

Summer 2010

Summer 2010

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2009–2010*

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**WLA ANNUAL  
MEETING AND  
PRESIDENT'S PICNIC**

*Wednesday,  
August 4, 2010  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.*

*5757 Lindell Avenue  
(Home of Attorney  
Richard Banks)*

Please join us for food and drinks and to reconnect with your fellow WLA members. You'll also meet your WLA Board of Directors for 2010-2011.

## To Everything, There Is A Season

By WLA President Nicole Colbert-Botchway



WLA President Nicole Colbert-Botchway with her father, Ronald Colbert, Sr. (l), husband Ibrahim Botchway and son Ismail Botchway.

2010 has already been filled with hills and valleys, but the seasons change and there is time for rebirth. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the members of the Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis who have supported me during my most trying time - the home going of my father, Ronald Colbert, Sr., who passed away February 13, 2010. My father taught me how to be a strong woman, to work hard, to demand equality, to be gratefully humble and to fear nothing. I miss him greatly and

will always strive to make him proud, as his words of wisdom echo in my ear. I have my mother, Betty J. Colbert, to take care of and my father prepared me for this moment in his own special way. I received so many heart-felt expressions of sympathy which taught me that, like me, many of you are where you are because of the priceless support and love of a strong father.

I want to take this time to thank my wonderful Board who made sure "the show went on" in my absence. Unfortunately, I missed the WLA/MCBA Black History Month Trivia Night in February. This event is near and dear to my heart and I was happy to hear from many attendees that they had a great time. Special thanks go out to the then-very pregnant Jessica Liss who has worked hard on this event since its inception. Jessica supported my idea of having a joint event with MCBA in honor of Black History Month. When the first Trivia Night took place in 2007 at the Scott Joplin House, Jessica moved full speed ahead to insure it was a success. Although a blizzard dumped 6 feet of snow on us and there was a conflict with a BAMSL event, not to mention numerous issues with the location, catering, seating, etc., Jessica was the first person there to get things organized and did not sit down until the event was over and the clean up complete. Jessica Liss is a phenomenal woman who this year ran the event just a few days before she delivered her son, Benjamin Carter Traube, born March 8, 2010. Benjamin weighed in at 7lbs, 14 oz. and 21 inches long. Way to go, Jessica! She has made significant

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## BRAGGIN' RIGHTS

***Our mothers were wrong. WLA encourages everyone to submit your own or your colleagues' accomplishments so we can recognize you here and inspire others to keep plugging away.***

Congratulations to **the Honorable Audrey Goldstein Fleissig**, who was sworn in on June 11, 2010, as a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri. After serving as a United States Magistrate Judge since August 3, 2001, she was confirmed by the United States Senate on June 7, 2010, following a recommendation by Senator Claire McCaskill and nomination by President Obama. Judge Fleissig's oath was administered by the Chief Judge of the Eastern District, the Honorable Catherine D. Perry, at the Thomas F. Eagleton Courthouse.

Judge Fleissig is a proud member of the Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis and served as our President for the 1993-1994 term. During her tenure, Judge Fleissig presented the Honorable Lisa Van Amburg with the President's Award, and presented the Lifetime Award to Frankie Muse Freeman.

Several members of WLA were recently honored as recipients of **2010 Women's Justice Awards** from *Missouri Lawyers Weekly*. These include: **Judge Kathianne Knaup Crane** (Public Official), **Mavis Thompson** (Public Service Practitioner), WLA Executive Director **Deborah C. Weaver** (Enterprise Award), WLA Board Member At Large **Bridget G. Hoy** (Rising Star), **Melanie Daily DeRousse** (Rising Star) and **Sheena Hamilton** (Leader of Tomorrow). Way to go! We are tremendously proud of all of you.

Finally, a rousing "Atta Girl!" to one of the *St. Louis Business Journal's* 2010 40 Under 40 award winners, our very own WLA President **Nicole Colbert-Botchway**. The honorees — all younger than 40 — were chosen by a panel of *Business Journal* editors and former winners based on career achievements and community work.

It's always great to see women lawyers (and WLA members) doing great things and it's our pleasure to show off their accomplishments. For those whose announcements we've missed, congratulations and please email us at [wla@wlastl.org](mailto:wla@wlastl.org) so we can be sure to give you your due.



**Judge Audrey Fleissig**



**Judge Kathianne Knaup Crane**



**Mavis Thompson**



**Deborah C. Weaver**



**Bridget G. Hoy**



**Melanie Daily DeRousse**



**Nicole Colbert-Botchway**

# Looking Forward to 2010-2011: Big Shoes To Fill

By Jessica Liss



Taking the helm as the incoming President of the Women Lawyers' Association is a tremendous honor and endeavor. Since 1976, WLA has been led by strong and innovative women who recognize the need and vital importance of maintaining an organization specifically designed to promote and assist women lawyers in both their professional and personal lives. As I look over the list of Past-Presidents, I am humbled to join the ranks of these incredible and accomplished women. Many of these women are past and current members of our judiciary, leaders in their respective fields and influential in our legal community. I am tremendously inspired by those who have come before me. Over the course of the next year, I will make every effort to honor their indelible legacy by carrying the mission of WLA into 2011 and beyond.

With that said, our current President, Nicole Colbert-Botchway, has left some very big shoes to fill. Nicole hit the ground running as President and never stopped. She began her tenure with a kick-off event and fashion show at Macy's benefiting domestic violence awareness. Throughout the year, Nicole worked tirelessly with judges, bar leaders, WLA members, the legal community and area vendors with events that continued to raise awareness and financial support for domestic violence prevention. Nicole's energy and enthusiasm for all things WLA is infectious. Some people are born leaders and Nicole is one of those people. I am grateful to have been her "Number Two" this past year. I am equally grateful for her friendship and support as I assume the role of President.

My single most important goal for 2010-2011 will be to increase our membership and ensure WLA's financial future. To accomplish this goal, WLA needs you! I am so pleased that you, our members, have put in place a Board which is committed to the needs and resolve of WLA. During the next year, we ask that you continue to attend the core events that make WLA great – our Annual Golf Event, Christmas Party, the Linda Murphy Scholarship Reception, Diversity Trivia Night, and Missouri Legislative Luncheon. You will also see additional noteworthy events added to our roster, designed to benefit your health, social awareness, mentorship, networking skills and women as rainmakers.

I am excited to serve as your 2010-2011 President. I strongly encourage you to continue your support of WLA and each other.

## UPCOMING WLA EVENTS

**Thursday, July 8, 2010:**

**Membership/Mentorship Happy Hour**

Jade, 910 Olive Street

5:30 to 7:40 p.m.

Come enjoy tasty beverages and appetizers with WLA members old and new!

**Wednesday, August 4, 2010:**

**2010 Annual Meeting and President's Picnic**

5757 Lindell Blvd. (Home of Attorney Richard Banks)

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

**Thursday, September 9, 2010:**

**Annual Installation Banquet and Past Presidents Reception**

Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark, 1 S. Broadway

5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

# Like Mother, Like Daughter: Cookies Make Everything Better—Even Law School Finals

by Kristine Bridges



When I titled this column “Like Mother, Like Daughter,” I had no idea how true that would ring. By the grace of God, my daughter made it through her first semester of law school. Like any 1L, she had to endure the dreaded final exams – and so did everyone else who listened to her dramatic tales of woe. We all know because we have all been there, but you would think she is the only one who ever had to endure such torture.

She diligently prepared for each final using flashcards and notes and whatever means she could get her hands on. I even flew to Oklahoma for a weekend to read her flashcards to her, which only seemed fair since she read flashcards to me when I was in law school. I knew she was fully prepared for her exams. Then I got the following email, detailing the treatment she expected from us after her first final:

Ok, so my first final is tomorrow morning. I'm scared out of my mind. I'm so stressed, I don't even feel like myself! I keep studying, but I'll never feel ready. I just wanted to say that tomorrow morning, I'll be turning my phone OFF, and so I won't be answering until well into the afternoon. Also, the final goes until noon and I'll probably be there until noon. I will call you when I'm ready to talk. And, when I call you, please don't ask me how it went. Sorry for sounding mean, I just wanted to let you know that I won't have my phone on and since I won't talk about the exam with my friends, I am just making it a general rule not to talk about it at all. It's not like I will be able to go back and change anything, so just putting it behind me will be best. I love you.

Oh, the drama! At least she ended with “I love you.” Of course, all went well with finals. There were a few dicey moments – like after her torts final when she just knew she blew it. It required a late night phone call, after which I sent her a cookie basket to take her mind off of it, if only for a few minutes. Her Facebook status immediately changed to say she has the best mom ever (which was, of course, my goal), followed by several of her friends expressing their envy. High praise for something so simple; who knew I could obtain the Mother of the Year status with a cookie basket? Apparently, cookies make things better.

With finals complete, we had to wait the obligatory month and half to see how she actually did on them. In a freakish turn of events, her first semester 1L grades were identical to mine in the same classes. Could we be any more *like mother, like daughter*?

[Kristine's daughter also survived her second semester of law school and is interning in St. Louis this summer.]

## FIRST ANNUAL NATIONAL REUNIFICATION DAY CELEBRATION *Celebrating Families & Advocating for Change*

**The goal of National Reunification Day is to celebrate families and communities coming together and to raise awareness about the importance of family reunification to children in foster care.**

**Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010  
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**Washington University, School of Law  
ABH Cullenbine Classroom (No. 305)**

**Lunch will be served.**

This event made possible by Washington University School of Law and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Inc., a proud member of United Way.



## Don't Forget!

**It is time to renew your WLA Membership. Current members will an invoice in the mail this month—please remit payment by September 1, 2010. WLA appreciates your support!**

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contributions since joining the Board and will make a wonderful President. I cannot wait to see what she has in store for WLA 2010-2011.

This year has been a busy one—this list of events are just some of the ways in which WLA served its members:

In September, 2009, we kicked the year off with the Installation Dinner at the Roberts Mayfair Hotel. The President's Award was presented to Marjorie Carter. We also sponsored a Networking Breakfast at Midwest Litigation as part of the Missouri Bar Annual Meeting, and put on our annual WLA Golf Tournament at the Forest Park Golf Course. In October, we staged our first ever Domestic Violence Awareness Fashion Show at Macy's. The proceeds of the event were distributed to ROW (\$1,500) and Lasting Solutions (\$1,500). Our annual Holiday Party rounded out the calendar year, with food and drinks and a silent and live auction at Thompson Coburn. Proceeds of the auction benefited Legal Advocates for Abused Women.

We kicked off the new decade with a WLA/ALA networking breakfast at Midwest Litigation. Attendees brought coats and cell phones, which were donated to ROW. Our Diversity Trivia Night, co-sponsored with Mound City Bar Association, was part of Black History Month (February). WLA's annual Legislative Luncheon at the Missouri Athletic Club took place in March, with an outstanding number of women legislator's in attendance and lively discussion among all of the participants. In April, we sponsored a joint Happy Hour with BAMSL's YLD at Frazer's Travelin' Brown Bag, while our Scholarship and Judicial Reception at St. Louis Cellars took place in May. Before the end of my term, we are sponsoring a Membership/Mentorship Happy Hour at Jade (July 8) and the Annual Meeting and President's Picnic (August 4). Not bad for one term!

For the upcoming year, I want to encourage our membership to stay the course. WLA has been in existence since 1976 when a brave group of women decided to band together to form an organization that would support and promote women lawyers in whatever their endeavors. We must continue to support and promote each other. We need to share our goals and aspirations with one other and work to get them accomplished. It has become clear to me the more things change, the more they stay the same and although we have made significant strides in the legal professional since 1976, we still have a long way to go. I encourage all our members to renew their membership, join a committee, run for a Board position, share their wisdom, knowledge and expertise and make a significant difference in the organization by helping others. Please get off the sidelines and be the change you want to see in this organization. We need you to help pay it forward.

## ***Legal Services of Eastern Missouri Launches Its First Annual Bar Campaign***

***By Judith C. Miniace, CFRE, Director of Development***

The Women Lawyers' Association Board of Directors very graciously agreed to offer both their financial support and their endorsement of the Legal Services of Eastern Missouri's (LSEM) First Annual Bar Campaign at their recent meeting. We are very grateful for WLA's support of LSEM and, in particular, of the Annual Bar Campaign.

The mission of Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) is to provide civil legal assistance to low-income individuals. In these difficult times, an increasing number of people require civil legal advice to battle everyday struggles. Domestic violence increases when families struggle financially, access to safe shelter is challenging, appropriate health care and benefits seem inaccessible, and a quality education appears to be out of reach.

Unfortunately, at the same time as low-income individuals are struggling with multiple challenges, LSEM is facing a potential shortfall in revenue. Revenues from Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) funds, our 4<sup>th</sup> largest funding source, have dropped nearly 50% in 2010 from what they were in 2009. Because interest rates have been so low, LSEM will receive nearly \$250,000 less from IOLTA in 2010. For many years, LSEM has been dependent on funding from grants. However, income from grants is uncertain because government funders, corporate foundations, as well as family foundations do not typically renew their support year after year.

To respond to the growing need for civil legal assistance and to address the projected loss of income, community leaders created the Legal Services of Eastern Missouri's Annual Bar Campaign. Over 40 Legal Services programs throughout the country have initiated such campaigns, including Kansas City where they raise over \$400,000 per year. We are very fortunate to have Senator John Danforth and Judge Stephen Limbaugh, Sr. as the co-chairmen of our campaign. These two esteemed gentlemen believe fervently in the need for equal access to justice and have been a very effective team in assisting us in this fund raising effort.

Our goal is to raise \$600,000 each year for the next 3 years to provide access to justice for a wide range of eligible low-income, disabled and elderly persons, including hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations, throughout the 21-county low-income client community LSEM serves. This would cover about ½ of our projected gap in funding during this period. We are inviting law firms, individuals, corporations and foundations, and other members of the community to join us in making the promise of Justice for All for every low income resident in Eastern Missouri a reality.

We are especially excited that The Women's Lawyers Association has agreed to partner with us in an effort to assist us in reaching our goal and are proud to add the WLA to our list of Annual Bar Campaign donors.

The Campaign Kick-Off event on April 29, 2010 was a great success. We were able to announce that over \$400,000 toward our \$600,000 goal has been raised since November 1, 2009. If you, your law firm, or a foundation with whom you are familiar, would like to make a three-year pledge or a one-time contribution to the Annual Bar Campaign, please call or e-mail Judith C. Miniace, CFRE, Director of Development, at 314-256-8742 or [jcminiace@lsem.org](mailto:jcminiace@lsem.org).

Together we can continue to make a difference in the lives of those in need as we strive for equal access to justice for all.

## ***2010 Scholarship and Judicial Reception***

***By Bridget Hoy***

Each spring since 1996, WLA has given one or more scholarships to women law students in Missouri who are engaged in community service, making a difference in the lives of women and otherwise promoting WLA's mission while still attending law school. The award is given in memory of **Linda J. Murphy**, a local criminal defense and civil rights lawyer who also served as WLA President from 1987 to 1988. In 1999, just before Linda lost her battle with cancer, WLA renamed its scholarship in her honor. Every year, her spirit of advancing women and the community through competent lawyering, good service, and a sense of humor are remembered and celebrated through the Linda J. Murphy Scholarship award and reception.

Also honored at WLA's Scholarship and Judicial reception each year are newly-appointed women judges throughout Missouri. This year's reception was held on May 18, 2010, at St. Louis Cellars on Big Bend Boulevard. The turnout was outstanding, with attendees enjoying delicious appetizers and a generous wine tasting. Proceeds from wine purchased at the event went to the WLA Foundation.

This year, the WLA Board of Directors approved three worthy recipients for a scholarship of \$2000 each. The 2010 Linda J. Murphy Scholarships were awarded to:

Katie Crank – Washington University – 2L

Jerina Phillips – Saint Louis University – 1L

Fitzann Reid – Washington University – 1L

These three remarkable young women were selected from nearly 30 applicants. While all of the applicants were deserving, Ms. Crank, Ms. Phillips, and Ms. Reid were selected because each demonstrates a genuine and deep dedication to helping women, children and other persons in need. The Scholarship Committee is convinced that these women will continue that service throughout their legal careers and is confident the scholarship funds will be put to good use. Congratulations to the recipients!

Also honored at the 2010 Scholarship and Judicial Reception were The Honorable Gloria Clark Reno and The Honorable Ellen (Nellie) H. Ribaldo, both from the St. Louis County Circuit Court. Judge Reno was elevated to the Circuit Court in 2009 and Judge Ribaldo was appointed to fill the Associate Circuit vacancy left behind. Best wishes to these ladies as they continue to live the WLA mission while serving on the bench.

If you or someone you know is interested in applying for next year's Linda J. Murphy Scholarships, please check the WLA website in early 2011 for an application and submission instructions. Applications will be due at the end of March, 2011.

Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis

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Email: [wlastl@wlastl.org](mailto:wlastl@wlastl.org)



**Don't forget to renew your membership!**

**WLA Mission Statement.** Our mission is to:

- Promote and assist women in obtaining positions of influence and leadership within their workplace, the legal profession, the judiciary, and the community.
- Raise awareness of and combat biases against women within the community at large, the legal profession, and under the law.
- Advocate for diversity, equality, and justice under the law and within the legal system.
- Support women lawyers in their personal and professional lives.
- Provide opportunities for volunteerism and advocacy on issues affecting women.
- Collaborate with other individuals and organizations to improve the status of women.

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!**

**WLA**

**President's Picnic and Annual Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 4, 2010**

**6-8pm**

5757 Lindell Blvd (Richard Bank's residence)

**Please join us for**

**drinks and hors d'oeuvres**

All past, present and future members welcomed!

**RSVP by July 30th Required** – [kporter@midwestlitigation.com](mailto:kporter@midwestlitigation.com)

