to the client.

The first time you meet with a client, one of the most important questions to ask is: What is his or her ideal way to resolve the problem? Albeit, clients don't always respond with clear-cut answers. Sometimes you need to read between the lines to figure out what your client wants — does your client really want a huge settlement, or is your client simply looking for an apology and to protect similar people in the future? Money isn't always the answer.

4. Promising more than you can deliver.

If you aren't sure, don't pretend to be sure. It sounds simple ... until, for example, you have a prospective client

with a huge matter sitting in front of you insisting on an answer to "how long is this going to be?" or "how much will this whole thing cost?" You don't want to bid too high for fear of losing the client, but bidding too low will create an unreasonable expectation. Even if you're well-versed in that particular area of law, it may be impossible to gauge accurately. One thing you can try to do is give a range of costs for each stage that the matter might reach. But what if you still have absolutely no idea? Don't guess. Stick to your hourly fee and explain that it is the fairest method for the both of you or tell the client you need to do some research and find a more experienced attorney to ask.

5. Letting your client run wild with bad ideas or telling the client "No" without coming up with alternatives.

If a client comes to you and wants to market a tiny clothing line for ants, you need to find a way to tell the client that it's a bad idea without completely crushing the client's dreams. Always suggest a few alternatives, especially when you have to tell the client bad news. Allowing the client to choose from alternatives will empower the client, make the client feel more involved (remember those listening skills!) and add to the client's overall satisfaction.

6. Sending sloppy documents either to or on behalf of the client.

For everyone's sake, just spell the client's name right. And why should the client trust and pay you to represent him or her with respect to some of the most intimate aspects of the client's life if you aren't even savvy enough to use proper grammar and spelling? You may not be the best writer, but you made it this far, and

you owe it to your client to always have someone proofread your documents.

7. Failing to be respectful — use your manners.

I'm pleased to have entered a profession that prides itself on civility — we are taught to use proper manners with judges and opposing counsel. During law school, the running joke was that you could always tell the "One Ls" from the upperclassmen. Whereas the upperclassmen had observed and learned to copy our esteemed attorneys in all mannerisms, the One Ls hurriedly rushed through doors and failed to take even a couple seconds to hold doors open, not just for females, but anyone in general.

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10 ways to annoy your biggest clients

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Obviously, be polite to your clients, but remember that clients know people who will run into you out in public, too. We don't stop being attorneys when we leave the office. It's funny; I was never introduced as a waitress before I finished law school, but now my name in any introduction always seems to be followed with "Oh, she's an attorney." People admire (or maybe fear) the title and commit it to memory. Remember that someone is always observing you, be it a prospective client, opposing counsel, or whoever, no matter where you are or what you are doing. So remember your manners.

8. Making a mistake and not fessing up or blaming it on your staff.

Everyone makes mistakes. In fact, some clients retain you only after making a mistake themselves. Come up with a few ways to remedy or mitigate the problem you caused and then have a conference with your client. Is it really in your best interest to wait for another party, say opposing counsel, to blow the problem out of proportion when you could mitigate damages from the start? Also, never offer up incompetent staff as an excuse; remember who is responsible for your staff. If anything, you should have trained them better.

9. Waiting until the last minute on a deadline before requesting information from the client.

In the ideal world, we would never procrastinate. Nobody likes the last-minute scramble. Unfortunately, it happens. What you can do is take a few minutes to preview each project as you receive it. Skim it over, and see what it entails. Then if necessary, you can send it to the client or request information from the client right away and avoid imposing on the client's lifestyle by forcing the client to rush around at the last minute.

10. Failing to have a life other than living solely to answer your client's needs.

This one doesn't directly annoy clients; some might think they really do want you to immediately answer their 4 a.m. emails. However, having your own life outside of work will not only de-stress you but also give you some non-work related ways to connect on a personal level with your client. Find out what interests your client has and share in some mutual ones together. If you can turn a client into a friend, you'll have a client for life.



Lindsey Bierzonski graduated from Widener Law School in Harrisburg and joined the Artell Law Group as an associate in 2010. She practices primarily in litigation, labor and employment law, and corporate law.



Book review

By Mary Kate Coleman

Women Rainmakers' Best Marketing Tips, Third Edition

By Theda C. Snyder

American Bar Association, 2010

This 150-page book is an easy read and offers many good marketing tips. It has something for everyone — from solo practitioners to large firm attorneys and government/in-house attorneys (yes, you have to market, too!). It contains valuable suggestions regardless of whether you have a small town practice or a national practice. The tips can be implemented in a variety of practice areas.

In the introduction, the author writes that she offers information based on the RAM principle: Some suggestions may not be appropriate for you, and you will *reject* these suggestions. Other ideas will be a good fit for your personal style, and you will *accept* these ideas. Another category of tips will not be exactly right, but the suggestions will work when you *modify* them. I thought this was an accurate description of the advice given. Some of the ideas were not appropriate for me, but I look forward to implementing other ideas into my marketing activities. In some instances, it was good to learn that I am doing things right. However, the book also helped me identify room for improvement.

The author references a number of websites that appear to be helpful and that were new to me. The book also contains a lot of anecdotes that were illuminating. The chapter on "Making the Pitch" offers suggestions on how to have a conversation that may not come naturally to many women attorneys. Other readers might find the chapter "Old Advertising/New Advertising: Websites and More" to be practical. The following piece of advice resonated with me: "Smile when you talk on the phone. It really does make a difference to your tone of voice and the reaction of others."

The encouraging tone of the book appealed to me. The consensus of women rainmakers is "don't give up." I highly recommend the book to you. It is going on my bookshelf so that I can read it again from time to time.



Mary Kate Coleman is a civil litigation attorney, mediator and arbitrator with the law firm of Riley Hewitt Witte & Romano in Pittsburgh.

Commission's Fall Retreat in Hershey focuses on 'Optimizing Verbal Communications'

By Melinda C. Ghilardi, WIP Co-Chair

The Commission on Women in the Profession held another successful Fall Retreat on Oct. 21-22 at The Hotel Hershey with the theme, "Let's Talk! Optimizing Verbal Communications."

The retreat started Friday evening with a cocktail reception, followed by a delicious dinner carefully prepared by the wonderful culinary staff at The Hotel Hershey. We were joined by Janis Leftridge, PBA diversity officer; PBA Vice President Tom Wilkinson (husband of longtime WIP member Kathleen Wilkinson); and PBA Immediate Past President Gretchen Mundorff.

Following dinner, Helen Richardson, counsel to Canon U.S.A. Inc., spoke about "The Seven Words You (Apparently) Can't (But Need To) Say in the Law" including "perspective," "humility," "civility," "integrity," "priorities," "humor" and "longevity." She also added some "L Words," about how "Live, Laugh and Learn" are not incompatible with "Lawyering."

We were then treated to a lively and interactive look at "Improvisation for Lawyers." Sharon Geller, adjunct professor at the Earle Mack School of Law at Drexel University, demonstrated how improvisation training can improve your ability to think on your feet and to quickly respond in a creative and effective manner to just about any situation. She taught us how to be in the moment, to feel and appear more confident and to recover from mistakes seamlessly. A good time was had by all!

We began Saturday morning with a relaxing hour of yoga. Following breakfast, WIP co-chair Jane Dalton and I conducted a business meeting of the commission, which included a report from each committee on their progress and recent activities.

The remainder of the retreat was devoted to interactive presentations by Bonnie Allyn Barnett, chair of Drinker Biddle and Reath's Environment and Energy Practice Group and a managing partner in the firm; Tonya Evans,



The traditional group photo from the annual Fall Retreat was taken before the Saturday morning business meeting.

professor at Widener University School of Law; and Wendy Witt, a trust and estates lawyer and legal blogger. They enlightened us on how to face communications challenges with confidence and to avoid the most common mistakes attorneys make when speaking to a group. The best thing about this portion of the program was that we had an opportunity to give a two-minute presentation and to get feedback from the group.

This year, retreat attendees also had the option of donating items to The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank or The Harrisburg Humane Society. These charities were selected by the Public Service Committee because of the great need in the Harrisburg area due to the economic downturn and recent weather disasters.

After a fabulous Hotel Hershey lunch, retreat co-chair Shelly Goldner facilitated a discussion of memorable retreat moments. Everyone then headed home with smiles on their faces and happiness in their hearts after a wonderful experience with old and new friends and colleagues.



Susan White (left) and Shelly Goldner were the Fall Retreat co-chairs.

**See more
Fall Retreat
photos
on Page 8!**



**A look at the
WIP 2011
Fall Retreat**



Report of Cheryl L. Young, PBA at-large woman governor

The Board of Governors has been hard at work. We met in November in Harrisburg, prior to the House of Delegates meeting. It was a full day with many productive topics addressed. Membership, as always, is a significant area of concern as it is imperative that we not only maintain, but increase, our membership. Costs continue to go up and the dues stabilization fund is significantly declining, so there has to be an emphasis on membership moving forward. Our officers are aware of this concern and are in discussions to address it.

We had reports and proposed recommendations, all of which were approved, from the Workers Compensation Committee and the Elder Law, Business Law, Municipal

Law and Real Property, Probate & Trust Law Sections.

We were also presented with the final report from the Pennsylvania Bar Association Constitutional Review Commission. This report has been in the works since PBA Past President Cliff Haines first appointed this commission in his year, 2009. The commission report was 144 pages. The commission members did an outstanding job in completing their assigned task. It is clear that hundreds of hours were spent in formulating this report. Right now it is submitted to the entire bar association as an informational only item. The next steps will be discussed at future board meetings. The entire report is available here: [http://www.pabar.org/forclogin.asp?topage=/](http://www.pabar.org/forclogin.asp?topage=/pdf/crc_report.pdf)

[pdf/crc_report.pdf](http://www.pabar.org/forclogin.asp?topage=/pdf/crc_report.pdf).

In addition, the board has appointed a Strategic Planning Committee which met in early December at Penn State with a professional facilitator. Its members are actively working on a strategic plan for this organization that looks forward for several years. This is probably long overdue, particularly with regard to a group that changes leadership every year. It will be nice to have a cohesive forward-looking plan that lays out goals and responsibilities over the course of the next three to five years.

We will be meeting again in January in Puerto Rico and in February at the Conference of County Bar Leaders.



WIP co-chairs attend Allegheny County Bar Association Women in the Law Division Luncheon featuring Anita Hill

By Jane Leslie Dalton, WIP Co-Chair

On Nov. 10, Melinda C. Ghilardi and I traveled to Pittsburgh to attend, on behalf of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, the Allegheny County Bar Association Women in the Law Division Luncheon (ACBA WLD) featuring Anita Hill. We were warmly greeted by many, including the ACBA WLD Chair Carrie Matesevac Collins; David Blaner, executive director of the ACBA; and Hal Coffey, the PBA zone governor for Zone 12.

We had the opportunity to speak with Hill before the luncheon formally began. We were both impressed with how down-to-earth and charming she is.

Discussion at our luncheon table was animated and entertaining. Our Pittsburgh-area attendees were most gracious in introducing us to others attending the luncheon. Those at our table included Penina Lieber, Shelly Pagac, Mimi McCormick, Jackie Mar-

tinez and Janet Meub from Pittsburgh, Garnet Crossland from Fayette County and Lauren Gentile from Washington County.

Hill's speech was even better than I anticipated. Her warmth and humility came through. She grew up in a small, rural southern community. She overcame discrimination and poverty by hard work and force of intellect. After graduating from high school as valedictorian, she graduated from Oklahoma State University and then graduated from Yale Law School in 1980.

After working briefly in a law firm, she joined the Department of Education and then the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission where, from 1981 to 1983, she worked for Clarence Thomas, now, of course, associate justice of the United States Supreme Court. She taught at Oral Roberts University Law School from 1983 to 1986. She then taught at the University of Oklahoma from 1986 to 1997. In 1997 she was appointed to the faculty at Brandeis University. Today she is se-

nior adviser to the provost and professor of social policy, law and women's studies at Brandeis.

In discussing her testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1991, she said that she was not afraid of the consequences because she knew it was time to tell the truth. She stressed the importance for women of anticipating success. She urged the audience to speak up about inequities, even if they are in a minority. She indicated that speaking out stridently was less effective than personalizing a message, which lessens the chances of resistance. Finally, she requested that every woman in the audience support other women in achieving whatever they define as personal success — a perfect message for those of us involved in the PBA Commission on Women in the Profession.

It was a wonderful event, and Melinda and I look forward to continuing to make deeper connections and to forge new relationships with our colleagues in western Pennsylvania.



8th Annual Pa. Conference for Women — Live Fearlessly!

By Melinda C. Ghilardi, WIP Co-Chair

Members of the executive council of the PBA Commission on Women in the Profession enjoyed another great year at the Pennsylvania Conference for Women. This wonderful event was held on Oct. 25 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia. WIP Co-Chair Jane Dalton and I were joined by PBA Treasurer Phyllis Epstein, Andrea Tuominen, Lisa Watson and Kathleen Wilkinson, enjoying lunch together before an afternoon full of innovative, inspiring and thoughtful speakers. The program started off with a “Fireside Chat” with Betsy Myers, author and public servant, and Denise Morrison, chief executive officer of Campbell Soup. Following that, we heard from Marion Jones, former Olympic athlete and retired WNBA player; Christy Turlington Burns, model, writer, entrepreneur, spokesperson, advocate and filmmaker; and keynote speaker Gloria Steinem, women’s rights pioneer.

Myers served as senior adviser to Barack Obama’s presidential campaign, having previously served as a senior official in the Clinton administration where she was the president’s senior adviser on women’s issues. Morrison is the first female CEO at Campbell Soup and only one of 14 female CEOs among Fortune 500 companies.

My takeaways from their “Fireside Chat” were that “families that eat together stay together,” and hard work alone is not all you need to get ahead. You must have a strategic plan for your career. Relationships are important in corporate America. When you have failures, you must dust yourself off and start all over again! Myers and Morrison advised the 5,000 attendees to “do the thing you fear most.”

Jones shared the story of her fall from Olympic gold medalist to convicted felon (perjury before a grand jury) and how she has committed her life to inspiring others who face life-challenging situations. She also shared a lesson she tries to impart to the young women she speaks to: Sometimes you need to



Gloria Steinem is shown on screen speaking at the Pennsylvania Conference on Women.

take a moment and pause before making a critical decision that may have a lasting impact on your life.

Turlington Burns works with the international humanitarian organization CARE and has since become their advocate for maternal health. In 2008, she began working on a documentary film profiling the status of maternal health worldwide in which she shares the powerful stories of at-risk pregnant women in four parts of the world. These stories depict a remote Maasai tribe in Tanzania, a slum of Bangladesh, a post-abortion care ward in Guatemala and a prenatal clinic in the United States. “NO WOMAN, NO CRY” made its world premiere at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival in New York City and its U.S. television broadcast premiere on May 7, 2011, on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN). Concurrent with the debut of her documentary, Turlington Burns launched Every Mother Counts, an advocacy and mobilization campaign to increase education and support for maternal and child health. Every Mother Counts seeks to engage new audiences to better understand the challenges and the solutions while encouraging them to take action to improve the lives of girls and women worldwide. Further information on Every Mother Counts is available at www.everymothercounts.org.

In her keynote address, Steinem shared her thoughts on the “Live Fearlessly” theme with her list of Top 10 Fearbusters:

10. Reverse the golden rule. For women, treat ourselves as well as we treat others.

9. Fear is a sign of growth. If you are afraid, it means you are stretching and doing something you haven’t done before.

8. Anger is an energy cell; it is precious.

7. We need to make sure we are using our own unique talents and not imitating others’ talents.

6. Measure yourself by the real, not by the ideal.

5. Look for allies everywhere. Do not be bound by conventional hierarchies.

4. What is viewed as a disability — being “feminine” — has enormous advantages within it.

3. Just about everyone can learn to change, even us and even them.

2. Ask for help. Surround yourself with people who make you feel smart, not dumb.

1. Remember that our humanity, our equality, our self-determination is the key to everything.

The annual Conference for Women is the premier women’s networking event held in Pennsylvania, with world-class speakers and events designed to empower women in the workplace, at home and in every aspect of our lives. I have attended seven of the eight held so far, and each has been better than the last. When details of next year’s conference are established, WIP hopes its members will attend together again.



More women judges needed, Gertner and Lithwick say

This article is reprinted with permission of University of Virginia School of Law.

Female judges bring invaluable life experiences to the bench and more women are needed in the judiciary, U.S. Judge Nancy Gertner and *Slate* senior editor [Dahlia Lithwick](#) said recently during a panel at the University of Virginia School of Law.

Gertner, who recently retired from full-time service with the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts and is the author of *In Defense of Women: Memoirs of an Unrepentant Advocate*, said judges are asked to bring their experiences to the table when deciding cases, and women can bring different experiences and perspectives.

"Context matters," Gertner said, speaking at a panel discussion titled "The Fairer Sex: A Conversation about Women in the Judiciary." "It's an illusion to believe that context doesn't matter."

As an example, she described a case she heard in which a woman accused her boss of making a vulgar unwanted sexual advance. While it might have sounded implausible to male judges hearing the claim, Gertner thought her life experiences as a woman informed her view otherwise.

"I can tell you that what's plausible to me may be very different from what's plausible to my male colleague," she said. "The law, in fact, invites us to consider and make judgments about life experiences. You, of course, bring your life experiences to the table. I'm absolutely not saying I only believe women. It's not a one-to-one correlation. But clearly you begin the analysis with your soul, with your person."

Gertner dismissed the "bizarre and ridiculous" view that judges must ignore their life experiences when deciding the outcome of cases. She noted that when Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall died, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor described how Marshall's experiences were invaluable



to the court.

"What O'Connor said was that [Marshall's] presence in the Supreme Court deliberations made an enormous difference," she said. "When you looked around the table, no other judge had ever lived in the segregated South. No other judge had ever represented people who were reviled. No other judge had gone through what he had gone through. And that context matters."

Lithwick, a legal correspondent for *Slate*, pointed out that women have comprised roughly 50 percent of the entering and exiting law school classes since the 1980s, but there is still an "unbelievable dearth" of women judges.

"Forty-nine of the 162 judges on the federal appeals courts right now are women," she said. "There's only one woman judge on the Eighth Circuit. Only one on the Tenth. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals is comprised of only 15 percent women. And only 30 percent of active trial judges in the federal district court are women. We're not talking even close to 50 percent. And the question is, why?"

An even bigger question, Lithwick said, is does it actually even matter that the gender disparity on the bench is so wide? She noted that the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court, O'Connor, famously said that a wise old man and a wise old woman would, at the end of the day, reach the same conclusion. In Lithwick's view, however, female judges can make a remarkable difference.

"I've been covering the Supreme Court for an era in which there were two women, then when there was one woman, and now, magically, there are three women," she said. "And I'm here to tell you, it matters a lot. It's unbelievable how different it is to cover a court with three women on it."

Lithwick cited a 2008 study that found that in sex discrimination cases before three-judge panels on the federal appeals court between 1995 and 2002, male judges were 10 percent more likely to rule against the plaintiff than women judges. However, if a female judge was sitting on the panel with the male judges, then the male judges overwhelmingly were likely to bring their opinion in line with that of the female judge.

"What does that suggest? Not that women's brains are different. I think that it suggests that thinking about gender from a woman's perspective is weirdly contagious," Lithwick said. "And that you don't have to be a woman to understand what it is to be a female plaintiff in a sex discrimination suit, but it really helps to have a woman explain it to you."

In the 2009 Supreme Court case *Safford Unified School District v. Redding*, Lithwick said, the justices heard how school officials strip-searched a 13-year-old Arizona girl who they believed possessed ibuprofen in violation of school rules.

"When this case is argued at the Supreme Court, some of the judges on the court not only were not sympathetic but actually made light of

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More women judges needed, Gertner and Lithwick say

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the search, likening it to 'Ha-ha-ha, this is what happened to me in gym class,'" Lithwick said. "And this was one of the few moments I've seen Ruth Bader Ginsburg really get mad on the bench and say, 'This is nothing like something

that happens in gym class. This is not something to be taken lightly. This is not a trivial search — this is a young girl being searched by school authorities in an incredibly intrusive way without her parents' consent.'"

As it turned out, Lithwick said, the court's decision was 8-1 in the young girl's favor.

"We need women on the court not because there's some magical number

of women on a court, but I think women have stories to tell and perspectives to share," she said. "We're so blessed to have these voices and these stories."

The event was sponsored by the Feminist Legal Forum, the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy, the Jewish Law Students Association, the Student Legal Forum and Women of Color.



WANTED:

Women lawyers in search of a mentor relationship PBA WIP presents the LINK MENTORING PROGRAM

We're looking to match women attorneys seeking advice about career development, leadership, networking and work-life balance with those who have wisdom to share. Please join the program as a mentor, a mentee, or both — we all can learn from each other.

For more information and to join the program, go to

www.pabar.org/public/committees/womenprf/Membership/mentoringprogram.asp

Pennsylvania Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE EDITORIAL POLICY

Voices & Views is a publication of the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) Commission on Women in the Profession and is published by the Communications Committee three times per year. The purpose of the publication is to facilitate communication among the membership of the Commission on topics and events of general interest to women lawyers. The editors of *Voices & Views* reserve the right to accept or reject any submission and to edit any submission to ensure its suitability for publication, its adherence to the Mission Statement of the Communications Committee and its furtherance of the objectives of the Commission on Women in the Profession.

The articles and reports contained in *Voices & Views* reflect the views of the writer and do not necessarily represent the position of the Commission, the editors of *Voices & Views*, or the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the PBA WIP Communications Committee to foster improved communication among its members in the furtherance of the goals of the Commission. To this end, the publication, *Voices & Views*, provides a forum for professional and open exchange among the WIP membership on all issues related to women and the law. *Voices & Views* shall be utilized for the following purposes:

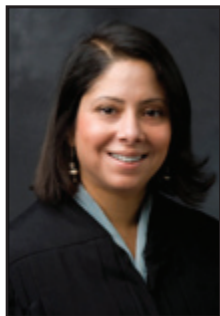
- To publicize opportunities and events that may be of interest to the WIP membership;
- To provide information to the membership on topics that may be of general interest to women lawyers;
- To reach a wider audience and increase the visibility of the Commission;
- To inform the WIP membership of the projects and goals of the Commission; and
- To share information with the WIP membership regarding accomplishments of the members, other women lawyers and public figures.

A profile of District Judge Cathy Bissoon

By Jennifer Berosh

On Oct. 20, Cathy Bissoon was sworn in and warmly welcomed as the newest member of the bench to the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Judge Bissoon was nominated by President Barack Obama to join the district court on Nov. 17, 2010. Following her nomination, Bissoon was confirmed by the United States Senate on Oct. 17,



Judge Cathy Bissoon

and received her commission on Oct. 19, 2011. Prior to her ascension to the district court, Bissoon served as a United States magistrate judge to the Western District since Aug. 1, 2008. She is the first woman of color to sit on the bench in the Western District.

Bissoon, a New York native, initially earned a B.A., *summa cum laude*, in political science from Alfred University in 1990. Subsequently, she earned her J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1993.

After finishing her formal schooling, Bissoon worked in the private sector at two prestigious law firms and also served as a federal judicial law clerk. In 1993, she became an associate at Reed Smith in Pittsburgh. From 1994 until 1995, she served as a judicial law clerk to Judge Gary L. Lancaster of the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. After her yearlong clerkship, Bissoon again returned to Reed Smith, where she would practice from 1995 until 2007, and eventually she became a partner and the firm-wide head of its employment group. Additionally, she acted as Reed Smith's director of diversity for six years. In 2007, Bissoon joined the law firm of Cohen & Grigsby in Pittsburgh. At Cohen & Grigsby, she worked as the head of its labor and employment group.

While she is not originally from Pennsylvania or the Pittsburgh area, Bissoon explains that she initially "fol-

lowed a boy to Pittsburgh." Ultimately, after remaining in Pittsburgh, she decided to practice in western Pennsylvania because she met her now-husband, and after "work[ing] for part [of] a summer in New York to see if I could envision myself living and working there," "[i]n the end, I found myself appreciating the pace of my life in Pittsburgh and could not envision living the type of life I desired in New York."

Bissoon is a strong proponent of female practitioners, especially new attorneys, participating in mentor relationships. She has been the recipient of advice from other attorneys that helped to advance her career, and Bissoon in turn, has used this herself to serve as an effective mentor to others. "First, I should say that, sadly, I have had very few female mentors. Many of the more seasoned female attorneys I knew were part of another era — an era in which they had to become 'one of the boys' in order to survive and thrive," said Bissoon. "While there were certainly things I learned from female attorneys along the way, the true mentoring I received generally was at the hands of male partners who took the time to teach me, not only how to do things, but why they were done that way. These men would advocate for me throughout my career and see opportunities for me that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. I've learned from them how to mentor others and how important effective mentoring is to building a successful career," described Bissoon.

In reflecting upon her own career, Bissoon fondly refers to Judge Lancaster as one of her "mentors-in-chief." She explains that Lancaster "recommended me for opportunities both inside and outside our court," which "enhanced my skills, exposed me to experiences and created a path for my success." Her decision to leave private practice was positively influenced by her job as law clerk, which she describes as "the best job I ever had," and firsthand exposure to the judiciary. To that end, Bissoon credits her clerkship with allowing her to catch the judiciary "bug." "I enjoyed the challenge of helping [Judge Lan-

caster] work out the issues between the parties and told myself that if there was ever an opportunity to do what he did, I would jump on it."

Bissoon feels that serving as a magistrate judge has been helpful to her acting in her new role. She has already found that there "is a fair amount of overlap between my role as a magistrate judge and my new role as a district judge, particularly on the civil litigation side." Further, "I feel that I have had several years now to fully appreciate the role of judge in the system and develop my style as a jurist," stated Bissoon.

Throughout her career, Bissoon has been a strong advocate for minorities and a proponent of diversity initiatives within the legal profession. She commented that some of the problems she recognized years ago continue to exist. According to Bissoon, given the economic downturn, "it appears to me that law firms are putting previously thriving diversity programs on the back burner." Further, Bissoon explains that "[t]he diversity programs created a decade ago were intended, in part, to create — programmatically — what did not occur naturally." However, she was informed from her recent discussions with minority and female attorneys that "many are lost within their firms" because "they do not have the mentoring relationships or advocates within their firms that have so naturally and organically existed for most white male lawyers" and that the "lack of focus on these initiatives leaves some women and minorities rudderless."

The economic downturn has had other negative consequences on the legal profession, and Bissoon has observed both female and male "high-quality lawyers . . . who simply cannot find jobs in the current economic environment." She does remain optimistic and hopes that the tough job market "is a temporary condition" and feels that because "women make terrific lawyers," they still "should be encouraged to pursue a career in the law if that is their passion."

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Commission members in the news

Ann L. Begler, founder and principal of the Begler Group, is writing a personal opinion column, "The Anti-Antagonist." You can read Begler's blog each Wednesday on the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's*, online, ipso facto page, and prior posts by entering "Ann Begler Anti-Antagonist" into your Google browser.

In November, **Superior Court Judge Susan Peikes Gantman** served as a



panel member at the Toby L. Dickman Fourth Annual Seminar, "Litigating a Support Case from Complaint to Appeal." Gantman also spoke for the Philadelphia Bar

Association Meeting on "Appellate Practice – Nuts and Bolts."

Marie Milie Jones has been awarded the St. Thomas More Award, the highest honor given by the St. Thomas More Society for Catholic lawyers. Following the annual Red Mass on Oct. 11, Jones received this honor at a dinner held at Duquesne University.

"I am humbled to be among the impressive list of prior awardees," said Jones. "The principles followed by St. Thomas More of doing what is right and just provide inspiration in the practice of law and in life. I shall look on this award as a reminder of those valued goals."

This award, presented annually by the St. Thomas More Society and approved by the bishop, coincides with the traditional Red Mass, wherein guidance and blessings are sought

for the bench and bar. Jones currently serves as chairman of the board of directors of Duquesne University and is a member of the board of regents of St. Vincent Seminary. She practices law in the recently formed boutique litigation firm of JonesPassodelis P.L.L.C. in Pittsburgh, where she focuses on employment and civil rights matters. Jones lives in Cranberry Township, Pa.

Rhoda Neft, a past co-chair of the Commission of Women in the Profession, has been appointed by Pennsylvania Bar Association President Matt Creme to the PBA Insurance Fund and Trust Fund. She also serves by appointment on the PBA Constitutional Review Commission and has been accepted for membership to the Women's Committee of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh.



District Judge Cathy Bissoon

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With respect to her mentoring relationships, Bissoon admits that her mentoring of diverse attorneys is what she regards as her greatest accomplishment among her work to increase diversity in the profession. While the attorneys she mentors "certainly are responsible for their own achievements and successes, it gives me great joy when they are happy and satisfied with the course of their lives and careers. I'd like to think that I played a small role in that — even if it was only to listen."

When asked what advice she would give to other female practitioners — advice that she would have liked to have known when she first entered the profession — Bissoon encourages attorneys to actively search for a mentor. She said that one cannot "wait for mentors to find you;" instead, "you need to be proactive and seek out people from whom you can learn." Interestingly, Bissoon further comments that a female attorney may be surprised by who guides her. Such mentors who "enter your life

may not always come in the packages we assume. My most important lessons on work-life balance, for example, came to me in the form of a middle-aged male partner, not a woman who seemed to have it all."

Even though Bissoon is very busy, she admits that readers would be surprised to learn what those closest to her know, "that even with work, family and other obligations, I still make time for a tremendous amount of television."

Given Bissoon's laudable credentials, commitment to helping women and minorities, and excitement for her new position, there is no doubt that she will serve the Western District well and to the best of her abilities. Congratulations, Judge Bissoon.



Jennifer A. Berosh is a graduate of Allegheny College and Widener University School of Law. She has served as a volunteer law clerk to Judge Nora Barry Fischer and currently serves as a law clerk to Judge Maurice B. Cohill, Jr., who both serve as district judges for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Some thoughts for 2012

(Continued from Page 1)

solving to donate a bit more time in pro bono hours this year to help a nonprofit legal organization or its client base. If you can't find the time, you can always help with a financial contribution — even very small gifts make a huge difference to organizations working on tight budgets.

Thanks, as always, for letting me share my thoughts with you. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Voices and Views*, where we have great articles from many of our members and some new contributors. My co-editor, Mary Kate Coleman, and I encourage you each to send in articles or blog posts that you've written or read that you think would be of interest to WIP members, tell us about events you've attended, and let us know about hot legal issues that you are confronting. Remember, this is our newsletter. We want to hear from you.

