

THE VOICE

OF

KING COUNTY WASHINGTON WOMEN LAWYERS

SPECIAL EDITION: HONORING OUR FOUNDERS

SPRING EDITION, MAY 2007

JANICE NIEMI, FORMER KING COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE AND WASHINGTON STATE SENATOR, A FOUNDER OF WASHINGTON WOMEN LAWYERS.



When Janice Niemi told friends that she was planning to attend law school some of them accused her of “taking away a man’s job.” In 1968 Janice Niemi was one of four women in her University of Washington School of Law graduating class. Few women were practicing law and the legal community was less than welcoming to these women.

Janice found that after law school the options were few. You could go to the prosecutor’s office and handle the sex cases or you could go into family law. She felt lucky to find a job with legal services, fighting the war on poverty. Still she began to encounter a legal culture where she was made to feel unwelcome.

In Court she noticed the Judges would call her case by calling out only her first name while male attorneys cases were called with a formal “Mr. So and So.” Another time, when she appeared opposite another female attorney the Judge said “girls, have at it.”

So, along with Betty Bracelin and Betty Fletcher, Janice began to periodically visit the University of Washington just before the LSAT’s were given, and encourage other women to become attorneys. In 1969 she was sitting on fellow female attorney One day Chris Young’s patio with about thirty five women lawyers in the state who had responded to their letter about founding a women’s association. Women from as far away as the tri-cities and the Olympic Peninsula came, excited to be part of a group of women attorneys. And so, Washington Women Lawyers was born.

The women met in each other’s offices, twenty or thirty of them per meeting. Together the women fought to get women on

(Continued on page 3)

KCWWL CALENDAR

Late May/Early June 2007

KCWWL Dress for Success Clothing Drive. Stay tuned for details or contact Kristin Peterson, V.P. Civic Events, kristinp@wsha.org

June 1-3, 2007

Access to Justice Conference; Wenatchee Coast Hotel.

June 13, 2007

KCWWL Annual Judicial Appreciation & Honors Luncheon. Please see page 6 for more information.

June 20, 2007

MAMAS brown bag lunch. Please see page 4 for more information.

June 9, 2007

Chaya Auction. Westin Bellevue, For more information, please contact sabina@chayaseattle.org

June 21

KCBA Annual Awards Dinner; Grand Hyatt, Seattle.

August 2007

KCWWL Summer Dinner and Legal Workshop at the Jubilee House. Stay tuned for details or contact Kristin Peterson, V.P. Civic Events, kristinp@wsha.org

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JUDICIAL APPRECIATION LUNCHEON, JUNE 13, 2007

On Wednesday, June 13, 2007, KCWWL will also honor members of the King County and Washington State Judiciary at its annual Judicial Appreciation Luncheon. Each year at this luncheon, members of the legal community gather to recognize the remarkable contributions of the Judiciary and to pay tribute through annual awards to particular members and friends of the Judiciary who have contributed to access to justice for women and minorities.

Last year's awards recipients included Justice Tom Chambers, Eileen Concannon, Judge Laura Inveen, and June Krumpotick of the Northwest Women's Law Center. This year's recipients will be announced soon!

The luncheon will be held on June 13, 2007 at the Spanish Ballroom at the Olympic Fairmont Hotel. Tickets are \$50 for KCWWL members, \$60 for non-members, and \$25 for students. Sponsorship opportunities include:

Premium Sponsor (\$1,500) includes: A table for nine (9) luncheon guests plus special recognition throughout the event as a Premier Sponsor. Recognition also includes prominent placement of your firm or organization's name on our: stage and all event signage, luncheon program, KCWWL website, KCWWL newsletter VOICE, & the KCBA Bar Bulletin.

Vanguard Sponsor (\$1,000) includes: A table for nine (9) luncheon guests plus special recognition throughout the event as a Vanguard Sponsor. Recognition also includes your firm or organization's name on our: stage and all event signage,

luncheon program, KCWWL website, KCWWL newsletter VOICE, & the KCBA Bar Bulletin.

Partner Sponsor (\$750) includes: A table for seven (7) luncheon guests plus special recognition throughout the event as a Partnership Sponsor. Recognition includes your firm or organization's name on our: stage and all event signage, luncheon program, KCWWL website, KCWWL newsletter VOICE, & the KCBA Bar Bulletin.

Associate Sponsor (\$500) includes: Five (5) luncheon tickets plus special recognition throughout the event as an Associate Sponsor. Recognition includes your firm or organization's name on our: event signage, luncheon program, KCWWL website, KCWWL newsletter VOICE, & the KCBA Bar Bulletin.

Friend Sponsor (\$200) includes: Two (2) Luncheon tickets plus recognition as a Friend in our event signage, luncheon program, KCWWL website, and the KCWWL newsletter VOICE.

For more information, including sponsorship opportunities, please contact Luncheon Chair Becky Andrews at (206) 389-1635 or at randrews@riddellwilliams.com.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our first issue of THE VOICE. As you know, KCWWL is devoted to working with and on behalf of women lawyers in King County. When I became 2007 President, I promised to increase communication to our members – THE VOICE is the first step towards this goal. We hope our first of four issues of THE VOICE will inspire and encourage you as we celebrate women who have laid the foundation for women lawyers in King County. Our great respect and gratitude to the women who founded our organization inform all our current efforts to increase the full integration of women in the legal profession. Likewise, our future issues will feature articles about women whose contributions to King County and the legal profession make our lives more meaningful and our organization immensely proud. As you know, KCWWL provides opportunities for members to enrich their careers through CLEs, civic events, and networking opportunities. We hope to see you at an upcoming event and invite you to become more involved with KCWWL, contribute an article to THE VOICE, and contact us about volunteer opportunities in the community and on our various committees.

With warmest regards,

Alisa Brodkowitz, 2007 KCWWL
President

WOMEN AND THE WAR IN IRAQ

Did you know that 161,000 American service women have been deployed as part of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that one out of seven American troops are women, the highest number in history? Do you often find that mention of the Iraq war rarely raises the fact that women are

serving on the front lines and also left at home raising children alone with financial and emotional hardships? The KCWWL's board has launched a special project to occur in the fall, 2007 so that public awareness can be raised on the impact of the war on women.

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We will focus on issues facing women and the war in Iraq, including soldiers serving overseas, the impact on women and children with spouses deployed, and Iraqi civilian women impacted by the war. This important and timely topic will be covered in three venues: 1) a special edition of the VOICES newsletter dedicated to these issues (please submit articles to

Moni T. Law at moni-esq@aol.com no later than August 1, 2007); 2) a CLE covering legal issues affecting women veterans and their families; and 3) a public symposium in the evening following the afternoon CLE covering topics such as health care access challenges for female soldiers upon return, economic opportunities and hardships for women serving in Iraq, Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and PTSD cases, human rights concerns for Iraqi women, impact on military families including separation from children and spouses while deployed, and more. This is a panel discussion that you will not want to miss! The CLE and Symposium will

be held at the newly expanded Seattle Art Museum (SAM). More details to be announced in the next newsletter.

If you have family who have served, or you yourself are a member of the military with a story to share, please contact planning committee chair Moni T. Law at 206-915-8138 to provide your valuable insights for this project.

JANICE NIEMI, CONT'D.

(Continued from page 1)

Washington State Bar Committees. They worked to open firms up to hiring more women. Washington Women Lawyers wanted women attorneys to have more female mentors, like female law professors and female judges. But bar polls (the equivalent of today's judicial rating system) continuously rated female judicial candidates badly. So the women of WWL helped to get each other elected. They also wanted to increase

the number of female partners; a problem which Janice realizes persists today.

In 1972 Janice became the first elected female Superior Court Judge, Judge Nancy Ann Holman had been appointed by Governor Dan Evans in 1971. At her first annual meeting of Washington State Court Judges she was shunned. When she approached a group of other judges they would turn their back on her and refuse to speak to her.

After serving as a District Court Judge for two years and a Superior Court Judge for five years, Janice Niemi went to Washington DC where she was the Acting and Deputy General Counsel for the Small Business Administration. Upon returning to Seattle she served in the Washington State Senate and the House of Representatives from 1983 to 1994. She was again elected to the Superior Court in 1995 and retired in 2000.

Her message to women cur-

rently practicing law is that the obstacles still exist. It is not alright to wait until you encounter bias first hand to become active. We must continue to work together to make sure that women are represented at every level of practice and in the profession.

KING COUNTY WASHINGTON WOMEN LAWYERS 2006 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Danielle Franco-Malone
Receives Her Scholarship

The annual holiday party provided an opportunity to honor our two King County Washington Women Lawyers Scholarship recipients, Elizabeth Greene and Danielle Franco-Malone. Each received a \$1,000 scholarship and a full-year membership to Washington Women Lawyers.

Elizabeth is a second year law student at Seattle University and current board member of the Women's Law Caucus. Active in moot court and mock trial, she has been selected to compete in regional mock trial and national moot court competitions. She is also a member of the Seattle Journal for Social Justice and is currently an extern for Judge Monica Benton in the Western District of Washington. Her 1L summer was spent at Columbia Legal Services. Prior to law school Elizabeth worked as a project assistant in a Chicago firm and taught fourth grade.

A second year law student at the University of Washington, Danielle is a board mem-

ber of both the Law Women's Caucus and Washington Women Lawyers. She currently serves on the Pacific Rim Law Journal and is active in Law Students for Choice, the ACLU and the NARAL Pro-Choice Washington PAC Committee. She participated in the million-person March for Women's Lives in Washington D.C. in 2004 and has externed for the Northwest Women's Law Center.

Among her many commitments to women's health and human rights, she also volunteers for CAIR Project, which provides pro-choice options and counseling. She adds, "advancing the legal status of women has been the driving force of my adult life and is what motivated me to pursue a legal education. I believe the law is a powerful tool that can be used to improve women's day to day lives."

In honoring these women and helping facilitate their legal education, "KCWWL wishes to promote individualism and courage within the profession. The purpose of the scholarship is to recognize

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women who have made a significant contribution to the community or have overcome great obstacles, including financial."

--N. Elizabeth Mills, University of Washington KCWWL Student Representative



Elizabeth Greene Receives
Her Scholarship

MAMAS AND KCWWL

Stay tuned for a regular column from the new organization MAMAS, which will address issues of interest to women who are both practicing lawyers and mothers. In this first issue, we feature the following calendar of upcoming MAMAS Events.

June 2nd from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. - MAMAS Monthly Networking Event Located at KidsQuest Museum in Factoria Mall

June 20: MAMAS brown bag lunch. Excerpts of the documentary "Motherhood Mani-

festo" will be shown. This video is produced by Moms Rising, a grassroots organization formed to educate the public about the problems facing mothers and families. RSVP by June 15th, to Cmyrick@KellerRohrback.com.

GRANDMA WAS A LAWYER

Not many of us have the privilege of having grandmothers who were lawyers. Mine was born on a small central Kentucky tobacco farm in 1900. While it was a tough existence, her family was better off than most at the time.

In 1918, Grandma took two suitcases and a train ride to Washington, DC to seek her fortune and build a life. 1928 found her pregnant, with my two-year-old mother, without a husband, broke, and in the beginning of the Depression.

She returned to the farm, where my uncle was born. Grandma, whose husband had developed amnesia and left after suffering a devastating brain injury, was not content to be a farm daughter.

Once my uncle was weaned, she left her children on the farm and traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio, where she found employment as a stenographer in the Veteran's Administration and a room in a boarding house across the Ohio River in Covington, Kentucky.

Lawyers were lucky to have any clients during the Depression, especially paying ones. Several Cincinnati lawyers banded together to teach law school classes at the Cincinnati YMCA Night Law School (years later absorbed by the University of Kentucky) during the Depression as they attempted to provide for their families. Grandma, an intellectual person, decided to get a law degree there. The

classes were at night, of course.

Grandma, 32 when she started, worked 5½ days a week as a clerk-typist. She shared a double bed and a bedroom with another roomer in a widow's home. After expenses, her meager earnings were sent to her mother to pay for her children's expenses.

She financed her law school expenses by borrowing against a life insurance policy. Friends gave her clothes. Her landlady refused rent while grandma attended classes, but Grandma still contributed her share to the food kitty that was used to purchase food for all the tenants.

My great-grandmother, by then a widow herself raising my mother and uncle and running the tobacco farm alone, wrote her, "I am glad you are taking the law course and in time to come I am sure that you will do something with it."

Grandma finished law school and graduated on June 18, 1937. My mother, then 11, remembers that she was allowed to pick out a \$2.98 dress, instead of only choosing from the \$1.98 selection in the store, for the occasion, which, for her was a very rare treat.

Grandma's bar review course book, now in my office, was very similar to the bar review materials I remember studying

30 years ago, as were the practice questions.

On September 18, 1937, Grandma and her family drove a car to Frankfort, where Grandma appeared before the Kentucky Supreme Court to be sworn in. My mother was allowed to sit on the front-row polished bench to watch.

Her most striking memory, though, was celebrating the occasion by going to a restaurant, getting chocolate pudding for dessert, and paying for a meal – an unheard of extravagance at the time.

Later that week, Grandma was mailed a letter by the Court Clerk requesting the \$6.50 license fee. She was requested, "in order to expedite the matter" to send "a post office money order or certified check for this amount to save the delay in having a personal check cleared through the bank", something she most certainly did. Her law school diploma and certificate of admission to practice are proudly displayed in my office.

World War I veterans still had Veterans Preference Points in 1937, so after earning her law license, Grandma continued to work as a clerk-typist. She accepted that, and did not consider that she was treated differently from a man or subject to any discrimination.

Once World War II fully involved our nation, she finally became eligible for a position that utilized her education,

and moved to the Adjudication Division of the Veteran's Administration.

She served on administrative review boards that determined the eligibility for exemption from military service of men who had been drafted. The job required a command of medicine as well as law. Because she was a woman, she served as a citizen member of the review board, not an attorney member. Again, she simply accepted without complaint what would today be considered a huge and unacceptable discriminatory slight.

She considered herself fortunate to have a job that had allowed her to support her children through the depres-

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sion, including sending my mother to the University of Kentucky and my uncle to a high school academy. To save money, she continued to reside in boarding homes.

She was a woman, so was given assignments in fairly undesirable geographic areas, away from her family. When World War II ended, the vet-

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GRANDMA WAS A LAWYER, CONT'D.

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erans came home, again with Veteran's Preference Points, and Grandma was demoted for a year or so from her high paying \$4,520/year Authorization Officer position in the Adjudication Division of the Veteran's Administration to a clerk-typist.

She considered herself fortunate, again, that she did not lose her job as many women did throughout the country at the end of the War. She was eventually reinstated to an attorney position. This resulted in moves to Lexington, Louisville, Columbus, Ohio, and Philadelphia, and eventually to Huntington, West Virginia.

Huntington, a coal-mining town in the Appalachian Mountains, was considered a hardship location, so Grandma was given a significant raise when she moved there. It was in Huntington that she retired from the Veteran's Administration in 1966 with what she considered to be a generous pension.

Grandma maintained an active interest in law and politics throughout her retirement years. Experienced in administrative and constitu-

tional law, she watched every minute of the Watergate hearings, and deplored the deterioration of ethics in law, politics, and business that she saw developing at the time.

It meant a great deal to Grandma when I chose to go to law school myself. We stayed in close communication during those years, although jurisprudence was not often a topic of our conversations.

She financed a third of my law school education, which occurred in far more comfortable circumstances than did hers. When I graduated in 1977, she stayed with me for the occasion. I was still studying for final exams when she arrived.

I vividly recall her picking up my Administrative Law textbook, and caressing it as she always did her books. My Administrative Law professor, Seattle civil rights attorney Kenneth MacDonald, was a remarkable orator who had been a product of Dartmouth and Harvard Law School, and was a contemporary of Joe Kennedy, who died in the War.

I was to quickly find out that Grandma's mind was as well-honed as Mr. MacDonald's. She Simply moved her fin-

gers down the table of contents, which listed topics and US Supreme Court Cases spanning more than two centuries. Grandma, then almost 78, knew those cases like the back of her hand – the subject of debate, the holdings and minority positions, and which justices stood on each side of the decisions in all of the cases – and described each of them eloquently. I simply sat in amazement and listened to her.

My law school application required that I answer the topic, "Why I Wish to go to Law School." I knew my initial answer at the time to be too self-centered and materialistic to be acceptable, so I turned to Grandma for help. My reasons for being a lawyer have long since become more altruistic. While I cannot recall what I submitted, Grandma picked up her red ball point editing pen, wrote this on her legal pad, and mailed it to me.

"It is a universal and never ending study. From the earliest historical period laws have been enacted enabling people to enjoy certain rights and privileges and requiring them to perform certain duties. Law enters our lives from the hour of our birth

and may not leave even with our burial.

"History shows man has learned moral and ethical standards from the history of religion and law. Unjust laws or laws wrongfully interpreted can ruin a man's life or destroy a nation. The study of law requires a search for truth and facts about many other professions, such as medicine, commerce, banking or agriculture.

I think I will find law very, very interesting and that I will be better qualified to know what to do to promote the welfare of my country and its citizens as well as myself."

Ruby Flanagan Buchanan Wrench died in 1983, having made the world a little bit better with her commitment to the rule of law, the constitution, and the role lawyers play in the order of our lives, and pioneering the places we women have in law today.

—Jennifer C. Rydberg owns her own firm and practices in Kent, Washington

2007 KCWWL BOARD

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The 2007 KCWWL Board

FIVE REASONS TO JOIN KCWWL

1. Network, Network, Network ..
2. Develop witty responses to the blank stares you get when you ask about your firm's part-time policy
3. You don't have to wear a silly hat
4. Shatter the Glass Ceiling!!
5. Meet some of the best and brightest women attorneys in King County and around Washington, at events like our Meet-and-Greet (photo).

FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
PLEASE VISIT: WWW.KCWWL.ORG



KING COUNTY
WASHINGTON
Women Lawyers



KING COUNTY WASHINGTON WOMEN
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VISIT OUR WEBPAGE

WWW.KCWWL.ORG

Furthering the full integration of women in the legal profession, promoting equal rights and opportunities for women, and preventing discrimination.

Enhancing the recognition and effectiveness of women lawyers and judges in the profession and community.

Providing a forum for informing members and the community about issues of social and legal concern to women.

Increasing interaction between women lawyers of diverse backgrounds and practices.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATE

As part of our newsletter, we hope to report on international women's human rights issues. Our first report will be about international women who are a little closer to home: immigrant women within the United States. International women who come to the U.S. having married American men often have big hopes, big dreams - dreams of the perfect American life that people all over the world often dream. What happens when those dreams are shattered as a result of domestic violence? Do they have to return to their country once the marriage is over? In some cases, applications are not filed to make the woman a legal resident (which would eventually lead to citizenship). In some cases, applications are abandoned deliberately- perhaps to punish or to be vindictive. Can they still rely on their husbands to continue in their applications to become legal residents?

In such circumstances, the woman is not

left without choices, though it might not seem that way. In the event that there is abandonment or divorce, one can in fact apply to "adjust her status" by herself. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was enacted with this very scenario in mind. As long as there is evidence of a valid marriage, status of the US citizen spouse, and some evidence of abuse, there is hope of a successful application for a "self petition for victims of domestic violence.

Facing uncertainty and financial hardship, women can get assistance from various organizations in Seattle. The Northwest Immigrants Rights Project (NWIRP) and the Access to Justice Institute (ATJI) have consistently provided free assistance to these women.

As a result of help from many attorneys who have donated time and effort through organizations such as NWIRP and ATJI, immigrant women facing

these difficulties have been able to live full lives in the United States further enriching America's diversity of culture and experience represented by its international women.

– Tahmina Watson

In Our Next Issue ...

Watch out for our next issue!

If you want to know more about what is happening in the pro bono community in King County, pro bono opportunities available and how you can get involved, please stay tuned for our July/August newsletter.