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**EVENTS &
REMINDERS**

• It's time to send in your membership renewal—find the form at www.wlastl.org OR on page 6!

• **4/29/8, 5:30pm—7:30pm, WLA's Judicial & Scholarship Reception.** Downtown at the Noonday Club. Join us to salute this year's recipient of the Linda J. Murphy Memorial Scholarship and to honor all new women judicial appointees and retirees.

President's Column by Genevieve Nichols



Politics as Usual?

Being president of WLA has been an eye-opener for me in a lot of ways.

I've always known that St. Louis was a small town at heart – I'm home grown and am always one of the first to ask where you went to high school (for those other locals who need to know, I'm a proud alum of U. City High). Since September I've seen first hand how much easier things can be if you have a little help from people in powerful places. Don't get me wrong, you have to start with hard work. And, I know that this is not peculiar to St. Louis or peculiar to the legal community. But, whom you know in St. Louis can get your foot in the door, get your phone calls answered, get your project done, get you a job, get you business, or get you on the track to success.

Not a bad thing, but, the reality does beg the question: what if you're on the outside? What if you don't know any of the people with power? What then?

Since WLA was founded in 1976, women lawyers in St. Louis have come a long way, and we have tons of ladies out there with the kind of power I'm talking about. A word from them can definitely make things hap-

pen. Unfortunately, however, many women lawyers in St. Louis are still on the outside.

For at least 15 years now, about 50% of law school graduates are women. In the first few years out of law school, the numbers remain pretty equal but the closer you get to the centers of power, the less equal the statistics become. We only just celebrated the promotion of the first woman managing partner of one of the largest firms in Missouri. A recent survey showed that, in the largest Missouri firms, women make up only 6%-22% of equity partners. In the same firms, women are a whopping 32%-59% of associates. The Missouri Bar's economic survey showed that women still make less money than men and the disparity is actually larger than two years ago – in 2007 women reported making 64% less than men for the same job.

So why are these women on the outside? Why are they leaving before they make partner? The experts say that one of the reasons is the unavailability of flexible work-place policies. These experts have shown that simple changes can make all the difference. Instituting written part-time, flex-time and maternity policies can help ensure that it's more about what you are capable of than about who you know. Back-up and

(continued on page 2)

Opportunities & Classifieds

We all need to do something a little new and different every once in a while, here's some upcoming opportunities for you or your friends.

- The Missouri Bar's 13th Annual **Solo & Small Firm Conference** will be held **June 12-14, 2007** at Tan-Tar-A resort at Lake of the Ozarks. Earn your MCLE credits by signing up for your favorites from over 70 educational programs, discussion groups, and computer labs. Learn all about it at <http://themissouribar.org>
- **Great Space for a New Lawyer or For a Small Firm** We have office space available in the Richmond Heights area. Our law firm is in an historic stand alone building on Big Bend near Clayton Road. Easy access to Hwy. 40. White box or including services. Client parking and kitchen facilities are included. Other services available include receptionist, scheduled use of conference rooms, local telephone, DSL, fax, voice mail, online legal research, copier, and network. Services and term negotiable. Referrals possible. Call 314-647-1200 for Lynn Ricci or Cynthia Garnholz.

President's Column

continued from page 1

on-site child-care as well as consistent women-mentoring programs help firms and their employees balance work and family. Regular reviews of a firm's statistics can also make sure that equal pay, equal work-assignments and equal opportunities are a reality and not just a goal. When firms institute these policies, attrition rates go down, women excel and start entering the higher echelons of power.

At WLA we would like all St. Louis firms – not just the ones with 100 or more attorneys – to institute the best policies available. To help make that happen, WLA is rolling out its "Scorecard Project." In the next few months, firms of all sizes will receive a questionnaire from WLA asking about the firm's policies and statistics. We're hiring an outside organization to tabulate the results. There will be a "Top 5" list in three categories: firms with over 50 attorneys, firms with 25-50 attorneys, and firms with 25 or fewer attorneys. The "Top 5" lists will be published in the media and announced at a summit between the best firms, experts and business leaders. The goal is to get St. Louis firms to implement the best policies available and thereby help women lawyers succeed.

WLA needs your help and support with this important project. For all of you women out there who already have the power, contact me today to get a copy of the questionnaire and help make sure your firm participates. For those of you who haven't quite conquered the world yet, call me to ask about other ways you can help make sure the questionnaire makes a difference. Politics as usual? Helping make sure that women are a part of what makes St. Louis legal politics move sounds good to me.

WLA Member nominated for MOBAR Board of Governors

WLA is proud to endorse Megan Phillips for the Missouri Bar Board of Governors. Megan's commitment to the bar is demonstrated by her numerous positions of leadership and service within the Missouri Bar, WLA, and other civic organizations. In addition, her diverse professional experience, including corporate, academia, non-profit, and state government, enables her to consider the interests of lawyers in a wide variety of practice areas and institutional contexts, independent of the plaintiff/defense divide. As a representative for lawyers in the City of St. Louis, Megan hopes to further the bar's efforts in defending the judiciary, providing loan repayment assistance to public interest lawyers, and promoting diversity within bar leadership. Currently, women hold only 7 of the 42 seats on the board.



Congratulations to WLA members **Heather Hays** for receiving one of the Rising Star Awards, **Debbie Champion** and **Mary Coffey** for receiving two of the tree Lawyer's Lawyer Awards, and to the **Hon. Mary Rhodes Russell** for receiving one of the Public Official Awards on April 10, 2008 at the Tenth Annual Women's Justice Awards. Also congratulations to **Heather Hays** and **Maureen McCullen** for becoming partners at Rynearson, Seuss, Schnurbusch, & Champion, LLC, to **Jessica Liss** for becoming a principal at Rabbit, Pitzer & Snodgras, P.C., and last, but certainly not least, congrats to **Genevieve Nichols** for being named partner to Coffey & Nichols. Way to go, ladies!!

Invite a Friend to join WLA!

Scholarship and Judicial Reception to Honor Outstanding Women in Law

by **Jamie Boyer**

Each year, WLA's Scholarship and Judicial Reception honors outstanding women whose accomplishments and advancement in the profession set an example for all lawyers. This year is no exception, with three judges—including two Missouri Supreme Court justices—receiving recognition for their recent appointments to the bench. WLA will also recognize two local law students with the Linda J. Murphy Scholarship and say good-bye to three groundbreaking women who retired from public service this year.



Chief Judge Laura Denver Stith and Judge Patricia Breckenridge will both receive gavels recognizing their service on the Missouri Supreme Court. Chief Judge Stith was appointed to the Court in 2001, and will serve as its chief judge from 2007 until 2009. Before joining the state's highest court, Chief Judge Stith served on the Western District Court of Appeals, and was a partner with Shook, Hardy and Bacon. Also active in her community, Chief Judge Stith serves on a variety of bar association committees and was the president of the Association for Women Lawyers of Greater Kansas City.

Judge Patricia Breckenridge was appointed to the Court in 2007, following seventeen years of service on the Western District Court of Appeals and eight years as an associate circuit judge in Vernon County, Missouri. During her time on the bench, Judge Breckenridge served on the Missouri Task Force on Gender and Justice and chaired the Missouri Gender Fairness Implementation Committee from 1993 to 1997.

Also being honored is Judge Ellen Levy Siwak, who was appointed to the St. Louis County Circuit Court this year. Judge Siwak previously served as an associate circuit judge and family court commissioner. Before taking the bench, Judge Siwak was a partner with Rosenblum, Goldenhersh, Silverstein & Zafft. Outside of the courtroom, Judge Siwak has served as president of the Missouri Association of Probate and Associate Circuit Judges and president of the St. Louis County Directors of the National Association of Women Judges.

At the same time it acknowledges the recent accomplishments of these outstanding women, WLA must also say good-bye to three judges who will leave the bench this year. **Judge Evelyn Baker**, the first African-American woman to be appointed a circuit judge in Missouri, stepped down from the bench in March, ending 25 years of service with the St. Louis City Circuit Court. Before her historic appointment, Judge Baker served with the National Labor Relations Board, St. Louis City Circuit Attorney, St. Louis County Prosecutor and United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Former WLA president **Joan Burger** will also retire from the St. Louis City Circuit Court after serving for 13 years. A long-time St. Louis resident, Judge Burger served as the Legal Officer for the St. Louis Juvenile Court, as well as an assistant circuit attorney. During her 14 years in private practice, Judge Burger also acted as a hearing officer for the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners and was actively involved in countless bar and community organizations.

And finally, **Judge Barbara Crancer** will step down from the bench this year ending 15 years of service with the St. Louis County Circuit Court. Before becoming an assistant circuit court judge, Judge Crancer acted as a legal advisor and administrative law judge for the Missouri Division of Workers' Compensation. Prior to entering public service, Judge Crancer enjoyed a long career in private practice.

This year's reception will also honor two rising stars in the law, **Linda J. Murphy Scholarship award winners Mary Wolff and Elizabeth McDonald**. Both women exemplify the ideals of Ms. Murphy, a former criminal defense and civil rights attorney who devoted her career to advocating on behalf of women and minorities. Now in her first year of law school at St. Louis University, Ms. Wolff first became involved with women's issues during her undergraduate years at Illinois State University. As a student, Ms. Wolff organized the school's first ever "Take Back the Night" rally to focus attention on violence against women, and also worked with the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance to provide education, employment and legal services to women in abusive relationships.

Ms. McDonald, a 2L at Washington University, is the Vice-President of the Women's Law Caucus and was instrumental in launching a speaker series discussing the rewards and challenges women face in the legal field. Ms. McDonald also lobbies for the hiring and promotion of more female and minority professors. While she has not settled on a particular practice area, Ms. McDonald's interests include family law and feminist legal theory.

This year's Scholarship and Judicial Reception will be held on Tuesday, April 29, 2008, from 5:30-7:30, at the Noonday Club in downtown St. Louis. For more information, please contact Katie Wolf at Katie.wolf@wlastl.org.

- Jamie Boyer is current WLA secretary and practices business, education and ERISA litigation at Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP. She can be reached at jboyer@stinson.com

Life is a Spinning Plate, and I Want to Balance It!

By Amy Collignon Gunn

On a recent beautiful Sunday afternoon, I walked back from the park with my five year old son. We heard dogs barking in a nearby back yard.

He asked, "Mom, why are those dogs barking?"

"Maybe they are upset because they see other dogs running and playing in the park and they are fenced in." I responded.

"Why would that make them upset?" He wondered.

I replied. "Because they want to be free."

"Why?" He persisted.

"Everyone wants to be free, sugar. Free to do what they want to do, when they want to do it, where they want to do it." I added as if it were obvious even to a five year old.

"Do you want to be free?" He questioned.

"Of course, don't you?" I inquired.

"No, I want to be with my mommy." Cue the tears.

At that moment, freedom didn't mean anything to me. I didn't want to be anywhere else in the whole world. Earlier that day, however, while at the office preparing for a trial that was suppose to start the next day, I could think of a million other places I wanted to be. I wanted to be free from work. Free from obligation and stress. Regardless, I forged onward until I received a phone call from my client necessitating that I ask for a continuance. I contacted opposing counsel, headed home and to the park.

In my life, balance creates freedom.

Recently, I had the pleasure of being a panelist at a Saint Louis University School of Law Women Law Students' Association event. Probably because my introduction included information that I work full time and have two small children, several women asked me how to balance work and life. No one wanted to talk about getting a job or the bar exam, but rather, after graduation, these ladies wanted to know how to do it all. I felt very ill prepared to provide any true insight, but I found myself talking about balance.

Balance means different things to different people. No one person's balance will work for everyone. We all have different tolerances for work, children, family and community obligations, religion, hobbies and of course, sleep. Balance can truly be depicted as the scales of justice, with

each weight representing all the things in our lives that require attention, focus, time, devotion and affection. If one becomes too heavy, the scales tip and we are out of balance. When I am out of balance, I feel less free, more stressed, less in control and more insecure about my choices. Sensing imbalance on the horizon can help avoid it, but that can be challenging.



Routine is my answer. It may not be very exciting, but keeping the same schedule every weekday gets me closer to the balance and thereby freedom that I need. It is almost like a budget, but with time, not money. Allot time to work, family and extracurricular activities. When you find yourself with an extra moment or two during the week, assess whether you are out of balance. If so, take that time to write a note to a friend, pick up the kids early from school or study up for the deposition, hearing or meeting that might be coming up the next day. Keep a list of the things you need to accomplish during the week, both for work and life. Efficiency is a key element to balance.

Plan long term, but have flexibility for the days when the regular routine is interrupted. My flexibility comes from having a supportive spouse, a wonderful family, an understanding employer and various other contingency plans in place. Don't be afraid to ask for help, but always remember to recognize that person's role in your ability to balance your world.

Most of all, know yourself, including your strengths and weaknesses; your goals and fears. Trust yourself and your choices. Balance can be achieved, but it is a work in progress. When I have my life in balance, I am actually free to enjoy it!

About the Author: Amy Collignon Gunn is a member of Simon Passanante PC where she practices in the area of plaintiff personal injury litigation. She is also a WLA board member at large and can be reached at agunn@simonpassanante.com.



SAVE THE DATE! FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2008

WLA of Greater Saint Louis Annual

“It’s Not Your Mother’s Golf Tournament Redux”



Open to Men & Women

LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON!

11:30 am Registration and Barbeque Lunch
 1:00 pm Shotgun Start with Drinks and Snacks on the course
 5:30 pm Drinks, Appetizers and Awards Presentation

Redux, as in “brought back and with a new interpretation.” We are eagerly anticipating another fabulous day of gorgeous fall weather, a delicious barbeque luncheon, plenty of drinks and snacks throughout the course and an “Awards Presentation” happy hour complete with hors d’oeuvres and the now **ubiquitous Frozen Margaritas**. This will be time well-deserved and well-spent relaxing and restoring in the company of good friends and colleagues. **Be prepared for a few more surprises this year, too.**

Our “four-person scramble” tournament has for many years allowed WLA to combine an entertaining afternoon with the chance to raise money in support of our various goals for women in the community. Last year’s golf outing generated approximately **\$6,000.00** which was **shared with WLA’s Foundation for charities such as Women’s Safe House**. In addition, WLA works year round fulfilling its mission to provide opportunities for volunteerism and advocacy on issues affecting all women and by collaborating with other individuals and organizations to improve the status of women.

Last year’s event at the Historic Normandie Golf Club was sunny and warm and many folks came out early to enjoy the weather and get into that natural, easy frame of mind so necessary for proper renewal of the body and soul. Our **generous sponsors** contributed an outstanding selection of items for our raffle including beer and wine accessories, golf attire and equipment for both men and women, gift certificates for fine dining around St. Louis, rounds of golf and lesson packages at Normandie and Aberdeen, and tickets to other sporting events, such as Blues Hockey. The **Schicker Automotive Group** sponsored our Hole In One challenge and friends of WLA were nestled throughout the beautiful scenery with some special refreshments to keep you in the game.

All golfers finished the daunting course in time to enjoy the sunset with continuous libations and some tasty Mexican appetizers from the nearby Mi Ranchito restaurant. Some even spontaneously adjourned to another location to keep the party going. Perhaps a true after-party should be added to this year’s plan. Trophies were awarded to **Judge Barbara Wallace** for “Closest to the Pin” and **Judge Mary Pat Schroeder** for “Longest Drive”, as well as to the First, Second and Third place teams.

As always, this tournament could not happen, did not happen without the help and support of many people. **Please check out our website for the complete list of last year’s tournament sponsors.** This year as well, there will be hole and tee sponsorships available and your company’s name and/or logo will be prominently displayed during the tournament. Volunteers also prove to be invaluable to the success of this kind of event, and even if you’re not a golfer, it’s a way you can still join in the fun. Many, many thanks to you all and **I’m looking forward to seeing you in October.**



This year’s location and more information on this event will be announced soon. Registration materials will be available online at www.wlastl.org.

- written by Maribeth McMahon, WLA Board Member, and St. Louis City Counselor.

Genevieve Nichols, President

P.O. Box 1428

St. Louis, MO 63188

E-Mail: wla@wlastl.org

www.wlastl.org



MEMBERSHIP INVOICE

September 2007-2008

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: _____

Firm/Corp: _____ Fax: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____

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 (*open to past presidents*)



Please circle your desired level of membership:

Gavel Club	\$110.00*
Scales of Justice	\$85.00*
Regular Membership	\$65.00
2006 Graduates/New Admittees	\$10.00
Law Student Membership	\$10.00
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____

**Proceeds from additional dues paid by Gavel Club & 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.*

OUT AND ABOUT WITH WLA

WLA Road Show Attracts New Members

WLA's membership is up 25% - about 50 new members – since September, due in part to the membership committee's outreach efforts. The committee has taken WLA "on the road" to visit women lawyers in some of the city's large law firms, including **Bryan Cave, Gallop Johnson & Newman, Lashley & Baer, Lewis Rice & Fingersh, Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal, and The Stolar Partnership.**

"We've received a warm welcome from the firms," said committee co-chair, Megan Phillips. "Many women we met were unaware of WLA's great work and were pleased to learn about our efforts to address their issues."

The committee's success is largely attributable to the follow-through of co-chairs **Megan Phillips**, judicial clerk for the Honorable Booker T. Shaw of the Missouri Court of Appeals, **Sara McAvoy** of Sandberg Phoenix & VonGontard and board member **Amy Gunn** of Simon Pasantante. Other active committee members are **Brigid Fernandez, Laura Ittman, Amany Hacking, and Melanie Daily**, as well as board members **Nicole Colbert-Botchway, Kristine Bridges, Jamie Boyer, Tricia Susi**, and, of course, our fearless leader, **Genevieve Nichols**.

Want to bring the road show to your firm? Contact Megan Phillips at 314-435-6560 or megan.phillips@courts.mo.gov.



WLA and MCBA Celebrate Black History Month with A Silent Auction and Trivia!

Not even eight inches of snow could stop the Women Lawyers' Association and Mound City Bar Association from filling the Historic Scott Joplin House for its first co-sponsored Happy Hour and Trivia Night!



On February 1, 2008, WLA and MCBA joined forces to celebrate Black History Month. This spirited event began with a happy hour, great food and a silent auction featuring everything from a private wine tasting for eight to a karaoke machine. Lawyers, judges, law students and friends mingled with each other while enjoying ragtime classics performed by St. Louis area pianist Ptah Williams.



Following a successful and fun-filled Happy Hour, over 100 guests and spectators made their way to the second floor of the Historic Scott Joplin House for a blazing 5 rounds of theme-based Trivia! WLA Member at Large and City Counselor Maribeth McMahon took to the floor to begin the questioning. Round one featured live music trivia played on a baby grand piano by Ptah Williams followed by more challenging trivia on celebrated African Americans and women in history, sports and the law. Ten tables filled with trivia pros and novices battled each other for the top spot. We are pleased to report that the table with the most State, Federal and Supreme Court Judges swept the competition to take the First Place Prize!

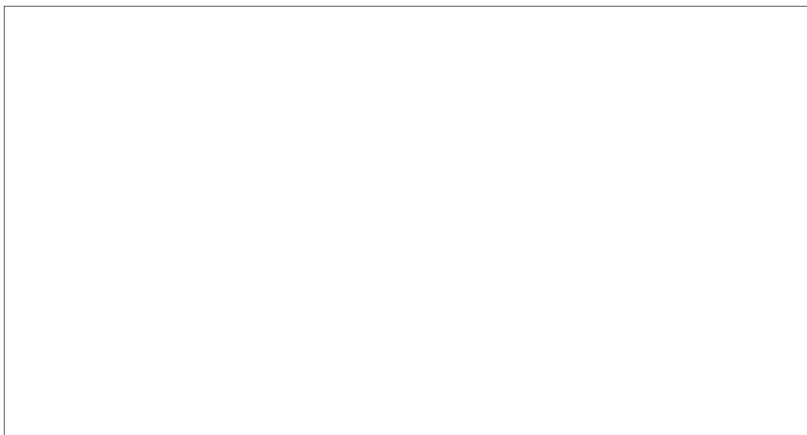


WLA and MCBA wishes to extend its appreciation and gratitude to all of the sponsors, law student volunteers and the guests who braved the snow and cold to make this such a successful event. We are looking forward to another sold out crowd next year!

- Nicole Colbert-Botchway, WLA Vice President, works in the Attorney General's Office in St. Louis. Jessica Liss, WLA board member, is an associate at Rabbitt, Pitzer, and Snodgrass.

Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis

P.O. Box 1428
St. Louis, MO 63188
Email: 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!

WLA BOARD NOMINATIONS OPEN

5/1/08-6/1/08

Now's your chance to get more involved in WLA: nominations for Board positions open on 5/1/08. You can nominate yourself or nominate someone you know. There are 6 Member at Large positions and 4 officer positions available (President-Elect, Vice-President, Secretary & Treasurer). The Board meets once a month and has the pleasure of being involved in all of WLA's annual events.

Read all the details and download your application at www.wlastl.org/members.html

Remember, in order to vote in the election or run for any office, **your membership dues and application must be current.** Nominations must be received by 6/1/08 so send in your Nomination Petition today and become a bigger part of WLA.

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