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*2007-2008*

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**President's Column by Tricia Susi**



Fall is my favorite time of the year. The leaves are turning, the temperature getting cooler (well, at least some days) and there is a plethora of events and activities to get involved in. In early October, we hosted the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Installation Banquet and President's Award Ceremony and hosted a cocktail reception honoring our Past Presidents and Board Members at Lumen. Then just a few days later, WLA hosted a Golf Tournament at Sunset Lakes Golf Course. I have been sort of hibernating since those two events, which were both hugely successful, but utterly exhausting.

This year's Installation Banquet turnout was the largest that I have witnessed since my swearing in as a member-at-large over eight years ago. This year, we, as a board, decided to put together not only a cocktail reception with great food and drink, but a tribute book, wherein our numbers could pay homage to the past and support our future endeavors. The proceeds from the tribute book will go to enhance the Linda Murphy Scholarship Fund.

The Golf Tournament could not have been more perfect. We went back to the first venue, Sunset Lakes. It was a beautiful summer/fall day (too hot to be actually considered fall). This year, instead of taking direction from my father, who believes he is a professional golfer, I sat with Genevieve Nichols at the hole in one and waxed nostalgic about the past

seven years we shared as members on the board and discussed the future of WLA. We did this all over a few beers and the occasional shot of Gold Schlagger.

I must admit that I am not very creative and alcohol certainly does not add to my creativity. What it boiled down to is that the agenda for the next year is to continue the scorecard project, which Genevieve started in her tenure as president. The gist is to get the larger firms to fill out information regarding their policies on hiring minorities and women and to account for the number of minority and female partners and associates. The results of the scorecard will be published and the firms can see how they "measure up". This is a pretty big undertaking and I am hopeful that we can get it completed with the assistance of our members and my dedicated board.

In addition to this project, I want to encourage more people to become involved in our organization. The turnout at the installation banquet is just a start. In my remarks that evening I felt as though I had the support of everyone in the room. I reminded the crowd not why WLA was relevant today, they should know this already; but I explained why it is still relevant to me. My involvement in WLA has assisted me in both my professional and personal life. I have met women who have mentored me and women that now look up to me to mentor them. This feeling is indescribable and my goal is to share this feeling with others, as they become involved and discover what WLA truly has to offer.

## BRAGGIN' RIGHTS

*Our mothers were wrong. WLA encourages everyone to submit your own or your colleagues' accomplishments so we can*

Way to be brave to **Sara Marler** for hanging out her own shingle, **The Law Offices of Sara Marler**. Sara focuses on criminal defense, family law, & juvenile law—she can be reached at **314-961-5010**. So super-cool to those voted by their peers into Lawyers' Weekly's "Best of" Edition: long-time member, supporter & all over great guy, **Judge Richard Teitelman** is our **Best Supreme Court Judge**; Nancy Mogab for the **Best Lawyer to Call if You're Injured at Work**; **Joyce Capshaw** for **Best Dressed** and **Best Lawyer to Call if You Need a Divorce**. Also of note, **Bryan Cave** got the nod for **Best Place to Work for Women**. Promotion to **Partner** is always impressive, thanks for showing it can be done to **Jacqueline Kinder** and **Irene Marusic** of Brown & James, P.C. Good going to **Kathie Dudley** with Gallop Johnson & Neuman for earning the distinguished **Accredited Estate Planner** (AEP) designation from the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils. Hats off to former board member **Katie Wessling** for receiving a **Special Recognition Award** from Legal Advocates for Abused Women. Super job to **Nicole Colbert-Botchway** for her appointment to the Missouri Bar's newly created **Professionalism Task-Force** and for receiving a **Special Achievement Award** for service in the legal profession from the St. Louis Sentinel! Congrats to **Dawn Johnson** for being named one of the 2 **leaders** of the **Appellate Practice** Group over at Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, P.C. Many kudos to **Lisa Martin** for being named **Chief Diversity Officer** at Bryan Cave. Very impressive to **Kathleen DuBois** on being appointed to the new St. Louis County Domestic Violence Council Legislative Committee. Way to go **Beth Boggs** for receiving the **2008 Southern Illinois University's Distinguished Alumni Award**. Last, but definitely not least, Rock On to **Mary Anne Sedey & Donna Harper** for their **\$337,000** verdict in St. Louis County in a hard fought **hostile work environment** claim.

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.



**Sara Marler**



**Judge Teitelman**



**Nancy Mogab**



**Joyce Capshaw**



**Jacqueline Kinder**



**Irene Marusic**



**Kathie Dudley**



**Katie Wessling**



**Nicole Colbert-Botchway**



**Dawn Johnson**



**Lisa Martin**



**Kathleen DuBois**



**Mary Anne Sedey**



**Donna Harper**

## 2008 Installation Banquet & Cocktail Reception

- Nicole Colbert-Botchway



The Women Lawyers' Association hosted its Annual Installation Banquet and Cocktail Reception Honoring WLA Past Presidents & Past Board Members on October 1, 2008 in the beautiful and spacious Lumen. The Cocktail Reception began at 5:30 p.m. on the second floor of the establishment and guests mingled and acknowledged the WLA Past Presidents and Board Members. Jessica Liss was the brain child of the Tribute Book Honoring WLA past Presidents for their years of service toward the advancement of women in the metropolitan St. Louis area.

Outgoing WLA President Genevieve Nichols introduced **Judge Kris Kerr** from the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial Circuit who read the Missouri House of Representatives' House Floor Resolution acknowledging WLA's contributions to the community, the 2008-2009 Board and The Honorable Mary Kay Hoff. This Resolution was introduced to the House Floor by **State Rep. Robin Wright Jones**. State Rep. Wright Jones is a progressive Democrat representing the 63rd Legislative District of the Missouri House of Representatives since 2002, the former Chairperson of the House Democratic Caucus for 4 years, Chairperson of the Missouri Legislative Black Caucus, Democratic Candidate for State Senate and was also Nicole Colbert Botchway's 3rd Grade teacher. The Resolution will travel with the Past President Genevieve Nichols.

President Genevieve Nichols gave a very heart felt and moving speech summarizing WLA Achievements and challenges in 2007-2008 and continued work for the future. She also introduced **this year's President's Award Recipient, The Honorable Mary K. Hoff**. Judge Hoff's willingness to share her time, talent, and experience serves the community and her family. A committed wife, mother, lawyer, and judge, she has touched many lives. The audience embraced her honesty and sincerity.

The oath administered by **The Honorable Mary Bruntrager Schroeder** installed the WLA Board of Directors for 2008-2009: **President, Patricia K. Susi, Past-President-Genevieve Nichols, President-Elect-Nicole Colbert-Botchway, Vice-President-Jessica Liss, Secretary-Jamie Boyer, Treasurer-Melanie Knies and Members at Large: Kristine Bridges, Kathleen Dubois, Amy Gunn, Jessica Kennedy, Maribeth McMahan and Kathryn VanVoorhees.**



Incoming WLA President Patricia K. Susi 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. WLA thanks all who attended and looks forward to seeing you next year. If you were unable to attend, plan now to be at the Installation Dinner next fall.



## A few fun pics from the 2008 WLA Golf Tourney



President and Past-President Pow-Wow



Amy Gunn checking her raffle tickets

## Inaugural St. Louis Diversity Job Fair

- **Melanie Knies and Jessica Liss**

On August 15, 2008, the Women Lawyers Association had a booth at the opening night reception of the 1st Annual St. Louis Diversity Job Fair. The St. Louis Diversity Job Fair was designed as opportunity for 2L and 3L law students to interview for summer associate positions. Over 280 2L and 3L law students from diverse backgrounds and a wide geographical area registered for the job fair, and over 100 students participated in interviews with local St. Louis legal employers from both the public and private sector. A number of law students stopped by the booth to fill out a WLA membership form and ask about the benefits of a WLA membership.

The attendees were also treated to several fine speakers, including **Robert Wallace**, **Charlie Harris**, and **WLA's own Mavis Thompson**. Ms. Thompson, who is President Elect of the National Bar Association when she is not having fun at WLA events and running her own practice, provided opening remarks to the group. Robert Wallace, the Vice President of the St. Louis Rams addressed the attendees on Friday night at the welcome reception held at the BAMSL Headquarters. Charles Harris, President of the Missouri Bar and the first African-American elected to that position, was the keynote speaker at the luncheon on Saturday at the Renaissance Grand Hotel.

## Project People Foundation Concert

- **Jessica Kennedy**

WLA was honored to attend and support the Celebrating Life concert on Sunday, October 26, 2008, at St. Francis Xavier College Church on the St. Louis University campus. The concert was part of a series of fundraising performances to benefit Project People Foundation, founded in 1995 and providing economic empowerment, educational enrichment and leadership development for women, children and youth in the townships of South Africa and community service opportunities for students in the United States.

The inter-faith evening included vocal and instrumental performances and speakers talking about the importance of the work of the Foundation. Foundation President Linda Tarry-Chard recounted the stories of the many women in South Africa who have benefited from the training offered by the Foundation, learning to sew school uniforms so that they can not only send their own children to school but can sell their work to become self-sufficient. Six local students, members of the congregation at St. Louis Bibleway Church, were honored as scholarship recipients.

The stars of the evening were the performers: featured vocalist Diana Solomon-Glover, cantor Sharon Nathanson from Congregation B'Nai Amoona, Dello Thedford & The Gospel Symphonic Choir, the B'Nai Amoona Zamarin (Teen Choir) and the Anointed Feet Christian Dance Academy of the Arts. As a special surprise, one of the conductors from The Color Purple, Victor Simonson, performed his inspiring original arrangement of "Amazing Grace" on the piano. The crowd was brought to their feet and to tears by all of the performances and the evening ended with the entire crowd singing along with The Gospel Symphonic Choir's rendition of "This Little Light of Mine."

In the words of one of the students, *"I am glad that I was able to attend the Job Fair. The event was extremely well organized and the interview process went very smoothly. The Fair offered fantastic opportunities to students and lunch was great!"*

A second Job Fair is scheduled on August 14-15, 2009. For more information, visit [www.stldiversityjobfair.com](http://www.stldiversityjobfair.com). Anyone who wants to help with WLA presence at this future event, please talk to a WLA Board Member.

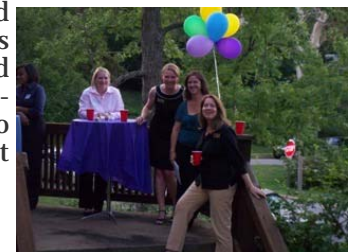
## 2008 President's Picnic

- **Jessica Kennedy**



The weather was perfect for this year's President's Picnic on August 14, 2008. Genevieve Nichols hosted the annual get-together at a fabulous Clifton Heights home. The party was well-attended and the delicious heavy appetizers, scrumptious mini-cheesecakes and full bar were big hits. Genevieve spoke about the many accomplishments of WLA

during her tenure as president, along with the goals and challenges for the incoming Board. She introduced the new Board and we all raised a glass to the past, present and future of our organization. A big thank you to Genevieve for making it a picnic to remember.



**Patricia Susi, President**  
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 St. Louis, MO 63188  
 E-Mail: wla@wlastl.org  
 www.wlastl.org



### MEMBERSHIP INVOICE September 2008-2009

**Please provide the following information for our records and return to: PO Box 1428, St. Louis, MO 63188.**

Membership Type: Renewal      New Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Year: \_\_\_\_\_ States admitted: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check to be included in the following:**

- List of professionals willing to receive requests from media for comment on an issue in my practice.
- Law students and less experienced lawyers can contact me for mentorship, resume review, mock interviews and similar.

**Please circle the committees in which you would like to participate:**

Legislative Committee	Golf Tournament Committee
Holiday Party & Charity Auction Committee	Scholarship Committee
Membership/Mentorship Committee	Judicial Committee
PR/Communication/Media Committee	Advisory/Historian Committee
Diversity Committee	<i>(open to past presidents)</i>

**Please circle your desired level of membership:**

Black Robe	\$250.00*
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Private Attorneys	\$80.00
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One Time fee for Online Directory    \$10.00 (must pay this one time fee to be included in the directory)

**TOTAL ENCLOSED    \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

*\*Proceeds from additional dues paid by Black Robe, Gavel & Scales of Justice Members will be given to the WLA Foundation for WLA's Charitable Activities Including the Linda J. Murphy Scholarship Fund for women law students.*

If you are enrolling in the Online Directory, please select three of the following practice areas for publication:

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Commercial Litigation	Eminent Domain/Land Use/ Zoning	Construction Law	Consumer Law	Contract Law
Corporations/Not For Profits	Criminal Prosecution	Criminal Defense	Disability Law	Elder Law
Election Law	Employment Discrimination – Employees	Employment Discrimination – Employers	Entertainment & Sports Law	Environmental Law
Family Law/Divorce/Custody & Support	General Practice	Government/Municipal Law	Health Law	Immigration
Insurance Defense	International Law	Internet/Technology	Judicial	Labor & Employment – Employers
Labor & Employment – Employees	Landlord/Tenant	Legal Aid	Legislative/Political	Medical Malpractice
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Retired	Regulatory/Licensing	School/Education	Securities	Social Security
Taxation	Traffic	Wills/Trusts/Estate Planning	Workers' Compensation	Legal Placement



## **Come Home for the Holidays!**

**Bring a friend! Bring a past WLA member!**

The setting for the 2008 WLA Holiday Party and Charity Auction  
is

**Favazza's Rose of the Hill**

**On Thursday, December 11, 2008.**

**Mark your calendars** for this fun and festive event.

Look for your invitation in the mail or log on to **[www.wlastl.org](http://www.wlastl.org)**

The proceeds will be donated to a worthy charity in the St. Louis Area that benefits women and/or children. **We need your help** to make this event a success. In the past, people have donated a week at a beach-front condo, original oil paintings, hand-crafted and vintage jewelry, personal care items, tickets to sporting or cultural events, gift certificates and numerous other items. **We are grateful for all donations.**

If you do not have items to donate and still wish to support this event, you may issue a check to assist with the **underwriting** of this event. This is also very much appreciated by WLA.

**Please contact Kristine Bridges at (314) 553-6559 or [kbridges@thompsoncoburn.com](mailto:kbridges@thompsoncoburn.com)** with questions or if you have an item with special delivery needs.

***Your support is greatly appreciated.***

# INTRODUCING THE HONORABLE ROBIN RANSOM VANNOY

-written by Hon. Suzette Carlisle



If you practice in the area of juvenile abuse and neglect, termination of parental rights, juvenile delinquency, guardianship or adoption in the St. Louis City, you need no introduction to **Judge Robin Vannoy**, the newest member of the Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit Bench. For the rest of the bar, allow me to introduce Judge Robin Ransom Vannoy, appointed by Governor Matt Blunt in September 2008. Judge Vannoy is respected for her ability to get things done.

Judge Vannoy practiced family and juvenile law for fourteen years before her appointment as Family Court Commissioner in December of 2002. She faced obstacles when looking out for the best interest of children while unifying families. Being a parent herself, it was difficult to terminate parental rights. It was a challenge to persuade delinquent youth to seek positive alternatives. She holds fond memories involving adoption cases and successful family reunifications. One highlight was a Tea Party she hosted in May 2008. Judge Vannoy explained; "Our achievements offset skepticism about judicial efforts."

Judge Vannoy believes the main difference between her responsibilities as Family Court Commissioner and Circuit Judge is the focus on the best interest of the child. As a Commissioner, case dispositions were restorative, not punitive. She is delighted to continue to serve the citizens of Missouri as Circuit Judge.

She graduated from Douglass College-Rutgers University and the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law. As a child, Judge Vannoy wanted to become a rock star. Her decision to practice law was influenced by family members who are attorneys. Her parents are Adell and LeVert Ransom. Mr. Ransom, now deceased, encouraged Judge Vannoy to pursue a legal career. The entertainment industry's loss is the legal profession's gain.

The youngest of four children, Judge Vannoy was born in St. Louis, Missouri and attended St. Louis Public Schools through fifth grade, Crossroads College Prep in grades six to ten and she graduated from Rosati-Kain High School. Her favorite subject was math because she could count on an exact answer. As a child, she enjoyed attending Cardinal baseball games with her family and church members.

Judge Vannoy met her future husband, Richard Vannoy III (Rick), at work. Mr. Vannoy is also an attorney. They were married on a perfect day in September 1995. She and Rick understand career pressures because they are both in the legal profession. She credits her success at home with having a "terrific and understanding spouse" and her ability to multi-task.

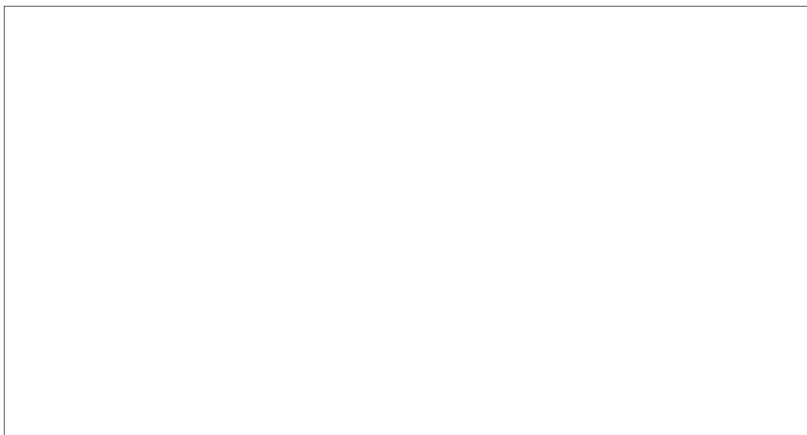
I had the pleasure to meet their young children, Alex and Ryan. Alex, eight years old, enjoys playing the Suzuki violin and sports. Alex thinks his mom's appointment to the bench is cool. Ryan, age three, has a bright smile and enjoys being near Dad. At this time she has no comment regarding Mom's appointment.

To women balancing home and work responsibilities, she offers this advice: "Never feel guilty when you know you are doing your best. I know that in all of my roles, I am the best that I can be because I give all that I can."

The citizens of Missouri look forward to receiving Judge Vannoy's best effort as Circuit Judge.

Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis

P.O. Box 1428  
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Email: [wlastl@wlastl.org](mailto:wlastl@wlastl.org)



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

- Promote and assist women to obtain 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!**

**Legal Services of Eastern Missouri** is seeking an **attorney** to work in its Lasting Solutions Unit, which provides a full range of **family law representation to victims of domestic violence**. Significant state court work expected, including pursuit of appellate and extraordinary remedies where appropriate. Must have a strong interest in working with victims of domestic abuse. Experience preferred but not required. Strong communication, research, and writing skills required. Attorney must be licensed to practice in Missouri or available to take the next Missouri Bar Exam. Send resumes no later than **December 5, 2008** to: **Beth Roper, Legal Services of Eastern MO, 4232 Forest Park Avenue., St. Louis, MO 63108. E.O.E.**



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