

WLA Newsletter

Fall 2004

Fall 2004

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2004-2005

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- Katie Wessling

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My Favorite Bumper Stickers By Megan Phillips



Maybe it's from all my years of tailgating (the kind in parking lots and the kind in traffic) that I love bumper stickers. I like the one about the village in Texas missing an idiot and the one about getting their laws off my body, but that's just my personal politics. I also like the one asking what's so radical about equality. Webster's defines feminism as "the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes." I find it sad that women have let this simple concept of fairness be distorted into a dirty word by purposely disowning it, reinforcing its negative connotation. I can't tell you how many times I've heard strong, intelligent, independent, talented, accomplished, even powerful women disclaim, "I'm not a feminist or anything, but... [insert brilliant principle of gender equality]." I challenge you to reclaim our word and to educate those who misunderstand and slander it. I'm a feminist. If that's radical, then good for me.

But my favorite bumper sticker of all time is "If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention." Attention to what? Whom? Where? We can't all pay attention to every outrageous circumstance all the time. We all have different interests and indignations. I suspect that, to some extent, as members of WLA, we pay attention to the same things and share the same outrage. As an alternative to psychotherapy or anger management classes, I propose that we work together, fueled by our collective passion, to remedy the root causes of our outrage. If this is

group therapy, then I'm offering to go first: I'm outraged that several victims of severe and barbaric domestic violence are serving life sentences in Missouri prisons for their crimes of survival. They were convicted for the deaths of their abusers at a time when evidence of intimate partner abuse was inadmissible in their defense. During that time, 40% of women accused of killing their intimate partners were charged with capital murder while 0% of their male counterparts were charged with capital murder, and 75% of the women received sentences of life in prison without parole while 0% of men received life without parole. Some of the women have already served 24 years in prison with 26 more to go, for defending their lives at a time when neither the police nor the courts would. The Missouri Battered Women's Clemency Coalition, led by nationally reputed lawyers and professors from the state's four law school domestic violence clinics and Catholic Legal Services, submitted clemency petitions to the Governor. To be a credible voice for social justice and against gender bias, WLA must get off the sidelines and join the Coalition in urging the Governor to grant clemency. For more information about this issue, read an outstanding law review article published in the SLU Public Law Review (23 St. Louis U. Pub. L. Rev. 193 (2004)). October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I urge you to express your support for our Coalition colleagues and the women they represent by writing personal letters to the Governor.

I'm also outraged that women represent only 16% of partners in medium and large law firms and still make just 76 cents on the male dollar. It's no longer a pipeline issue. In 1994 when this year's partners graduated, women comprised 42 percent of the graduat-

Bumper Stickers (cont'd)

ing class. So why aren't there more women partners? Anecdotal evidence indicates that many leave the big firms before reaching partnership. WLA must help firms explore what causes talented women (and plenty of men, too, incidentally) to leave. This year WLA will initiate a local and possibly statewide survey of women lawyers to learn more about their specific workplace, family leave, glass ceiling, and female flight issues. We want to know how we can improve the workplace for women and help employers keep and elevate them.

I'm outraged, too, by the dearth of women in influential positions of policy-making and leadership in our profession (with the notable exception of current BAMSL leadership). Women hold just 6 seats of 42 on the Missouri Bar Board of Governors, 2 seats of 7 on the appellate judicial commission, and zero seats on the 21st circuit judicial commission. During the Missouri Bar annual meeting, WLA convened a meeting of women lawyers from across the state to strategize about promoting women lawyers for these important positions that shape our profession. Throughout the year we will work to identify and promote women for the Missouri Bar Board of Governors and judicial commission elections next summer and fall. Please help by sending us the names of potential candidates – including yourself – and by promoting our candidates within your own networks when the ballots go out.

Another source of outrage for me stems from the violations of constitutional rights of battered mothers

whose children come under the protective jurisdiction of the state. Despite the valiant efforts of some of WLA's own respected members, our system has yet to evolve away from victim blaming. Systemic change will not happen as long as battered mothers lack zealous, competent, and truly independent counsel throughout dependency proceedings. Nor will it occur without exposing abuses of power and disregard for due process by deputy juvenile officers. A small group of WLA members who are familiar with these issues is forming to strategize about our role in systemic change. You are invited to share with us your own stories and join us in reaching solutions.

I'm also outraged by the gender and racial bias glaring out of our state's judicial evaluation survey results. I have already made contact with other bar leaders to discuss how to address the disparity and shed light on its causes. Perhaps we should start by considering the source. Seventy percent of the state's lawyers are men, and 92% of lawyers (male and female) in Missouri are white. I suppose it's human nature that one would favor one's likeness and more harshly scrutinize the unfamiliar. What if we conducted a survey to see how women and minorities evaluate the judiciary, not only in terms of job performance but also in terms of cultural competence? I wonder if the results would be different. It has been a decade since the Missouri Bar Gender and Justice Task Force (now a standing Committee) completed its research on gender bias in the state judiciary. Perhaps it's time to recirculate that questionnaire.

Most recently I've become outraged by the unenlightened partisan attack on treasured WLA member and Missouri

Supreme Court Judge Richard Teitelman. I'm also terrified by attempts to abolish the Missouri Non-Partisan Court Plan. Again we must consider the source, but we must also fight back when the quality and independence of our judiciary is threatened. In fulfilling our mission to be civic-minded, we must educate non-lawyers in our community, including our elected representatives, about the judicial decision-making process, judicial independence, and the great value of non-partisan judicial selection.

Lastly, I'm not so much outraged as I am bewildered by the *lack* of outrage and activism among our peers about these issues and others affecting our profession. There are nearly two thousand women lawyers in the St. Louis area and yet only about 375 of them are WLA members (even counting those of you who haven't paid dues yet this year, hint-hint). How are we failing to connect with our non-member sisters? Do they think we're just a social club? Or that we have myopia for the judiciary? How can we serve their needs and be relevant to their lives? How do we bring them into the fold, both for their benefit and for our own, to enhance our efforts and maximize our impact through strength in numbers? I bet each of you knows ten women lawyers who aren't in the WLA directory. I implore you to reach out to them and tell them what we're really about. Our sleek new high-functioning website will be live very soon at www.wlastl.org. Encourage them to check it out, post a comment on the blog, and download a membership application. WLA is whatever you want it to be – a forum for networking, support, camaraderie, self-promotion, activism, volunteerism, and, yes, socializing, too.

Clearly I've bitten off more than I can chew and will be talking with my mouth full for the rest of my term. But as another WLA member just reminded me, it's up to us to push the envelope, take risks, and demand progress without fear of labels, criticism, resistance, or back lash, as did the suffragists to whom we owe our right to vote for or against the subjects of my favorite bumper stickers.

Support Judge Teitelman. Representative Rod Jetton (R-Marble Hill) has launched an attack on treasured WLA member and Supreme Court Judge Richard Teitelman, opposing his retention this November. We all know that Judge Teitelman is a compassionate lawyer and a judge of the highest character and integrity. He was an outstanding director of Legal Services of Eastern Missouri for more than two decades. Missouri Bar President, Joe Whisler, said in a recent message, "Unless lawyers stand up for the independence of the judiciary, the public will never realize that Missouri judges cannot, and will not, make their decisions based on political pressure or popular opinion." Please support Judge Teitelman and encourage your friends, family, and neighbors to support him as well.

Meet Your New Board

President Megan Phillips is a consultant employed by Re-development Opportunities for Women, Inc. through the St. Louis County Greenbook Initiative, a federally funded pilot project to address domestic violence and child maltreatment cases within the St. Louis County Family Court. She also practices corporate law with Levine Law LLC, serving small businesses and non-profit companies. Prior to her current positions, Ms. Phillips completed a teaching fellowship at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law where she served as a supervising attorney in the Family Violence and Child Protection clinics and taught Client Interviewing & Counseling and Corporate Finance. Previously, Megan practiced in the law firms of Coudert Brothers in Paris, France, and Bryan Cave in St. Louis, specializing in international transactions and commercial contracts. Within the Missouri Bar, Megan is Chair of the 2003 Leadership Academy, an elected member of the Young Lawyers' Section Council, and an appointed member of the Loan Repayment Assistance Program Committee. Her other organizational affiliations include the Women's Political Caucus and Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. Megan earned her J.D., a B.A. in Sociology, and a B.E.S. in Educational and Counseling Psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Immediate Past President Peg McCartney graduated from Indiana University Law School in 1990. Upon graduation, she moved to St. Louis and began working at the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office. She was an Assistant Circuit Attorney from 1990-1996. During 1994-1996 she was assigned to the Circuit Attorney Sex Crimes and Child Abuse Unit where she prosecuted numerous felony jury trials. She joined Washington University's School of Law in 1996 when she became the Assistant Director of Career Services. After serving as Washington University's Director of Career Services Public Service Office she was appointed as the St. Louis Traffic Court Commissioner in 1999. She currently presides over civil appeals from administrative findings of the Missouri Department of Revenue. Peg is a District Director of the Missouri Municipal and Associate Circuit Judges Association, and a board member of St. Martha's Hall, a domestic violence emergency shelter.

President-Elect Heather Hays is an associate at Rynearson, Suess, Schnurbusch and Champion, L.L.C. where she practices personal injury defense and insurance defense litigation. She has been a member of WLA since graduation from Saint Louis University School of Law in 1998. She is involved with Project Angel Tree through the Young Lawyers Division of BAMSL and also volunteers with her parish St. Raphael the Archangel. She enjoys softball and running and is part of a monthly book club.

Vice-President Lynn Ricci enjoys a civil law practice at Garnholz & Ricci, LC, focusing primarily on family law, business law, and business litigation. She earned her J.D. from Rutgers University in 1989, where she was a member and associate editor of the Law Journal. She received her B.A. from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1980.

Lynn has been a community volunteer for many years, presently serving on the Boards of Dance St. Louis and Alliance Française. She additionally serves on the City of University City Plan Commission, the Missouri Bar Mentoring Committee, and volunteers for Legal Advocates for Abused Women. Lynn loves to read and dine with friends. She tolerates exercise.

Secretary Genevieve Nichols has been an associate with Coffey and Associates since 2001 where she practices plaintiff's personal injury law. Genevieve graduated from Loyola Marymount University with a BA in history in 1996 and graduated from St. Louis University School of Law in 1999.

Treasurer Deborah Benoit is in private practice with the firm of Kruger & Benoit, LLC. She practices law in the areas of family law and bankruptcy. She graduated from Washington University School of Law in 1974. She is a volunteer attorney with Legal Advocates for Abuse Women and has been a member of the board of the National Council of Jewish Women. She is interested in reading and genealogical research.

Members at Large

Suzette Carlisle graduated from St. Louis University School of Law in 1996 while working full time and raising four children as a single parent. She holds a bachelors degree in Business Administration from St. Louis University and a Master's degree in Business Administration from Lindenwood College. In 1998 she was appointed by the Late Governor Mel Carnahan to serve as an Associate Administrative Law Judge/Legal Advisor for the Missouri Division of Workers' Compensation where she continues to serve. She has served as Chair of BAMSL's TEENS SPEAK OUT! Forum and Co-Chair of BAMSL's Workers' Compensation Committee, WLA's Legislative Committee, Member -Mound City Bar and Participant in the Missouri Bar's Leadership Academy Class of 2003-2004.

Kathleen DuBois has represented clients in criminal, corporate, appellate and civil juvenile matters. She earned her J.D. from the University of Arizona College of Law in 1987. Since 1999 Kathleen has been Managing Attorney for the Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) Family Court Project, on site at the St. Louis County Family Court in Clayton. The Family Court Project, a conflicts office for LSEM, represents parents who have children under the jurisdiction of the St. Louis County juvenile court. Kathleen's present clients include domestic violence victims, persons whose lives have been affected by disability or mental illness, and homeless parents. She is frequently called on to teach or consult with attorneys and others on aspects of juvenile court practice. Kathleen's memberships include various organizations aimed at supporting the legal needs of domestic violence victims as well as of other indigent citizens of Missouri. She is a member of the Juvenile Law section of the Missouri Bar. She has a 12-year old son (who is almost taller than she is), and likes trout fishing, gardening, and lunching with friends.

Kris Kerr was recently selected as Family Court Commissioner for the 21st Circuit. Kris graduated from Boston Univer-

New Board (cont'd)

sity School of Law in 1985. After graduation, Ms. Kerr was a law clerk for Hon. Kent Karohl, Missouri Court of Appeals (E.D.). After a time in private practice in the areas of domestic relations, worker's compensation, personal injury and bankruptcy, she joined the Missouri State Public Defender System in 1988. She served as an Assistant Public Defender and Team Leader in the St. Louis City Public Defender Trial Office for several years, and then joined the Capital Litigation Division of the Public Defender System.

Ms. Kerr defended death penalty cases across Missouri for three years, rejoined the St. Louis City Public Defender Trial Office as First Assistant in 1993, and joined the St. Louis County Public Defender's Office in October 2003.

Kris serves as Secretary for the Missouri Board of Drug Court Professionals. She also serves as the current BAMSL Committee Chair for the Government and Public Sector Lawyers Committee. She is a member of the Missouri Bar, the St. Louis County Bar Association, the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, the Lawyer's Association, and the Greater St. Louis Knitters' Guild. In her (few moments of) spare time, she loves to knit.

Katherine Wessling is Managing Attorney for Legal Advocates for Abused Women, a non-profit agency serving domestic violence victims in St. Louis and seven surrounding counties. She earned her J.D. from Washington University and her B.A. cum laude (English/Economics) from Truman State University. She is the author of "The OP Booklet" which is used in many area courthouses as a resource for domestic violence victims filing Petitions for Orders of Protection and is a frequent speaker at trainings, community forums and police academies on issues of domestic violence and the law. She previously served on BAMSL's Adult and Child Abuse Committee. Additionally, she is a volunteer with the St. John's Mercy Medical Center Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Parent Support Group.

Patricia (Tricia) Susi practices in the areas of family law, civil litigation, and estate planning at The Catalana Law

Firm, LLC. She earned her J.D. in 1999 from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law where she served as President of the Women's Law Association. She graduated cum laude from the University of Missouri-St. Louis with a B.A. in Political Science, a Minor in Legal Studies, and a Certificate in Women and Gender studies. Tricia served last year as Vice Chair of the Family Law and Juvenile Law Section of BAMSL and as a board member of BAMSL Young Lawyers Division for which she is in charge of BAMSL's JDs for ABCs and Read Across America. She is a member of the ABA and of BAMSL, contributing to Project Angel Tree. Tricia enjoys spending time with her husband Jim, their cat Xena, and their puppy Storm. She also enjoys playing softball, long walks with Storm, and yoga.

Lisa S. Van Amburg was sworn in as a judge of the Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis in March of 2003. She is a charter member of the Women Lawyer's Association, having helped form the organization after she and three of her St. Louis University law school classmates began the all-women's law firm in downtown St. Louis in 1975, Anderson, Everett, Sedey and Van Amburg. Before assuming the bench, Lisa practiced general civil law with a focus on labor and employment on behalf of employees and unions. From 1982-1996, Lisa was an associate and partner in the firm of Schuchat, Cook and Werner. Most recently, she was a founding partner in the firm of Van Amburg, Chackes, Carlson and Spritzer, LLP. Lisa is also an Adjunct Professor of Trial Practice at Washington University School of Law. She has served in a leadership capacity in the American Bar Association, Missouri Bar and BAMSL. She served for many years as Coach of the High School Mock Trial team at University City High School, from which both of her children, Kristen and John, graduated.

Help Public Interest Lawyers Pay their Student Loans!

The Missouri Bar recently established the Loan Repayment Assistance Program to help public interest lawyers pay their student loans, so that they can continue to practice in the public sector. Now the Foundation needs funds in order to grant awards to next year's graduates. Please make a donation, big or small. For more information about the LRAP or to make a donation, contact Steve Murrell at the Missouri Bar: smurrell@mobar.org or (573) 638-2240.

Donate Your Retired Jewelry and Furs to the Holiday Auction!

I have a box of very nice jewelry that I never wear! It includes a gold and ruby ring, gold bracelet, pearl earring studs. I don't want to throw this stuff away because of its value, but I will just not use it. Alas, an idea is born! I shared my idea with the committee and a member offered, I have a fur I have only worn once and will never wear again. Why don't I donate that?! Thus, the new feature to our Silent Auction will be the Estate Jewelry and Furs section. To that end, if you have a nice piece of jewelry that you no longer wear, or fur that you wish to retire, please donate! Contact Lynn Ricci with your questions or donations at (314)647-1200 or lricci@mindspring.com. We can also use donations for the silent and oral auctions as well. Oral auction items can include a week at a condo or week-end away at a local hotel. Be creative! The Holiday Party and Auction is set for December 2, 2004 at the Forest Park Clubhouse. Remember to mark your calendars!

By Lynn Ricci

Coming soon at www.wlastl.org:

Get ready for the new WLA website. WLA is totally revamping its website to better serve our members. The site will be up and running by the end of November. Some of the new features will include a searchable database of participating WLA members by area of practice and last name. Don't miss the opportunity to be on this list; it's available to the public and your sister WLA members. Renew your membership now and pay the one time \$10 fee. Also, a "blog" discussion board with weekly discussion topics, up to date info on WLA and other events of interest, and a whole new look!

By Genevieve Nichols

WLA hosts statewide women lawyers meeting

Hundreds of women lawyers from around the state were in St. Louis for the Missouri Bar annual meeting September 29 through October 1. WLA seized this opportunity for statewide collaboration by hosting a women lawyers' breakfast meeting to discuss strategies for increasing the number of women in leadership and policy-making positions within the legal profession, bar associations to judicial commissions to private practice. Among the attendees were Vivian Eveloff of the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life, Missouri Bar leaders Theresa Levings (past president), Bill Corrigan (outgoing president), Keith Birkes (executive director), and Sherry Doctorian, Hope Whitehead, and Lynn Whaley Vogel (governors). WLA President Megan Phillips launched the discussion by sharing a note from Patti Hageman scrawled on the cover of a recent issue of the Missouri Bar Journal featuring a photo of the board of governors, among them just three women whose faces Patti had circled in red. Patti's note read, "This is atrocious and perhaps something that St. Louis WLA could work on with other women lawyers across the state." Indeed.

Roughly fifty women from around the state attended the breakfast and heard inspirational remarks and practical suggestions from Corrigan, Levings, Doctorian, Whitehead, Vogel, and BAMSL President Lori Jones to identify and promote women for leadership positions. Vivian Eveloff provided additional insight and encouragement based on her statewide experience in successfully promoting women to a wide variety of policy-making positions. Among her valuable pieces of advice: Don't wait to be asked! Attendees were asked to provide their names and e-mail addresses for purposes of follow-up collaboration throughout the year. Please help us identify potential candidates for next year's elections for the judicial commissions and the MoBar board of governors so that we can start working toward victory immediately!

Honor Domestic Violence Awareness Month All Year Long!

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Show your support for our sisters in need. Donate your time and talent as a volunteer lawyer through Legal Advocates for Abused Women (LAAW) (535-5229) or Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (534-4200). Victims need representation in matters ranging from orders of protection, to divorce and motions to modify, to public housing and public benefits, to bankruptcy, to living wills. If you can't take a case, then visit a shelter or non-residential facility for one hour to provide information and answer questions about the law. Staff attorneys of Legal Advocates for Abused Women (LAAW) currently visit several rural shelters to give face-to-face support and advice to the women, and the response is phenomenal. In an effort to reach more women, and to provide them with lawyers of expertise beyond domestic violence issues, LAAW asks WLA members to join us in going to the shelters in St. Louis City and County. Of course, if you are willing to go to a rural shelter that's great too! This project will be ongoing, not just for the month of October. If you are inclined to this type of community service, please contact Katie Wessling at 314-535-0813 or ktwessling@earthlink.net.

Another way to contribute: Donate old cell phones, clothing, furniture, and household items to battered women's advocacy organizations. Women often leave abusive relationships with literally nothing. You can help them start new lives just by donating kitchen items, linens, tables, chairs, etc. See link above for area agencies. In fact, right now the AWARE program at BJC hospital has a client in need of a small dining table and a microwave. Contact Jelena Todoc at AWARE: 747-1262 or jxt2239@bjc.org. For a full list of area providers, go to <http://www.mocadv.org/members/StLouis.aspx>

Beautiful Day for Golf

The WLA annual golf tournament was held on September 30 at the Norman K. Probst Memorial Golf Course in Forest Park. The weather was perfect and the 50 golfers in attendance had a wonderful day of golf and good fun. The competition was good natured and fun. The winning team of Lori Neidel, Brian McGinnis, Diane Stanza and Susan Kelly shot an 8 under par to snag the top spot. The winning foursome of the B Flight at 1 under par included Faiq Mihar, Karen Sack, Michael Brueggemann, and Heather Hays. Lori Neidel and Jeff Strohmeier managed to grab the top prizes on the longest drive competitions.

After the golf competition the golfers were able to enjoy barbeque at the clubhouse and participate in the raffle. We were able to give away many wonderful prizes at the raffle this year thanks to our generous sponsors. Thanks to all our great sponsors and the participants the golf tournament brought in about \$2500 this year! We wish to thank all the golfers and the sponsors for the great support.

We would like to especially thank Mike McCartney and Anheuser Busch for donating the beer and Teresa Generous for donating the water. Also a special thank you to Sue Tedesco and Legal Communications Corp. for donating water, soda, the wine bottles for the winners and the special prize for the team for the most honest score. We hope to see everyone back out again next year and bring along some new friends as well!

By Heather Hays

Photo Gallery



Installation Banquet Pics. Clockwise from left: Peg McCartney and Mary Bruntrager Schroeder; Susan Rowe and Doreen Dodson; Lynn Ricci and Tricia Susi; Diarra Cross and Hon. Paula Bryant; Hon. Ed Sweeney and Hon. Rick Teitelman.



Missouri Girls State. Members of WLA and Mound City Bar Association pose with Governor Holden during Missouri Girls State on the campus of Central Missouri State University. Megan Phillips (far left) is the Girls State staff instructor for the legal curriculum. Volunteer lawyers Hope Whitehead, Hon. Calea Stovall-Reid, Inez Ross, Leslie Tolliver, and Nadine Nunn drove all the way to Warrensburg in late June to help with a lesson plan on equal protection for 225 high school seniors.

Zero Tolerance in Public Schools by Velma Lambert

As a result of violence and threats of violence on school campuses throughout the nation and the attendant fear fostered by them, many schools have established zero tolerance policies for aggression or threatened aggression by students. Certainly, when one remembers recent highly publicized acts of violence and mayhem at several public school campuses, it becomes patently clear that strong measures must be taken to insure that our schools are safe.

The concept behind zero tolerance policies is simple: students must feel and be safe in school; anyone who threatens or appears to create a threat to others must be dealt with swiftly and decisively. In this conviction, the general public, school administrators, and even students are united. How this should be accomplished, however, is a subject of widely divergent ideas.

According to the February 2001 ABA Zero Tolerance Policy Report, "Zero tolerance means that a school will automatically and severely punish a student for a variety of infractions." Although many districts, in response to court mandates, refuse to acknowledge that their policies constitute zero tolerance, and have added language providing for review and possible modification by the superintendent on a case by case basis, superintendents seem to rarely modify or reverse decisions made by school officials. Strict enforcement continues, oftentimes leading to harsh results.

One particularly tragic case involved Dustin Seals. *Seals v. Morgan*, 2000 FED App. 0358P (6th Cir.). Dustin Seals, a high school junior, was expelled from school when a friend's knife was found in the glove compartment of Seals' mother's car, which Seals had driven onto school grounds. The friend testified that he had put the knife in the glove compartment when Dustin had temporarily exited the car, and Dustin testified that he did not know that it was there. He did admit that he knew that his friend had the knife in the car on the previous day when they were off school grounds. Although there is no evidence from the record indicating whether the school board believed that he knew the knife was in the car, Dustin Seals was expelled, and his father brought suit in district court alleging a violation of Dustin's constitutional right to due process of law and seeking damages.

During the trial, the school board's attorney vigor-

ously argued that Dustin's knowledge or lack thereof was irrelevant because "... the board's zero tolerance policy required Seals' expulsion regardless of whether he knew the knife was in the car." Both the district court and the court of appeals denied the school district's motion for summary judgment, which relied on sovereign immunity. The district court essentially ruled for Seals by setting the case for trial on the issue of damages, but the appeals court remanded for further findings of fact to determine whether the board had considered the issue of Dustin's awareness of the presence of the knife in the car on school grounds. A settlement was reached in 2002, but Dustin, allegedly still despondent from his expulsion, committed suicide shortly afterward. His father has now brought a wrongful death suit in the district court. That case, *Dennis Seals v. Knox County Board of Education, et al*, was expected to be heard in September 2004.

How can individual student rights be justly balanced with the need of schools to protect their students and staff from violence? It is well established that, because of the concept of *in loco parentis*, school personnel have considerable leeway in exercising discipline and control over their students. As a result, schools' decisions are given great deference by courts, and school staff have qualified immunity when acting to further their purpose of educating and protecting students.

The Supreme Court has clearly stated, however, that students do not lose all of their rights while in school. Moreover, the right to a public education has been repeatedly adjudged by courts of appeal to be an important property interest which cannot be lightly abridged. Thus, it would seem incumbent upon school districts in formulating their student discipline policies to remember that *in loco parentis* status does not give them the authority to make harsh, baseless judgments that deprive students of their constitutional rights. Although their authority is great, it is not infinite.

Celebrate ROW's 25th Anniversary!

Redevelopment Opportunities for Women, Inc. (ROW), serving homeless and battered women, invites you to a happy hour celebration on Friday, November 5, 4-7pm, to mark its 25th year. Wine, champagne, and hors d'oeuvres will be served at 2229 Pine Street. A modest donation is suggested. RSVP to row@row-stl.org or 588-8300.

WLA Turns 29

WLA hosted the fifteenth annual Installation and President's Award Dinner on September 21 in the spacious clubhouse overlooking the golf course of the Norman K. Probstin Golf Club in Forest Park. The kick-off dinner began WLA's 29th year of service toward the advancement of women in the metropolitan St. Louis area.

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were served on the veranda as guests mingled before dinner. Guests enjoyed grilled tenderloin with cabernet sauce, potatoes au gratin, and crème brûlée. Outgoing WLA President Peg McCartney summarized WLA achievements and challenges in 2003-2004.

Mary Butts Bruntrager introduced the President's Award Recipient, Mary Bruntrager Schroeder, Associate Circuit Judge for 21st Judicial Circuit. Judge Schroeder's willingness to share her time, talent, and experience serves the community and her family. A committed wife, mother, soccer coach, lawyer, and judge, she has touched many lives. The audience embraced her quick wit and easy style as she told stories about her family and soccer team. Her mission is clear: "work hard and contribute much."

The Honorable Audrey Fleissig, United States Magistrate Judge, installed the WLA Board of Directors for 2004-2005: President Megan Phillips, President-Elect Heather Hays, Vice-President Lynn Ricci, Secretary Genevieve Nichols, Treasurer Debbie Denoit, Past-President Peg McCartney, and Members at Large Suzette Carlisle, Kathleen Dubois, Kris Kerr, Tricia K. Susi, Katie Wessling, and Hon. Lisa Van Amburg.

Incoming WLA President Megan Phillips outlined her goals for the year and challenged us to work toward the advancement of women in the legal profession today and in the future. WLA thanks its sponsors for their generous contributions: Anheuser Busch, The Honorable Lisa Van Amburg, Levine Law, LLC, Jennifer Arthur, Esq., Annette P. Heller, Law Office of Susan L. Ward LLC, Boggs, Boggs & Bates, LLC, Carter Bauer, Soule, LLC, Kelli E. Madigan, Mathis, Marifan, Richter & Grandy, Ltd., Commissioner Peg McCartney, and Roger & Pat Phillips.

WLA thanks all who attended and looks forward to seeing you next year. If you did not attend, plan now to be at the Installation Dinner next fall. You won't want to miss it!

By Suzette Carlisle

QUOTABLE QUOTES

I think a woman has two choices: either she's a feminist or a masochist. *Gloria Steinem*

Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead. *Louisa May Alcott*

Cautious, careful people always casting about to preserve their reputation or social standards never can bring about reform. Those who are really in earnest are willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathies with despised ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequences. *Susan B. Anthony*

We've chosen the path to equality, don't let them turn us around. *Geraldine Ferraro*

If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it. *Margaret Fuller*

Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got. *Janis Joplin*

Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose. *Helen Keller*

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. *Margaret Mead*

I can honestly say that I was never affected by the question of the success of an undertaking. If I felt it was the right thing to do, I was for it regardless of the possible outcome. *Golda Meir*

Something which we think is impossible now is not impossible in another decade. *Constance Baker Motley*

I think the key is for women not to set any limits. *Martina Navratilova*

Remember no one can make you feel inferior without your consent. *Eleanor Roosevelt*

The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn. *Gloria Steinem*

I am also very proud to be a liberal. Why is that so terrible these days? The liberals were liberators—they fought slavery, fought for women to have the right to vote, fought against Hitler, Stalin, fought to end segregation, fought to end apartheid. Liberals put an end to child labor and they gave us the five day work week! What's to be ashamed of? *Barbra Streisand*

I've learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances. *Martha Washington*

Announcements

Kudos

Kris Kerr as New Commish. Congratulations to new WLA Board Member-at-Large Kristine Kerr, who is the new St. Louis County Family Court Commissioner. Kris was sworn in by Administrative Judge Tom DePriest on Monday, September 13, 2004. Our best wishes to the new member of the bench. *By Kathleen Dubois*

Cindy Ormsby Walks for Days. Over the weekend of October 23 while the rest of us were probably out frolicking in the beautiful fall weather, Cindy Reed Ormsby completed a 3-day, 60 mile walk to benefit breast cancer research. Cindy writes, "The walk was absolutely incredible - very hard and very emotional - but worth every step. My feet have a ton of blisters, but they'll heal soon. The walk took place through Scottsdale, Phoenix and ended in Tempe, AZ. The weather was warm during the day, but freezing at night. Camping out each night was probably my least favorite part of the walk, but how else would you house 2000 walkers plus the crew to support the event. Koman did an excellent job of organizing the event. I'm signing up to do another next September in Chicago. Anyone interested, please let me know. This walk alone raised \$5.5 million - I plan on walking each year until there's a cure. If you want more info, give me a call (726.3040)." *By Lisa Herder*

Women Lawyers Achievement Award: The ABA Commission on Women in the Profession is accepting nominations for the 15th annual Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award. Let's bring some much-deserved recognition to the amazing women lawyers in St. Louis by nominating one (or more) of our own for this prestigious award. Please reply to wlastl@yahoo.com with your suggestions.

Comment on Lawyer Advertising: The Missouri Bar Board of Governors invites you to review the latest revisions to rules governing lawyer advertising and submit your comments by November 7. Go to www.mobar.org <http://www.mobar.org/>.

Oleta Adams in Concert + Auction Benefiting Community Women Against Hardship

Community Women Against Hardship, an organization that helps many underserved women and children in the area with innovative programs in nutritional and computer education, a transitional housing program, and a unique concept of teaching math, reading, and grammar using hip hop music, is having its annual fundraising auction and concert on Sunday, November 14 at the Sheldon. Tickets for the auction and concert are \$50 and tickets for the concert only are \$35. This year's concert is by national recording artist Oleta Adams and her quartet. The auction begins at 4:30 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30. WLA Member Lisa Langeneckert is the Chair of this year's auction. Tickets can be purchased by contacting her at The Stolar Partnership (314 641-5158 llangeneckert@stolarlaw.com) or by calling Metrotix (314) 534-1111. If you are interested in contributing an item for the auction or in placing an ad in the auction booklet, please contact Lisa Langeneckert.

Pay Dues Today! The membership renewal form is sitting in your inbox. Fill it out and send your check today! Delinquent members will be dropped from the mailing list. While you're at it, rescue your colleagues and friends from the isolation of non-membership and sign them up! The form is available on our web page.

Lost and Found

Prescription sunglasses left at Installation Banquet on September 21 at Forest Park Golf Clubhouse. Brand name St. John. Glasses have black ear stems and gold frames. Case is black with snake skin pattern and black and gold decorative button. Contact Megan Phillips at 531-5316.

So, Whaddya Think?

The WLA Newsletter editors want your feedback about newsletter content, format, and distribution. We invite your submissions, announcements, or other contributions. Contact Megan Phillips at phbreton@swbell.net. Electronic distribution of the newsletter results in a substantial savings to the organization. However, paper copies are still available upon request. Members without e-mail or otherwise desiring to receive the newsletter by regular mail may opt out of electronic distribution by contacting WLA's Executive Directors at wlastl@yahoo.com.

**WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION OF GREATER
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WLA Mission Statement

To encourage women lawyers to prosper and endeavor in the profession and in their individual practices,

To encourage and aid women in attaining and excelling in leadership positions,

To encourage women to be civic-minded by volunteering their time and talent to the organization and to the Greater St. Louis area,

To promote diversity and justice within the legal system and to end gender bias, and

To work with community leaders to improve the status of women.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND REMINDERS...

Today: Send in your membership renewal form. Get five friends/colleagues to join WLA this year!

Friday, November 5, 4-7pm: 25th Anniversary Happy Hour for Redevelopment Opportunities for Women, Inc. (ROW), serving homeless and battered women in St. Louis. Enjoy wine, champagne, hors d'oeuvres, and music. Suggested donation \$25 (minimum \$5). RSVP to row@row-stl.org or 588-8300.

Sunday, November 14: Oleta Adams in Concert for Community Women Against Hardship. Contact Lisa Langeneckert at 314 641-5158 or llangeneckert@stolarlaw.com.

December 2: WLA Annual Holiday Party and Charity Auction at Forest Park Golf Course Clubhouse.