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2008-2009

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### Save The Date!

## 2009 WLA Judicial/ Scholarship Reception

Tuesday, May 19, 2009  
5:30—7:30 p.m.

St. Louis Cellars  
2640 S. Big Bend



## President's Column by Tricia Susi



### A Personal Perspective on Domestic Violence

I believe many of us have our own experiences with domestic violence. We have either family members or friends that are or have been what some would call "victims" of domestic violence. In my opinion as a domestic attorney and woman who has seen the effects of domestic violence on my own family, the word "victim" does not capture or describe the women, children, and even men who are affected. For me, it is more appropriate to describe these individuals as "survivors."

My mother is such a survivor. Her abuser, her own mother, died when my mother was just fifteen. On her death bed she apologized to my mother for the torment that she put her through. For my mother, however, nothing could bring back the years that she had to live in fear.

Back in law school, now 10 years ago, I wrote an article on the effect that viewing domestic violence has on children. What I omitted from this article was the perspective of the children who are the survivors of such violence perpetrated against them. Many become abusers as they grow older, and some find themselves in relationships where they are again abused. Yet others, like my mother, learn from the experience and become assertive, strong and determined not to abuse or be abused again.

On May 7, 2009, WLA is sponsoring an event to promote awareness of domestic violence. We called it a "kick off" event because, quite frankly, the reality is that in the next few years, incidents of domestic violence will increase with increase in the rate of unemployment and deterioration of our economy. WLA is committed not only to promoting the awareness of domestic violence, but to supporting and recognizing local organizations that on a daily basis assist those affected by domestic violence.

Some of you who know me know my own commitment to the support of "survivors." I have counseled women as a volunteer for ALIVE, a nonprofit organization in St. Louis dedicated to assisting the survivors of domestic violence. While in law school I clerked at the Cole County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and prosecuted perpetrators of domestic violence, which is not an easy task when the main witness often refuses to testify or simply fails to appear. I also participated in the domestic violence clinic at Mizzou, where I assisted individuals in obtaining full orders of protection. What I can tell you from my experience with those fighting the battle against domestic violence - the prosecutors, lawyers, advocates, and counselors - is that they are selfless, dedicated, and, in my opinion, inspirational. They need our support now more than ever. What I can say about my personal experience is: "Thank you, Mom!"

Apply now to be on the 2009-2010 WLA Board of Directors! See the back cover for details and go to [www.wlastl.org/members.html](http://www.wlastl.org/members.html) for more information.

## 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.*

What a great time of year to be a woman lawyer! Our hats off to all of the recipients of The Women's Justice Awards, most of whom, we are proud to report, are also WLA members! The **Hon. Carol Jackson** was the belle of the ball and **Woman of the Year**. **Alisse Camazine, Kathi Chestnut & Deidre Gallagher** have taken the boy's club by storm and were recognized as our top **Trial Practitioners**. Also daring to break some glass are our best **Business Practitioners: Jane Dueker, Becky Nelson & Therese Trelz**. Women Judges swept the **Public Official Awards** - great job to **Hon. Nannette Baker, Hon. Catherine Perry & Hon. Carolyn Whittington**. Proving it does good to do good were **WLA President-Elect Nicole Colbert-Bochway, Janis Good & Marie Kenyon** with the **Public Service Practitioners' Award**. **Beth Anderson & Sarah Siegel** were the recipients of the **Enterprise Award**. Rockin' service to the community are **Susan Amato, JoAnn Karll & Linda Riekens** with the **Citizenship Award**. Shine on to **Rising Stars Connie McFarland, WLA Board Member Amy Collignon-Gunn & Amie Needham**. Law students who will be our **Leaders of Tomorrow** are **Anne Marie Harkins, Melissa Lin & Manasi Venkatesh**. Last, but definitely not least are the best and brightest **Legal Scholars, Carol Needham & Kim Norwood!**

In other noteworthy news, **Jovita Foster** made **partner** in the employment and labor law division of Armstrong Teasdale, LLP. **Jennifer Marler** was named **Real Estate Practice Leader** at Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal, where she is a partner. **Lucy Unger** was named **Chairwoman of the Management Committee** at Williams, Venker & Sanders. **Lizabeth M. Conran, Michelle M. Drake & Christina Z. Randolph** made **partner** at Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, PC.

It's always great to see women lawyers and WLA members doing great things and it is 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.



Hon. Carol Jackson



Alisse Camazine



Kathi Chestnut



Deidre Gallagher



Jane Dueker



Becky Nelson



Therese Trelz

Hon. Nannette  
BakerHon. Catherine D.  
PerryHon. Carolyn  
WhittingtonNicole Colbert-  
Bochway

Marie Kenyon



Beth K. Anderson



JoAnn Karll



Connie McFarland

Amy Collignon  
Gunn

Amie Needham



Prof. Kim Norwood



Jovita Foster



Jennifer Marler



Lucy Unger

## Legislative Luncheon Features Jefferson City's Women with a Passion for Service

- by Amy Collignon Gunn



WLA President Tricia Susi, Vanessa Brown of the Attorney General's Office, WLA President-Elect Nicole Colbert-Bochway, Rep. Maria Chappelle-Nadal, 72nd District of Missouri, and WLA Past-President Genevieve Nichols.

On March 13, 2009, the Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis hosted its annual Legislative Luncheon. In attendance from the Missouri Legislature were Senator Robin Wright-Jones, Representative Cynthia Davis, Representative Maria Chappelle-Nadal, Representative Jeanne Kirkton, Representative Michele Kratky and Representative Jill Schupp. We also had the pleasure of hearing from Missouri's new Director of Health and Senior Services, former Representative Margaret Donnelly.

In 2009, only 20% of the 163 seats in the Missouri House of Representatives and only 23.5% of the 34 seats in the Missouri Senate are held by women. (Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life, statistics provided dated March 10, 2009, [www.umsl.edu/~iwpl](http://www.umsl.edu/~iwpl). These numbers rank Missouri 30<sup>th</sup> among the states in the percentage of

women in the State Legislature.)

Listening to these competent individuals speak about their work on our behalf in Jefferson City confirmed that women are aptly suited and imminently qualified to make our laws and run our government.

It takes a great deal of commitment, however; most women find themselves pulled in so many different directions that carving out the significant amount of time and energy required to be a public servant is daunting. What is it, then, that moves these women to serve? It is passion for our communities, for our families, and for the belief that if you work hard enough and stand up for what is right, you will be rewarded. We should all consider ways to become involved in our government, whether through school boards, city councils or on the state or federal levels.

Our thanks go out to the women legislators and Director Donnelly for attending the luncheon and sharing their goals and experiences with us. Mark your calendars to attend this event on Friday, March 12, 2010, and



WLA Board Members Kathy Van Voorhees and Amy Collignon Gunn, and Dayna Stock, Manager of the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life.

## Family Court Project at LSEM Supports Parents at Risk of Losing Their Children to Domestic Violence - *By Kathleen DuBois*



Kids come into foster care for a multitude of reasons, some of them directly linked to domestic violence against their mother. Adults who batter their partners may turn their anger on the child. On occasion a child intervenes to protect the mother, or gets in the way. At times, a woman is attacked while her children are simply present. If the juvenile court believes that the mother will not be able to keep the child or children safe from a partner or former partner who has abused her, it will remove them from her care.

Imagine the agony that mother experiences. Imagine the fear of those children as they lie awake wondering if their mom is alive or dead.

It is critical for an abuse victim who faces allegations of failure to provide safety for her children to have a competent and independent lawyer in juvenile court who: (1) knows the child protection system, and (2) understands the special issues involved in domestic abuse cases. For the past ten years the Family Court Project, a unit of Legal Services, has fulfilled this role. The Family Court Project provides legal representation, advocacy and case management services to indigent parents who are parties in the child welfare system and whose custody and parental rights are at stake. Our mission is to provide clients with the highest quality representation. Many of the mothers we represent are victims of domestic violence.

A large part of our job at the Family Court Project is to remind the child welfare system of the respect and justice a battered woman is due. Mothers who have lost their kids tend to come to court where many fathers do not. As observed by the federal judge in the seminal case on this subject, *Nicholson v. Scopetta*, 203 F. Supp. 2d 153 (E.D.N.Y 2003), it is always possible to control the choices a mother makes so long as the state has custody of her children. In practical terms, the burden of proof is on the mother so long as her child is in foster care. She must prove that the abuser is no longer part of her life, and that she is not going to attract other partners equally as violent.

Simply put, personnel of the Family Court Project do whatever it takes in terms of legal work and social services to get the children back, to maintain the client's voice in the care and upbringing of her kids, and to ensure a future with the family safe together. In addition to the abuse/neglect litigation in the juvenile court, our legal representation for a mother who is a victim of domestic violence may include orders of protection, child protective orders, habeas corpus, jurisdictional litigation and appellate representation.

For information on the Family Court Project, contact Kathleen Dubois at 314-615-4507.

### NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship and wants help, please contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE, or visit <http://www.mocadv.org/members/> to find a domestic violence program in your area.

- In 2007, law enforcement agencies in Missouri reported 37, 215 incidents of domestic violence.
- 35 domestic violence homicides were reported in Missouri in 2007.
- In 2007, 25.7% of the victims of domestic violence related homicides were the wives or girlfriends of the perpetrator.
- 6,155 incidents of domestic violence involving blood relatives were reported in 2007.

(Taken from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence's website, <http://www.ncadv.org>, Missouri State Facts Sheet.)

P.O. Box 1428

**Patricia Susi, President**  
 St. Louis, MO 63188  
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 www.wlastl.org



**MEMBERSHIP INVOICE**  
**September 2008-2009**

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

Membership Type:      Renewal                      New Membership

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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:**

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

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

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Gavel	\$150.00*			
Scales of Justice	\$100.00*			
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2007 Graduates/New Admittees				\$20.00
Law Student Membership				
\$10.00				
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:

Administrative Law	Admiralty/Maritime	Adoption	Advertising	Agricultural
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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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Personal Injury	Legal Malpractice	Public Interest	Railroad	Real Estate
Retired	Regulatory/Licensing	School/Education	Securities	Social Security
Taxation	Traffic	Wills/Trusts/Estate Planning	Workers' Compensation	Legal Placement

## **Lasting Solutions at LSEM Brings Holistic Approach to Legal Aid for Victims of Domestic Violence - by *Melanie Daly***

The research is now all-too-common knowledge - when a woman attempts to leave an abuser, she faces many obstacles and the odds are often against her. When an *indigent* woman attempts to leave an abuser, she faces additional, formidable obstacles as a direct result of her poverty. In addition to finding a safe route to escape the abuse, an indigent woman may also have to consider how she will continue to receive food stamps or other benefits when her address changes, whether there will be room for her children at a shelter, whether her cell phone will be disconnected by the abuser, and how court appearances might affect her ability to remain employed. She may struggle to arrange transportation to meet with her attorney or to attend court hearings. Her credit or rental history may not be adequate for her to obtain housing apart from her abuser. Later, in a child custody proceeding, she might face an abuser's allegation that she does not adequately care for her children because of her poverty. If these non-legal needs are not adequately addressed, the woman may have no other choice than to return to her abuser.

Lasting Solutions is a program of Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, specifically designed to address the needs of indigent survivors of domestic violence for "lasting solutions" to their family law matters. The program provides full representation to clients in matters including dissolution of marriage, paternity, child custody, modification of child custody, and adult and child orders of protection. In addition to legal representation, the program strives to meet clients' non-legal needs to assist them in rebuilding their lives post-abuse. As part of its holistic approach, the program includes in its staff a full-time social worker who coordinates non-legal services for clients, ranging from transportation to safety planning to job search assistance to referrals to other community organizations. If clients have legal needs beyond family law, they may be referred to other in-house Legal Services attorneys focused on landlord/tenant law, foreclosures, public benefits, or other matters.

Because the four Lasting Solutions attorneys focus their practices on geographic areas (Jason Dodson: Saint Charles County; Jackie Chun and Cheryl Rafert: Saint Louis City and County; Melanie Daily: Jefferson County), they are able to coordinate with local organizations to develop wrap-around services for clients. Community partnerships are key to the unit's success. Lasting Solutions staff works with community groups to provide education on survivors' rights, advocacy, and options. In addition to participating as members of local family violence councils, attorneys regularly collaborate with the Circle of Safety, Comtre, A Safe Place, Lydia's House, Women's Support and Community Services, the International Institute, ALIVE, AWARE, and other organizations.

For more information on Lasting Solutions, please contact Jason Dodson at 314-534-4200, extension 1020. For information on volunteering with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, please contact Jim Guest at extension 1304.

## **WLA and MCBA Celebrate Black History Month with Trivia Night and Auction**

On February 13, 2009, WLA and MCBA joined forces for the second annual trivia night in celebration of Black History Month. Lawyers, judges, law students and friends enjoyed in for an evening of great food, a silent auction and 5 rounds of challenging trivia at the Saint Louis University Allied Health Facility. Attendees also enjoying ragtime classics performed by St. Louis area pianist Phat Williams.

WLA and MCBA wish to extend their appreciation and gratitude to all of the sponsors, law student volunteers and the guests who made this event a repeat success. We also wish to thank Judge Sandra Farragut-Hemphill and Commissioner Kristine Kerr for serving as our trivia announcers.

Please Join Us For  
The WLA Domestic Violence Awareness  
Kick-Off Event

May 7, 2009

5 – 9 pm

Sol Lounge  
4241 Lindell Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63108



**Please join the Women Lawyers' Association and other local organizations that provide support for victims of domestic violence for this special evening. There will be music, mingling, motivation and meaningful discussion of working together in the effort to end domestic violence.**

**The evening will include speakers, live performance by Fran-Reggae's Sol Chile, drink specials, appetizers, door prizes and a raffle.**

Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis

P.O. Box 1428  
St. Louis, MO 63188  
Email: [wlastl@wlastl.org](mailto:wlastl@wlastl.org)



**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 BOARD NOMINATIONS OPEN**  
**May 1—May 31, 2009**

If you are looking for a chance to become more involved with WLA, here's your chance!

Nominations for Board positions open on May 1, 2009. You may nominate yourself or someone else for 4 officer positions (President-Elect, Vice-President, Secretary & Treasurer ) and 6 Member at Large positions. The Board meets on the third Thursday of each month and has the pleasure of being involved in all of WLA's annual events.

**Read details and download an application at**  
**[www.wlastl.org/members.html](http://www.wlastl.org/members.html)**

Nominations must be received by May 31, 2009.

**Remember:** to vote in the election or run for any office, your membership dues and application must be current.



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