

2008 Washington Women Lawyers Annual Dinner and Leadership Institute Kicks off a New Year of Unity, Celebration, and Inspiration

By Tracy Sarich and Margaret Lee

On October 10, 2008, Washington Women Lawyers (WWL) proudly bid farewell to its 2007-2008 board and launched its new board year with a renewed spirit of unity at its Annual Awards Dinner and Leadership Institute. WWL's sold-out dinner and CLE, *Breaking Through the Marble Ceiling: Women in Politics*, featured keynote speaker **Donna Brazile** and the largest turn-out in WWL history.

Ms. Brazile is an American author, educator, and political activist and strategist. Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Brazile was the first African-American to direct a major presidential campaign. She has worked on and advised several campaigns for Democratic candidates, including President Bill Clinton's campaign in 1992 and 1996. After the post-election fight over votes in the 2000 presidential election in Florida, Ms. Brazile was appointed Chair of the Democratic National Committee's Voting Rights Institute.

In addition to her political accomplishments, Ms. Brazile is well respected in the academic world. She has served as a lecturer at the University of

Maryland, College Park, a fellow at Harvard University's Institute of Politics, and is currently an Adjunct Professor of Women and Gender Studies at Georgetown University. Ms. Brazile also serves on the advisory board of the Washington & Lee Mock Convention, where students are given the opportunity to attempt to predict presidential candidates.

In the media world, Ms. Brazile is a weekly contributor and political commentator on CNN's The Situation Room, American Morning, NPR's political corner, and CNN's Election Coverage. In addition, she is a columnist for Roll Call and a contributing writer for Ms. Magazine. *Cooking With Grease*, Ms. Brazile's memoir of her life and work in politics, was published in 2004.

With this amazing wealth of experience, Ms. Brazile's inspiring keynote address on October 10, 2008, capped the evening as she shared her insight into the 2008 election cycle and the importance of women on the national stage. Ms. Brazile captivated the audience, sweeping everyone into her journey, and the journey of other women, to careers in politics and beyond. Ms. Brazile discussed the importance of the past year in political history and the strides women have made in leadership positions. She made a point to reiterate the importance of the work Hillary Clinton did to

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WWL Keynote Speaker, Donna Brazile

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WWL Mission Statement

The principal purposes of Washington Women Lawyers are:

- to further the full integration of women in the legal profession, and
- to promote equal rights and opportunities for women and to prevent discrimination against them.

Washington Women Break the Marble Ceiling

By Gwen Marie Forrest and Grace O'Connor

Washington women have a rich history of breaking the political marble ceiling through hard work and successful campaigning. For those women lawyers thinking of making the move to a political position, our state's women leaders have helped to pave the way. This groundwork, laid by generations of women, is certainly evident in the current composition of Washington's government.

In 1910, women secured suffrage through a permanent amendment to the Washington State Constitution, a decade prior to the national ratification of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution.¹ Following suffrage, Washington's first women legislators were elected in 1912.² In 1926, Seattle elected Bertha Knight Landes, the first woman mayor of any major American city, and to date, Seattle's only woman mayor.³ In 1976, Washington elected its first woman governor, Dixy Lee Ray.⁴ In 1993, Christine Gregoire was the first woman elected as Attorney General, where she served three terms, and later successfully ran for governor.⁵ In 2001, Washington was the first state to elect two women to the U.S. Senate, Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell. In 1998 and 2004, Washington had the distinction of electing the

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



By Amy Robinson,
WWL President

I hope this newsletter edition finds you all happy, healthy, (warm!) and excited about the New Year!

As I have been connecting with members and other board members in the past few weeks, I have been asked quite often to repeat a story that I shared with you all at the Annual Event in October. Although this story is quite personal to me, and I certainly don't want to diminish it by repeating it too frequently, I find myself willing to share it just one last time with those of you who found significance from it as I did. I also want to share this with those of you who weren't able to join us that terrific night in October when we all gathered together to celebrate our accomplishments, honor the legacies of the women who have inspired and encouraged us, and hear the moving words of our keynote speaker, Donna Brazile.

This story begins after I graduated from college and went to work for a time in human resources. I had toyed with the thought of going to law school for many years, but finally one day, after an encounter with one of our in-house attorneys, I just knew that it was time to take the leap and do it. Shortly after that I was taking the LSAT and submitting applications to law schools. I was thrilled, and honestly somewhat shocked, when the school that I wanted most of all accepted me. I was fortunate to be able to celebrate the news of my acceptance with my grandmother.

I had always been exceptionally close with Gram, and thought I knew her and the story of her life well, at least until that day. Until that day, I knew she was a woman who valued education, who had obtained a masters degree in teaching in a time when that certainly wasn't expected of a woman, nor particularly encouraged. After marrying my grandfather she used her education and inherent leadership skills to raise 3 children, teach piano to the children in the community, and stay actively engaged in a host of social and political activities. She also spent much of her time mentoring other mothers and young adults who were struggling or in need of some encourage-

ment.

But on that day, I learned something entirely new about Gram. When I arrived at her house and burst out the news that I had been accepted into my chosen law school, she shrieked and hugged me like I knew that she would. But then, with tears beginning to well in her eyes, she excused herself and went upstairs. She returned a few moments later with a single piece of paper and handed it to me. It was a letter, from an [unnamed] prestigious local university, dated December 1935, it read (and I'm going to paraphrase a bit here):

Dear Ms. Mary Trevitt. Thank you for your interest in our School of Geology. While your academic skills are indeed impressive and your application is compelling, we regret that we are unable to offer you admission. The School of Geology is limited to male students only at this time, as we feel that the skills and aptitudes necessary to succeed in the field of Geology, simply aren't suited to female students.

We hope that you will consider other educational pursuits more appropriate for a talented young lady such as yourself ..."

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Annual Dinner Highlights Breaking the Marble Ceiling

(Continued from page 1)

break down barriers, especially for those who thought a woman could never be President. Also important, she felt, was Sarah Palin's inclusion on John McCain's ticket as the Vice-Presidential nominee. A marble ceiling was indeed broken in this last presidential election.

Ms. Brazile poignantly discussed her modest upbringing, but indicated the importance of political awareness that was instilled in her at a young age, and how she relied on that upbringing as an African-American woman attempting to break barriers in the political arena. For the attorneys, professionals, and students in attendance, it was "an uproarious and uplifting evening." Sara Springer, WWL Website VP, felt the evening was "a call to action for women to push expectations of those around them not to not just meet but exceed expectations, and to lift the benchmark for women."

The 2007-2008 Board also celebrated its Board Members of the Year from the State and Chapter Boards. The awards handed out that night included the WWL State Board Member of the Year, given to Pat Foster for her dedication to the office of Treasurer required countless hours of work, endless patience, and a heart of gold. In addition,

Lynnda Brown received the Capitol Chapter award; Emily Sheldrick received the Clark/St. Helens Chapter award; King County awarded both Kristin Peterson and Kristin Larson; Karen Klein received the Kitsap County award, Jemima McCullum received the Pierce County award; Beth Cullen-Fraser received the Snohomish County award; Deborah King received the Spokane County award; and Marie Gallagher received the Whatcom County award.

Additionally, three important women lawyers who have made our community great were honored. **Jo-Hanna Read** received the Passing the Torch Award for her excellent legal career. Ms Read has a distinguished legal career, and in her current solo practice represents clients in personal injury claims, with emphasis on representation of victims of sexual and/or physical abuse, therapy malpractice, and related areas. Also honored was **The Honorable Mary Yu**, who received the President's Award. Judge



Judges Yu and O'Connor at the WWL Annual Dinner

Yu, in addition to her responsibilities on the bench, tirelessly serves her community as a member of various Boards and Commissions, as well as a mentor to numerous women lawyers. **The Honorable Kathleen M. O'Connor** was also honored, and received the WWL Foundation Award. Judge O'Connor hails from Spokane and was the first woman elected to the Spokane County Superior Court. She has maintained a special interest in children's issues and is known as a mentor to many attorneys in Spokane, as well as a strong WWL supporter.

In addition to a remarkable dinner, WWL also hosted a CLE that same day, chaired by **Sharon McConnell** and **Rene Saade**. This sold-out half-day CLE brought together local and national speakers with women lawyers from a variety of practice areas to discuss ways in which women can increase their participation in elected politics – both as candidates and key voices within the political process.

Overall, the day was great a success and WWL looks forward to another inspiring year in 2009 fueled by the energy and enthusiasm of its board members, as well as returning and new members.

SUPPORT DV SURVIVORS: DONATE YOUR OLD CELL PHONES!

By Margaret Lee, Co-Editor WWL Newsletter

October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time when we pause to remember those whom we have lost to this epidemic, recognize those in our communities, workplaces and families who have survived, give thanks to those who work so hard every day to stop domestic violence, and reinvest our commitment. But, we can all help this cause out year round. As a part of its Domestic Violence Awareness Month Activities, the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence sponsors a used cell phone donation drive for ABA staff. Verizon Wireless continues to collect donated phones throughout the year, re-distributing these phones to domestic violence organizations and using the funds raised from refurbished phones to support services for victims of domestic violence. To learn more about the Verizon's HopeLine Project, please go to: <http://www.verizonwireless.com/b2c/aboutUs/communityservice/hopeLine.jsp> or <http://aboutus.vzw.com/communityservice/hopeLineRecycling.html>.

To donate your used wireless phone, you may: 1) donate used phones directly to any Verizon Wireless retail store nationwide; 2) send wireless phones and equipment donations to: Verizon Wireless HopeLine c/o ReCellular Inc., 2555 Bishop Circle W, Dexter, MI 48130. If you have any questions, contact Robin R. Runge, Esq. – Director, American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence, 740 15th Street NW, Washington DC, 20005. Phone: (202) 662-8637. Email: runger@staff.abanet.org.

Don't forget...It is time to renew your Washington Women Lawyers membership!

WWL and its local chapters are continuing their great work in 2009, including:

- * Providing networking opportunities for women in all areas of the state and areas of practice.
- * Presenting numerous CLE programs, some of which focus on the unique issues faced by women attorneys.
- * Providing mentoring opportunities that allow women in different phases of their careers to meet, share, and learn from each other.
- * Coordinating social functions so that women attorneys have a chance to connect in an informal setting.

Membership in WWL gives you access to these member benefits, as well as many others! Don't forget to renew your WWL membership today!

To renew your membership, please complete the attached membership enrollment/renewal form and return it to the address listed on the top of the form. To learn more about WWL and its programs, please visit www.wwl.org. Questions? Contact Alison Bettles at alison.bettles@klgates.com or Gena Bomotti at gbo-motti@riddellwilliams.com.

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WWL CAPITOL CHAPTER: NEW YEAR KICKED OFF TO A GREAT START

By Grace O'Connor, Law Clerk for Justice Debra L. Stephens

The Capitol Chapter kicked off its membership year on January 9th with a presentation and CLE in Olympia by attorneys Harry Schneider and Joe McMillan of Perkins Coie, who represented former Osama bin Laden driver Salim Ahmed Hamdan. Schneider and McMillan represented Hamdan in both military courts and civilian courts in connection with Hamdan's charges for conspiracy and providing material support to terrorists. The presentation included a discussion of the legal questions at play in the case, as well as colorful anecdotes about working in the military justice system and with Hamdan himself. The lively audience asked several interesting questions, and the presentation appeared to be enjoyed by all who attended. This event was co-sponsored with the Thurston County Government Bar Lawyers Association.

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Brazile Wows the Crowd



Tracy Sarich discusses Brazile's book



Amy Robinson, WWL President, Brazile, and Janet Chung, WWL Immediate Past President



Brazile, James Andrus, Partner K&L Gates, and Carla Lee, WWL Membership VP

Are you an aspiring writer? Do you have any ideas for the WWL State Reporter? Have your voice heard!

Please contact
Gwen Marie Forrest at
gwen.m.forrest@gmail.com or
Meg Lee at
meglee77@gmail.com



WWL 2008 Annual Awards Dinner

Breaking the Marble Ceiling

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highest percentage of women to its Statehouse, 40 percent in 1998 and 37 percent in 2004. This percentage dropped to 32 percent in 2009.⁶ Today, four of Washington's nine Supreme Court Justices are women, and nine out of twenty-two Court of Appeals judges are women. Clearly, many women in our state have made the choice to run campaigns for elected office, and have been successful.

WWL member Grace O'Conner interviewed Justice Debra Stephens to discuss her movement to becoming an elected official, first at the appellate court level, and then as a Supreme Court Justice. Looking back at her experience, Justice Stephens reflected that, "Getting to public office happens organically, it's a matter of being prepared and being flexible." Her biggest challenge to running a campaign was that she had never been involved in politics before, and she did not know where to start. Therefore, her first logical move was to form a team of people who did know about campaigning. Justice Stephens, noting that she ran unopposed, indicated that the most rewarding part of campaigning was traveling all over the state and meeting people from all walks of life. In looking to what might prevent qualified individuals from running for public office, Justice Stephens pointed to the cost, and indicated that it is especially difficult for judicial candidates because they cannot ask for money.

While campaigning for a political office might seem at first blush to be the same as campaigning for judicial office, Justice Stephens argues that they should be dramatically different. A partisan office campaign style would not serve the judiciary, and the challenge is helping voters to understand this difference, especially when partisan groups support judicial candidates. For women lawyers who are thinking of running for office, Justice Stephens encourages them to

get involved at the grass roots level: "If you want to run for county commissioner, get involved in a citizen group that interacts with the board of commissioners and appears before them. Go to public meetings to see what goes on there, and understand that in a lot of public offices, you are really paid to listen."

Washington's wealth of experienced women should not be overlooked, and Justice Stephens suggests that women should seek out and take the advice of women that have gone before; seek out mentorships, and hear stories and challenges. Many of the challenges are not about the job itself, but about work-life balance, the challenges the job brings to family life, and that is information you only get from the women that have held the office you are pursuing.

¹ <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/timeline/suffrage.htm>.

² <http://www.washingtonwomenshistory.org/themes/electedwomen/default.aspx>

³ <http://www.seattle.gov/CityArchives/Exhibits/Women/panel5.htm>.

⁴ <http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm>.

⁵ <http://www.atg.wa.gov/page.aspx?id=3686>.

⁶ <http://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/LIC/Documents/Statistical%20Reports/History%20of%20Women%20in%20the%20Legislature.pdf>.



"No, Bob, it's called medication!"

Cartoon by WWL Member Kirstin Peterson, www.kirstoons.com

President's Letter

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I finished reading the letter and looked up to see my grandmother's face, tear soaked, but beaming. "I saved this letter because I just knew someday they would know they were wrong. Today, I truly believe that they do."

Words cannot describe the value of that moment to me. Nor can the opportunity I had to sit at the foot of that woman, and have her pass on her legacy to me, in that and so many other powerful moments. And I hope, and indeed feel obligated, to do the same someday for other young women who need it like I did and still do.

Members and friends, I tell you this story because while I am truly excited and motivated about the work we are doing, I am also genuinely concerned that we are losing a unique opportunity to share our legacies with one another.

Perhaps many of you, particularly those of you whose legacies paved the way for us today, have simply gotten busy and assumed that we are healthy and thriving without you. Well, we are not. We need you. We need you to share your experiences, share the battles you've fought- big and small- and share the lessons you've learned so that we can carry them forward.

And, for those of you on the other side of the spectrum, perhaps you think that you just need to focus on your billable hours and, like many of us, say to yourself "I'll get involved later...when things slow down." Well, I'm here to tell you, things just don't slow down. And if you sacrifice a billable hour or two to build strong bridges within our community, I guarantee your life, and your practice, will be richer for it.

I hope that by sharing that story with you again in this newsletter, you come to appreciate the importance, and indeed the sense of

urgency, I feel about making sure we all do what we can to connect as lawyers and as women. We need to continue to build, and rebuild, our sense of community, and we need to keep the bridges of communication strong so that we can share the legacy of those who walk before and beside us with those who follow behind us. Through WWL, we have the resources and the network available to us to make that happen.

With your support and encouragement, I'm pleased to report that our new Legacy Program is in its formative stages. Our vision is that the Legacy Program will be about more than just mentorship, but also about sharing resources, about facilitating meaningful connections, and about helping our members be excellent in our lives and practices. But most of all, we hope that it will be about sharing the legacy of women lawyers. I particularly want to thank its champions and visionaries Tracy Sarich (Legacy Program VP), Eileen Concannon (Immediate Past President, KCBA), and Judge Ann Schindler (Court of Appeals, Div. II) for leading the effort.

We will have a regular section of the newsletter devoted to the Legacy Program, so keep reading the newsletter for more information. Please also be sure to renew your membership and watch your email for more information about how you can get involved and share the legacy of WWL.

Thank you again for entrusting me to lead this amazing organization, and with this great board beside me, I look forward to a productive, enjoyable and exciting year ahead!

WWL LAUNCHES LEGACY PROJECT

By Tracy Sarich, WWL VP Legacy Project

This year, WWL will focus on recognizing and reconvening the many women who made our organization possible and guided us through more than 30 years of service to women lawyers in Washington. Through our newly created Legacy Program, WWL will be working with each of our county Chapters to reconnect with our founders and former board members at the State and Chapter levels in the hope of renewing our ties with those who made us the success we are today. Two of Washington's most dynamic women leaders will help WWL lead this program, **Eileen Concannon**, Immediate Past President of the King County Bar, and **The Honorable Ann Schindler**, Washington State Court of Appeals, Division I. Their devotion to the mission of WWL and mentorship of countless women lawyers has allowed generations of women lawyers to make meaningful contributions to their communities and find satisfying legal careers. We are deeply grateful for their willingness to help design and lead the launch of this program and look forward to an exciting year ahead.

The Legacy Program's two-part goal is to help Chapter Boards connect with women leaders in their communities and develop programs that are relevant to women lawyers at every stage of their professional lives. Through our Chapters, we hope to increase meaningful programming across Washington in order to help women lawyers become more professionally effective and connected with one another. We hope you will become involved this year in this exciting program by renewing your membership, or joining for the first time, and attending the many programs our Chapters have planned for you across Washington. We also hope you will help us connect with women who are leaders in your local communities and those who have served on Chapter and State Boards and Committees throughout the years. We look forward to announcing events and opportunities for you to become more involved this year and hope to see you at our many upcoming events.

If you, or someone you know, served on a Chapter or State Board, please help us find you by emailing Tracy Sarich at tsarich@foodista.com

BRIEFLY SPEAKING: REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark your calendars!

March 11, 2009 WWL Board Meeting. Members are always invited to join us for our regular monthly board meetings which are held at K&L Gates in Seattle. Please contact WWL President Amy Robinson at arobinson@barronsmithlaw.com or Secretary Jessica Skelton at jskelton@klgates.com if you have questions, would like more information, or have an item you'd like to request be placed on the agenda for consideration.

March 12, 2009 RDI International Women's Day Women & Land Luncheon, Sheraton Hotel, Seattle, Keynote Speaker Ambassador Swanee Hunt. For more information contact my-land@rdiland.org.

Congratulations!

WWL State Treasurer Mary Crego made partner at Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson. Congratulations, Mary!

WWL Members Dalynne Singleton and Jean Jorgensen are pleased to announce the formation of the law firm of SINGLETON & JORGENSEN, INC. P.S.

Joan Tierney (WWL-Past President 2007) was recently appointed to serve as an Administrative Law Judge at the Office of Administrative Hearings.

WWL PIERCE COUNTY HOSTS NEW EVENT

By Annie Bernhard, WWL Pierce County

The Pierce County Chapter of the Washington Women Lawyers hosted a wine-tasting/meet and greet for new admittees of the Washington State Bar Association on November 5, 2008 at Tacoma Wine Merchants in Tacoma's Stadium District. The event was attended by several new admittees and members of the PCWWL who got to know each other over tasty hors d'oeuvres and fine wines chosen by Bill Bonnie, owner of Tacoma Wine Merchants. This was the first time the PCWWL has hosted an event like this and the Chapter plans on making it an annual event for all new admittees currently practicing or planning to practice in the Pierce County area. For more information about the Pierce County Chapter and how to get involved, please contact Co-President Brooke Johnson at bjohnson@gth-law.com.

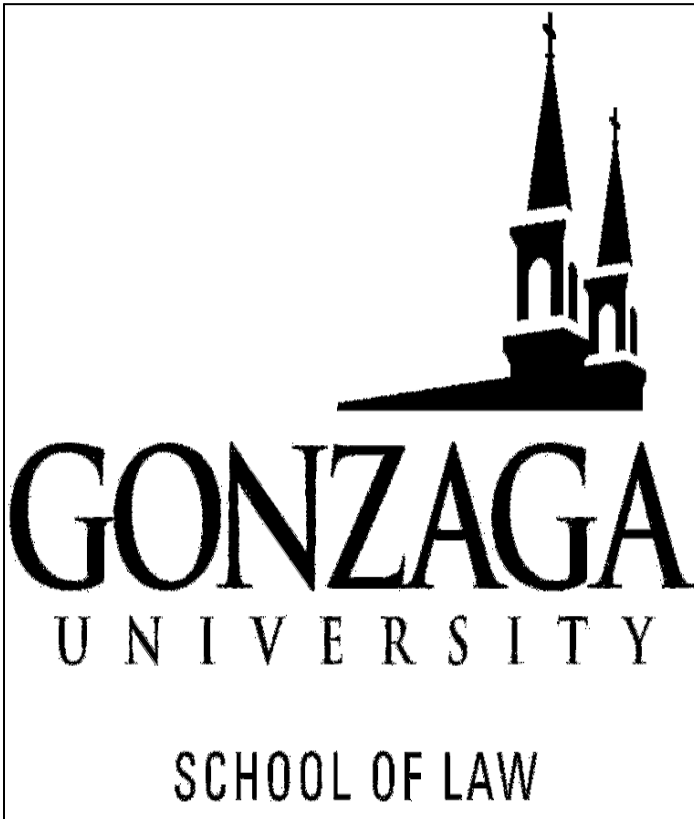


Remember When...



WWL State Reporter from April 1980 congratulated Washington's four newly-appointed women judges: Judge Betty Fletcher, the first woman from Washington to be appointed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals; Judge Barbara Rothstein, the first woman to be appointed to the United States District Court in Washington; Judge Barbara Durham, the first woman to serve on the Washington State Court of Appeals; and Judge Shannon Wetherall, appointed to the King County Superior Court bench.

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To submit event notices or announcements, please email wwl@wwl.org with the word "Announcement" in the subject line.

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