

# State Reporter



## **2011's Annual Event** **Women, Leadership & the Law**

*By Alexandra Krakow, UW 1L*

On a clear evening in downtown Seattle, members and supporters of WWL gathered at the Grand Hyatt for the Annual Awards Dinner and Legacy Presentation. The event was kicked off by a lively meet and greet reception where members of the legal community, law students, Washington Supreme Court justices, and living legends in the legal profession gathered to meet new friends, reconnect with old ones, share stories and laughter, and maybe even share a drink- it was Friday after all!

This year's event theme was "We Can Do It! Women, Leadership & the Law," as was broadcast by its mascot, the timeless icon, Rosie the Riveter. Rosie was far from the only icon present however. Throughout the evening the podium was graced by true icons and outstanding examples of leadership from the Washington, and greater, legal community.

Looking around the room from the podium, WWL founding member and first president Jane Noland exclaimed "THIS is what we dreamed of." Ms. Noland was honored to receive the Legacy Award for her enduring dedication to WWL and its goals. Before passing the gavel, 2010-2011 WWL President Jessica Skelton presented the President's Award to one of her mentors, the Honorable Justice Mary Fairhurst. Justice Fairhurst also had inspiring words for the crowd, touting that the work of the WWL "is changing the world in Washington."

The keynote speaker, Dr. Sarah Weddington, is truly a national icon. As a second year law student at the University of Texas, Dr. Weddington started what would become the Supreme Court

landmark case of Roe v. Wade. She is believed to be the youngest known person to win a case before our highest court. As to how she got the case? "I was the only one willing to do it for free!" she says. Since arguing the case, Dr. Weddington has held many esteemed positions, including serving as a Texas state congresswoman and as an advisor on women's issues and leadership to President Carter. She shared, with an unaffected humor and charisma, her experiences with the difficulties facing women attempting to gain positions of leadership while she was in school and in her career. Her poignant and often laugh out loud funny stories showcased not only how much the position of women in our society and in the legal field has changed in the last fifty years, but also how moments of adversity are often the best opportunities for growth and leadership. Dr. Weddington worked the room with a humble grace, and exemplified the traits of a born leader and mentor by taking the time to personally ensure that the wide-eyed law students attending the event had a chance to meet the Washington Supreme Court Justices present. She also paid tribute to the icons of our local legal community, and indeed did not start her speech until she had led the room in a chorus of "Happy Birthday" to Claire Sherman Thomas. As for her advice to current and future leaders? "You look at the world, think about what needs to change...and then you figure out how to change it."

WWL's new President Alison Bettles immediately headed the charge as she laid out goals for WWL in the coming year. These included determining why more women are not seeking the bench,

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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.

## WWL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*By Alison Bettles,  
WWL President*

I am honored to serve as the President of Washington Women Lawyers during its 41st year. Over the past four decades, WWL has worked to promote the full integration of women in the legal profession. Due in part to WWL and other organizations like it, the face of the legal profession has changed considerably. Greater numbers of women are entering the profession now than ever before. In fact, currently nearly half of all law school graduates are women.

With all the progress that has been made, we are often asked whether WWL is still a necessary organization. After all, if half of the attorneys entering the profession are women, hasn't the "full integration of women in the legal profession" been achieved? While it is true that the

optics of the legal profession have changed, women attorneys still face many real, albeit less obvious obstacles. To see the challenges women attorneys still face, one need only look at some statistics.

First, despite making up nearly half of all law school graduates, women are still significantly underrepresented in our country's judiciary. Although Washington fairs better than some states in this regard, there is still room for improvement. In Washington, only 22 percent of federal court judges and 31 percent of state court judges are women. Obviously, this gender disparity is not due to some innate jurisprudential prowess of the male gender.

We see a similar disparity in private practice. Statistics show that retention of women in private practice lags far behind men. For instance, one study found that the average time in private practice for a

woman is 9 ½ years, compared to 19 ½ years for her male counterpart. Another study found that women are twice more likely than men to cite the need for work/life balance as the driving force behind their decision to leave private practice.

In my mind, statistics like this beg the question: what is at the root of these continued gender disparities? After all, in order for women to be fully integrated into the legal profession, shouldn't we ensure that women are not seeking the bench or remaining in private practice by choice and not because they feel they cannot be successful within these environments?

It is these questions that WWL hopes to focus its efforts on this year. I look forward to leading WWL as it tackles these tough issues. On behalf of WWL, I thank you for your continued support.

**Don't  
Forget!**

**It's Time to  
Renew Your  
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WWL and local chapters are continuing their great work in 2012!!!

Membership in WWL gives you access to member benefits! Don't forget to renew your WWL membership today!

To renew your membership, or to join WWL, please register online at [www.wwl.org](http://www.wwl.org).

## 2011's Annual Event

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why women are leaving private practice on average ten years before their male counterparts, and what can be done to further the goals of equality in practice and leadership within the Washington and greater legal community.

"Life is best lived looking forward, and best understood looking back" said Dr. Weddington, quoting Danish Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. And indeed the night was one of retrospection and reverence at how far we have come, of friends and fun in honor of where we are, and of rededication to the work that lies ahead. It was a truly riveting evening, one that certainly did Miss. Rosie, and all of us at WWL, proud. We look forward to seeing you all next year!

*Alexandra Krakow is a 1L at the University of Washington School of Law whose areas of interest are Higher Education Law & Policy and Keeping An Open Mind. She can be reached at [akrakow@uw.edu](mailto:akrakow@uw.edu)*

## Mindfulness in the Legal Profession

*By Naomi Ogan, WWL Secretary*

Law school, as the saying goes, teaches people to think like lawyers. Undoubtedly, after years of legal training, we know how to use our brains – but what about our minds? As participants learned at "The Leader Within," a seminar sponsored in conjunction with the Annual Event on October 14, 2011, we can train our own minds to help us succeed at meeting our personal and professional goals.

Jeanne-Marie Clavere, WWL President Elect, first welcomed the audience with an overview of how mindfulness can help lawyers meet their ethical and professional obligations under the Rules of Professional Conduct, particularly with respect to the appropriate scope of representation, knowing when and how to withdraw from a client engagement, and exhibiting professional courtesy. The seminar

continued with a working definition of the concept of mindfulness, and an introduction to the underlying neuroscience, by Sevilla Rhoads, Of Counsel at Garvey Schubert Barer. An interactive panel discussion followed, featuring Anthony Gipe, a litigation partner with Scheer & Zender and WSBA Past Governor At Large. Adrienne Keith is a solo practitioner with a collaborative family law practice. Sherry Williams is a Pierce Co public defender, Washington Contemplative Lawyers co-founder, and a teacher - practitioner of mindfulness-based stress reduction. Among the attendees were renowned attorney and Annual Event keynote speaker, Dr. Sarah Weddington, and WSBA representative Sue Strachan, who audited the seminar to evaluate its eligibility for CLE credit.

Ms. Rhoads provided a fascinating overview of the brain's responses to different stimuli, first describing the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) response (frequently called "fight or flight") that arises when we find ourselves in a situation that our primitive brain perceives as threatening. As many lawyers have experienced during tense negotiations or heated arguments in court, the SNS response not only prevents us from thinking clearly in the moment, but can also cause us to react emotionally in ways that are unproductive for our clients and unhealthy for ourselves. Conversely, when our brains perceive our surroundings as safe and non-threatening, we experience the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) response. The PNS state promotes a calm physical state, as well our ability to think and act rationally. Ms. Rhoads then led the audience through a set of simple mental exercises that, with practice, can train the brain to experience PNS rather than SNS reactions to stressful situations, in turn helping us to become more effective, professional, and healthy legal practitioners. As Ms. Rhoads explained, mindfulness practices are intended to be developed over time, so that we learn to acknowledge, but not fall victim to, our brains' initial SNS reactions to stress.

During the panel discussion, Mr. Gipe, Ms. Keith, and Ms. Williams

each recounted their own experiences using mindfulness in practice. Mr. Gipe described his practice of the Buddhist principles of "active listening," which involves listening fully without preparing one's own response or anticipating the other party's statements, and "right speech," which requires that any response be truthful, beneficial, necessary, and timely. Ms. Keith and Ms. Williams each use physical activity, ranging from yoga to running, to bring mindfulness into their daily lives and, as Ms. Williams noted, find the balance between the two extremes of feeling overwhelmed and under-engaged. Ms. Keith also described her mindful approach to client relations: by choosing a collaboration-based legal practice over an adversarial one, and setting client expectations accordingly, she is able to play to her personal strengths and meet the needs of her clients.

The seminar concluded with an audience Q&A session, which included questions about how a lawyer's mindfulness practices might influence the outcome of a client conversation, negotiation, or legal proceeding. Some of the panelists reported improved communication and more constructive interactions with others, and everyone noted that, regardless of the eventual outcome, using mindfulness tools has helped them feel more in control of their own behavior in stressful situations.

Since we all share the same basic neurobiology, understanding the brain's automatic, untrained responses is the first step in developing healthier mental habits, not only for the sake of our own well-being, but also for upholding our commitments as professionals and officers of the court. As demonstrated by the diversity of techniques used by our presenters, developing mindfulness in the context of the practice of law is a personal process that can and should be individually tailored. WWL invites you to further explore this topic and find your own leader within. We hope to see you at our next event!

*Naomi Ogan is a new corporate practice associate with K&L Gates. She can be reached at [naomi.ogan@klgates.com](mailto:naomi.ogan@klgates.com)*

## Meet the Newest WWL State Reporter Vice-President

My name is: Gloria Ochoa

I hale from: Tri-Cities, WA

My current home is in: Spokane, WA

My practice focuses on: Criminal Defense, Personal Injury and Family Law

A typical day in my life involves: Sending off my 16 year old, 9 year and 8 year old off to school and dropping off my 9 month old at Kinder-Care. Typically I head to the office. Due to the nature of my practice, many of my days include court hearings, jail visits and preparing for court. I practice in Spokane, Benton and Franklin Counties so I travel from Spokane to the Tri-Cities about once or twice a week. I am a solo practitioner and run my own practice so typical days also include finding time to complete administrative tasks. I am involved with Leadership Spokane, the Spokane County Juvenile Accountability Board, the Spokane County Diversity Committee. I have been appointed to serve on the Board of Bar Examiners, the Client Protection Fund Board and I will be teaching Law Practice Management at Gonzaga Law this Spring.

I find running to be a great stress reliever. Although I love running full marathons I have only been running half Marathons this year due to the addition of a new baby this past January and less time to train. I will be running my 4th Half Marathon this year in December.

My favorite aspect of legal practice is: The ability to make a real difference in someone's life.

If I could not practice law, I would: I would be selling real estate. I love working with people and

it's a career that allows someone to maintain their independence and offers flexibility.

One lesson I have learned is: When striving for a life balance, it is best to assess it on a weekly or sometimes monthly basis.

I got involved with Washington Women Lawyers because: I love being a part of an organization that empowers women and provides the opportunity to work with successful, accomplished leaders in the legal profession.

As Vice President of the State Reporter, I want to: actively participate in the organization and contribute input and perspective from the East side of the State's constituency

My next great adventure will be: Training for and completing a Half Iron Man Triathlon in 2012.



## Of Note - Chapter News for You!

### Spokane WWL -

#### **Come Join Us for a Fun Art Evening!**

This is a great opportunity to spend time with WWL colleagues and friends while making personalized gifts for the holidays.

Event: Salsa Saturday at Polka Dot Pottery

Date: Saturday, Nov. 19th, 2011

Time: 6 p.m. until 10 p.m.

Location: Polka Dot Pottery at 2716 W. Northwest Blvd.

Phone No.: 509.327.5437

Cost: \$8 charge per person and cost of a pottery piece.

The \$8 charge includes a seven layer dip, chips, salsa, guacamole, M&M's, and alcoholic beverages. The pottery pieces start at \$11 for mugs, \$12 for plates, and \$6 for kids figurines.

RSVP: Shirley Anderson at

[shirley@leehayes.com](mailto:shirley@leehayes.com)



### Pierce County WWL

Pierce County Washington Women Lawyers & the Young Lawyers Section of the Tacoma Pierce County Bar would like to say

## **CONGRATULATIONS**

TO THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE WASHINGTON BAR!

To celebrate your admittance to the Washington State Bar, AND to welcome you to the Pierce County legal community, the PCWWL and YLS would like to invite you to a **HOSTED**

### **WINE TASTING SOIRÉE**

@ Tacoma Wine Merchants

**WHO:** New admittees to the WSBA, YLS members, PCWWL members, those interested in joining the YLS and PCWWL and Pierce County Judges

**WHAT:** A hosted wine-tasting where you meet other lawyers in the area, learn about the PCWWL and YLS and try a sampling of Northwest wines

**COST:** FREE!

**WHEN:** TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2011; 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** TACOMA WINE MERCHANTS (21 North Tacoma Ave, Tacoma)

Please RSVP to Amy Pagano ([apagano@harlowefalk.com](mailto:apagano@harlowefalk.com)) or Casey Arbenz ([casey@hesterlawgroup.com](mailto:casey@hesterlawgroup.com)) before 11/4/11



If you have a WWL Chapter announcement for the State Reporter, please email [paulinewoodman@mac.com](mailto:paulinewoodman@mac.com).

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