



# State Reporter

Washington Women Lawyers

A publication of WASHINGTON WOMEN LAWYERS FALL 2009

## Will I Find A Job?

### Law Students Adjust to Hard Economic Times

By Lisa Burke, 3L Seattle University School of Law

“In America, there are always people to sue or contracts to negotiate, right? Apparently there aren’t enough.” Editorial, *Recession Causing Lawyer Layoffs*, Daily Herald, April 14, 2009, DH1.

With the end of law school looming and the ever increasing unemployment rates in the legal profession, many recent graduates and soon to be graduates are left to wonder, will I find a job? This question inevitably bleeds into every law student’s greatest fear; will I be able to make my monthly student loan payments if I cannot find a job? The answer to these questions is uncertain, as is the current state of the nation’s financial woes.

The legal profession has fallen upon hard times in the past couple of years. In 2008, the number of unemployed lawyers jumped 66 percent to a 10 year high of 20,000. *Id.* In the first three months of 2009, more than 3,000 lawyers were laid off from the nation’s largest firms. *Id.* These layoffs coincided with big firm hiring freezes, where graduates entering the job market were being paid to delay start dates until firms could find ways to support new associates at

their expected compensation. *Id.* Given the grim state of affairs, many students were delighted to take on a “living stipend” and weather the storm while their former classmates continued to blast out résumés indiscriminately.

The prospects in Seattle do not provide students with respite either: downsizing is in and hiring is on hold until further notice. The Seattle Times recently opined that, “January’s statewide unemployment rate topped the national rate for the first time since December 2006. An estimated 303,570 Washingtonians – the most ever – reported being out of work last month; that’s 125,880 more people than in January 2008.” Drew Desilver, *State Jobless Rate Nears 8%, Likely to go Higher. Level Not Seen in More Than 20 Years. All Sectors Hit as Worried Consumers Pull Back*, Seattle Times, Feb. 25, 2009, A9. At the time of this article, the State’s unemployment rate had risen from 8.6 percent in January 2009, to 9.1 percent in February 2009. U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/surveymost>. As of June 2009, the unemployment rate for Washington has continued its climb to 9.2 percent, while the national average levels out at 9.5 percent. *Id.* But what does this mean for recent graduates and soon to be graduates of Washington law schools?

According to Shawn Lipton, Assistant Dean at Seattle University, *Id.* (Continued on page 2)

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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.

### Assistance Available for Job-Seekers in Washington’s Tough Market

By Virginia Nicholson, Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt

It has become a little stressful in the woods of the legal profession, even more so if you are one of the more than 3,900 lawyers who have been laid off from law firms nationwide since January (see <http://lawshucks.com/layoff-tracker/>). The Pacific Northwest, sad to say, has not been immune from the shrinking legal market. As many attorneys look for a position, attorneys are increasingly facing difficult decisions. Do you become a solo practitioner? Do you relocate? Even those with jobs face repercussions from the economic downturn, such as an increased need to take on clients they would not have considered a year ago.

If you are one of the many feeling the sting of this economy, says Dr. Dan Crystal of the WSBA’s Lawyers Assistance Program, the WSBA can help. It is never easy finding a new, or first, legal position. “Seattle has always been a hard market,” explains Crystal, who along with Dr. Rebecca Nerison, runs the WSBA’s job-seeker programs. “At every experience level, it can take up to a year or longer to find a legal job in Seattle.”

But with the doom and gloom comes a silver lining. While the job-seeking process it not easy, it is valuable. “It is the things that people do to market themselves and network that end up being them most

(Continued on page 3)

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER



By Amy Robinson,  
WWL President

Thank you for a great year together! You all have made it such a great experience. I look forward to seeing you again at the Annual Event on October 2nd! Warm-

est, Amy



WWL Kitsap County Event



WWL Spokane Chapter Event

## Law Students

(Continued from page 1)

the University School of Law, law students are adjusting to the changes in the economy by working at smaller firms and taking positions outside of King County. It is Mr. Lipton's belief that recent graduates have realized that they can have a rewarding career working in smaller cities and towns, while at the same time gaining exposure with clients and litigation. Mr. Lipton appears optimistic about employment prospects in the future and indicated that the majority of graduates in the 2008 class reported employment 9 months after graduation. While figures are not yet available on the class of 2009, many recent Seattle University graduates have decided to shelve their fears about obtaining employment and instead focus on the upcoming State Bar Exam.

Weathering the storm, or agreeing to move out of the city to find employment is not a realistic option for some. For students looking to find employment in Seattle or the

surrounding cities of Tacoma, Everett, and Bellevue, the prospects are not entirely bleak. Many people believe that there are recession proof legal jobs, in areas like personal injury and criminal law. Jane Ann Morrison, *Layoffs of Local Attorneys Show Las Vegas is Not Unique in This Case*, Las Vegas Review-Journal, February 28, 2009, 1B. In fact, when the economy is in a slump, these professions tend to see an influx of business. While this does not appear to be the case for large firms specializing in criminal defense and personal injury, students have had success finding jobs in smaller firms that specialize in these practice areas.



Ultimately, recent graduates and soon to be graduates will find a way to maintain until the economy rebounds. While

unemployment rates are unusually high for the legal profession, they are "miniscule" compared to other industries like manufacturing and construction. Editorial, *Sick Economy Causes Lawyer Deferrals, Lay Offs at Big Firms*, Merrillville Post-Tribune, April 14, 2009, C6. Similarly, individuals with a legal degree are marketable in a variety of other industries; a legal degree does not have to translate into a legal career, and many students have decided to seek non-traditional careers which utilize their legal degrees in one way or another. While it is true that student loans continue to drive the desire to find top jobs and to find them fast, law students have to keep things in perspective and be amenable to traveling for employment, accepting a focus area not initially desired, or taking on a non-traditional career until the economy rebounds.

## Washington Women Lawyers Kitsap Chapter Social Event

On August 14, 2009, the Kitsap Chapter hosted the WWL State Board at the beautiful home of WWL member Karen Klein on Bainbridge Island. It was a pleasant evening of food, fun and camaraderie as the members shared stories about the history of WWL and reminisced about the early days of the organization. The group concluded that the pioneers of the WWL were some amazing women who sacrificed much to further the interests of women in our profession. The lovely summer weather and the waterfront setting made it a very enjoyable evening for all.

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

Please contact [wvlann@yahoo.com](mailto:wvlann@yahoo.com) with the subject line *News* to contribute to the State Reporter.

## Assistance Available

*(Continued from page 1)*

important tools they bring with them to a new position,” Crystal explained when discussing the upside of job searches. “For example, the list of people you gather during your job search to network, which turns into a referral source.”

The WSBA has two different programs designed to help job-seekers compile their networking list and find a job. These programs are geared to help lawyers determine what type of job suits the job-seeker. Crystal feels fortunate to see the “Aha!” moment on a job-seeker’s face when she figures out what it is she really wants to do. She said that they do not have hard data regarding the success of the programs, but the feedback is positive. Participating attorneys are not only finding jobs, but finding jobs they are well-suited for.

The monthly Job Seekers Group provides the job seeker with the opportunity to network and exchange information and ideas with other lawyers. The group features speakers who discuss topics of interest. For example, past speakers have discussed how to use social media and network; how to brand yourself as a lawyer; how to identify the area of law that interests you; and the psychology of interviewing. Speakers also offer practical advice about cover letters, resumes, and interviews. The monthly Job Seekers Group is open to all WSBA members and third-year law students. It is held the second Wednesday of each month, from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the WSBA office. The group is free and no registration necessary.

There is also a weekly Job Seekers Group. This weekly group is an excellent resource for those unsure about their futures within the law. Many have utilized the group in order to figure out what line of work will be best for them. This group has a more in-depth focus on three areas of the job search: job-seeking skills, the identity search, and addressing the emotional challenge of unemployment.

The job-seeking skill area of the program includes the nuts and bolts of the job search, and includes collecting that all-important referral network. The identity search helps participants determine what job would be perfect for them. Crystal pointed out that some-

times the perfect job for an attorney turns out to be outside the legal profession. The emotional challenge of being unemployed is the third focus of the group. It is important for job-seekers to know that they are not alone in their struggle. “The participating attorneys start out as strangers, but by the end of the program, they are going out for coffee and becoming friends with people they never imagined they would,” said Crystal, describing the camaraderie that develops within the group. The weekly Job Seekers Group requires more of a commitment than the monthly group: Each group has 8-10 members and runs for eight sessions. Group meetings last for 75 minutes and members are charged \$40 up front, which amounts to \$5 per session.

Stress from economic downturn can lead to exhaustion and the development of distress symptoms, such as clinical depression, eating disorders, chronic procrastination, alcoholism, anxiety attacks, and anger problems. To help with these issues, or for those seeking individual assistance with job-seeking or other life skills, the WSBA offers individual counseling. Attorneys who take advantage of the individualized counseling have reduced, and are reducing, their distress and ending their isolation. Individual therapy is provided by licensed psychologists, including Crystal. The treatment is provided on a sliding scale based on income, and an initial consultation is only \$20.

It is nice to know there are resources to turn to when you need some guidance, insight, or just camaraderie with fellow job-seekers. The WSBA offers a wide variety of assistance in different formats geared to assist the seasoned professional, the third-year law student, and every experience level in between. For more information regarding these and other assistance programs, visit [www.wsba.org/lawyers/services/lap.htm](http://www.wsba.org/lawyers/services/lap.htm).



# Civil Legal Aid Funding Crisis in Washington State

By Sharon Payant, WWL VP Professional Development and Jennifer Brugger, WWL Kitsap County Rep

In the last newsletter we reported on the civil legal aid funding crisis in Washington State. There has been a great deal of activity in that arena recently. The WSBA Board of Governors continues to take action and develop strategies to help alleviate the substantial negative impact the depressed economy has had on civil legal services. Since our last report, the BOG has approved three proposals intended to assist those seeking civil legal aid in our state: a \$1.5 Million grant, an opt-out bar dues assessment, and a legal aid project aimed at helping homeowners avoid foreclosure.

## \$1.5 Million Grant from WSBA

At its May 29 meeting in Yakima, the BOG voted to grant \$1.5 million to the Legal Foundation of Washington (LFW) to help ease the extreme blow to civil legal aid funding due to decreased IOLTA interest rates and other funding cuts.

LFW provides funding for many volunteer lawyer programs and other programs across the state. A substantial reduction in LFW funding could force these programs to close their doors. IOLTA revenues, a major funding source, are projected to only be \$1.8 million for 2009 – an astounding shortfall when compared to 2007 when IOLTA revenues were \$9.1 million. As a result of this serious decrease in funding, many programs are struggling to continue operations in spite of the intense dedication of their staff and volunteers. The allocation of assistance from the bar is a lifesaver in this uncertain economic environment.

According to WSBA President Mark Johnson, the Bar's Budget and Audit Committee will decide on the source of these funds, although he believes it will be primarily from WSBA reserves, and largely from WSBA CLE reserves. The transfer of these funds to LFW could take place as early as October of this year.

## Opt-Out Bar Dues Assessment

The BOG also considered a mandatory dues surcharge for each WSBA member to support civil legal aid in our state. The proposal met with intense scrutiny and the BOG ultimately voted it down. Some of the arguments against the mandatory assessment included that lawyers should not be forced into charitable giving at the threat of license suspension if they cannot afford the dues increase, and that the responsibility to ensure access to civil legal aid should not fall entirely on attorneys, but should also be shared by the community as a whole.

Even though the mandatory assessment failed to pass, arguments against the proposal could not completely overcome the sentiment that lawyers are perhaps best situated to address this crisis because of our awareness of the great need for these services and, under our own Rules of Professional Conduct, we all have "a professional responsibility to assist in the provision of legal services to those unable to pay." (WA RPC 6.1) Consequently, the BOG passed a

compromise position: an "opt-out" dues assessment.

"Opt-out" means that an additional amount will be automatically added to every member's yearly Bar dues statement, and each member will have to take some affirmative step, perhaps checking a "no thank you" box on the dues statement, if the member wishes to avoid paying an additional amount. Although the BOG voted to approve the opt-out assessment, the BOG postponed setting the amount of the assessment until a meeting. The BOG's July meeting, and early reports from those who attended the meeting indicate that the BOG voted to set the amount at \$50.

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## Home Foreclosure Avoidance Assistance

Another step taken by the WSBA to address this crisis was the creation of the Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project, which began operations in June. The BOG voted to allocate \$160,000 from CLE reserves to fund one lawyer and one paralegal position to administer the program and match callers with volunteer attorneys throughout the state. Over 300 Washington attorneys have already signed up to volunteer.

The Project, which is housed at the Northwest Justice Project, provides assistance to Washington State homeowners whose income falls within 200% - 400% of the federal poverty guidelines. Its principal goal is to stem the increasing tide of foreclosures in our state by assisting homeowners with foreclosure-related legal issues.

It is hoped and anticipated that WSBA members will step up on their own to voluntarily support civil legal aid. One important way to do that is to contribute to the Campaign for Equal Justice, administered by LAW Fund. The WSBA BOG heard proposals aimed at increasing voluntary contributions to the Campaign for Equal Justice, and at its July meeting pledged to assist LAW Fund in efforts to increase voluntary contributions by WSBA members to the Campaign for Equal Justice.

In the future, we will likely need to find different ways to fund civil legal aid programs, particularly given the demonstrated unreliability of IOLTA revenues. In the interim, lawyers will be called upon to do our part to keep existing programs afloat during this troubled economy. Whether that means not opting-out of the bar dues assessment or making additional contributions of money or time to civil legal aid programs is up to each individual member to decide.

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## Quotes by Notable Women

*You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along." . . . You must do the thing you think you cannot do.*

~Eleanor Roosevelt

*Cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform. Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation.*

~Susan B. Anthony

*History is no longer just a chronicle of kings and statesmen, of people who wielded power, but of ordinary women and men engaged in manifold tasks. Women's history is an assertion that women have a history."*

~Aparna Basu

*Follow your instincts. That's where true wisdom manifests itself.*

~ Oprah Winfrey



*Save the date  
of October 2, 2009 for*

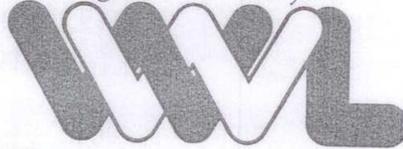
## Looking Back Walking Forward

*our Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Dinner  
to celebrate our accomplishments and reflect upon our journey.*



### Remember When...

Washington Women Lawyers



Remember when....someone could win a judicial race by attending local football games and printing 25 t-shirts to outfit "road runners along Montlake freeway"? The October 1982 Newsletter recounted recent judicial candidate races, noting that "often the most notable aspect of a judicial campaign is that only one name appears on the ballot."

Events reported in the October 1982 newsletter included numerous Chapter social events, the Annual State Bar Convention in Vancouver B.C., Seattle King County Chapter's VIP Dinner, which included a speech from Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, Rose Elizabeth Bird. Justice Bird's keynote address was "The Media and the Judiciary in an Instant Society," commenting that television's exposure may tempt judges to rule on the basis of popularity instead of the law, and search for instant answers rather than thoughtful reflection. Comparing the "instant society" of 1982 to our hyper speed test-messaging blackberry-typing society of today, one may wonder what Justice Bird would have to say today about the costs and benefits of such instant communication and its possible effects on the judiciary.

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Washington Women Lawyers

# Gifts of the Economic Downturn

By Jane Faulkner, Founder, Embodied Living, LLC

*“What we can or cannot do, what we consider possible or impossible, is rarely a function of our true capability. It is more likely a function of our beliefs about who we are.”*

--Anthony Robbins

Incoming ABA president Carolyn Lamm claims that the impact of the recession on the justice system will be at the top of her agenda. I ask, what gifts may come of this economic downturn?

It's hard to see the benefits if you have watched your job or your clients disappear. And this recession has affected us all. Yet a time like this offers the opportunity to take a hard look at our relationship to money and security, and to align our behavior with our values.

In *The Seven Stages of Money Maturity*, George Kinder compares our developmental process around money to the story of Humpty Dumpty. We start out round and whole, and then money and its contradictions enter our lives. Our parents tell us “time is money,” when we thought that time was for play. We hear from one parent that “money isn't everything,” and from another that “money makes the world go round.” In the face of these contradictions, Humpty Dumpty “suffers a great fall onto reality's hard surface and we shatter.” [pp. 42-43]

To stay safe, make sense of the world, and be part of our family's culture, we as children often adopt some version of our parents' beliefs. Or, we may reject those beliefs out of hand and rebel. But whether we embrace or react against our parents' beliefs, those early messages take root in our bodies and minds at the subconscious level and begin to drive our behavior. We operate based on someone else's belief system, and not from our own values, integrity and vision.

As Kinder notes in his book, each of our money beliefs contains some kernel of the truth, but not the whole. The whole truth always reflects both sides of the coin. Take “money isn't everything.” True in part, and yet, money can be the difference between meeting or not meeting your needs; money can empower you to live from your passions and values in the world.

So, how do you connect with the beliefs that drive your behavior? You might begin by writing down the family messages you received when you were young. I find that it helps to use the exact language your parents and caregivers used. What did they say? And how do you feel when you read those messages? Does your body contract or relax? Where do you sense the feelings in your body?

My family believed that “hard work is the key to success.” Another strong message was that “having fun” was something you do in your free time after your work is done. Following your heart and playing with your passion was not part of the program. When I am stuck in the old beliefs, I feel a sort of heavy dread in the pit of my stomach. When I am living from my heart, I feel clear, joyful and grounded—an open and soft feeling in my body.

So notice the feelings you have when you read your own early

messages. Do they remind you of feelings you've experienced in the past year? If so, our current economic climate is probably showing you an internal conflict about what is true and important to you right now.

If you can spend time feeling in your body and listening you will likely discover you. Try a dialogue your feelings on make it easier to what they have to This is an opportunity to recognize your truth connects with values and the vision those values.

Now let's think about abundance. How does abundance show up in your life? Does your energy expand when you consider the abundance that you do have, whether it is in money, relationships, natural beauty, fresh food, fun, laughter, or imagination?

What happens to your energy when you feel fear about the economy or think your security is threatened? Does it contract and decrease?

Our truth, though grounded in reality, is not based in fear. My clients and I have learned that our passions, creativity and heart-centered desires are central to our success, and that true security lies in staying connected to those parts of ourselves. As with the successful women lawyers I've been profiling on my blog this year, when business is based on passion, we are willing to work hard to bring our vision into form in the world. (*Women Lawyers Thriving in Their Own Firms*)

I invite you to align with your truth, reconnect with your wholeness, and find abundance during this recession.

## References

- Firm Hand for Hard Times* (ABA Journal Law News Now, August, 2009)
- The Seven Stages of Money Security* by George Kinder (NY, NY: Random House 1999).
- Women Lawyers Thriving in Their Own Firms* (series of 7 interviews found at <http://embodiedliving.typepad.com/>)

Jane Faulkner is the founder of Embodied Living, LLC, providing coaching and workshop/CLEs for lawyers and professionals. See [www.embodiedliving.com](http://www.embodiedliving.com) or contact Jane at [jane@embodiedliving.com](mailto:jane@embodiedliving.com) or 206 323-0160.

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