



Association for Women Lawyers
of Greater Kansas City

link

December, 2011
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President's Message

Shelley I. Ericsson

Season's Greetings! I can hardly believe this is my final President's Message. This has been a very exciting year for AWL, and I am thrilled to have been a part of it. I have been privileged to work with a great group of women, all of whom volunteer their time and efforts so generously to make AWL something we can all be proud of and who promote our mission statement of promoting the equality of women in society in general and in the legal profession in particular.

We have held several exciting events in the past few months. On September 30, we held our annual "I'm Not Serious About Golf" golf tournament at Swope Memorial Golf Course. We had perfect golfing weather and an excellent turnout of members and local judiciary. A special thank you to Tricia Scaglia and Elizabeth Tassi for all their hard work in making this an outstanding event. And thank you to everyone who supported the event, either by playing, sponsoring, or contributing door prizes.

We also had Step Up in October and assisted more than 50 women who currently reside in shelters with clearing outstanding tickets (all minor infractions) from their records in exchange for community service. These women were so thankful for this opportunity to serve and for our 30 volunteer attorneys who handled their matters pro bono. Thank you all for your commitment to this program and for sharing your valuable time and skills to make Step Up such a success.

AWL hosted "CLE in the City," an all-day CLE conference, on November 8 at the Westin Crown Center. We offered several tracks of CLE programming, a luncheon featuring local chef Celina Tio from the Julian restaurant in Brookside, and our Past Presidents' Reception at Benton's Steakhouse. All in all, it was a very rewarding day, and all of our

expectations were surpassed. This event would not have been possible without Phyllis Norman at the helm and her fabulous committee who labored on this conference for nearly 10 months. Please stay tuned for details about our next conference.



Shelley Ericsson

In a nutshell, AWL has been working hard this year to serve our community and our members. We hope everyone has a safe and wonderful holiday season. Cheers to a fabulous 2011 and a prosperous 2012!

AWL WOULD LIKE TO THANKS ITS 2011

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- Lathrop & Gage LLP
- The Henning Law Firm, P.C.
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First "CLE in the City" Was a Hit!!!!

by Phyllis Norman

Thank you to all of our attendees and speakers who made our first Conference such a great success! For those of you who were unable to attend, here is what you missed: The day started with a breakfast bar and chance to mingle with our Exhibitors. Attendees won some great prizes! *We hope you will continue to support these businesses.* After the morning sessions, we had a very interesting keynote speaker at lunch - Chef Celina Tio. She spoke about her decision to become a chef and to open her own restaurant, "Julian" in Brookside, as well as her experiences on The Next Iron Chef and Top Chef Masters. For more information about Celina and her restaurant, "Julian" send an email to info@juliankc.com. Next came some more great afternoon CLE sessions, including a panel with our esteemed Supreme Court Judges. The day ended with a Reception honoring AWL's Past Presidents. Everyone had a great day and we hope you will join us again next year when we do it all again.



Exhibitors and volunteers making the first annual conference a success



(left, left to right) Elizabeth Tassi and Christina Hahn call names for the golf tournament raffle.
(right, left to right) Monique McElwee, Heather Sicks, Brittany Barrientos, and Kristle Lee enjoy lunch together.

AWL 2011 Golf Tournament Was a Huge Success!

by Tricia Scaglia

The Sixteenth Annual “I’m Not Serious About Golf” Tournament was held on September 30, 2011, at a new location, Swope Memorial Golf Course. The tournament was a huge success and more than 100 golfers participated. In addition to the beautiful weather, the participants enjoyed the well-groomed PGA course. Thanks to our generous sponsors, we raised more than \$14,000 for AWLF this year!

We also appreciate the continued support from the Judiciary, especially the Missouri Court of Appeals Western District and Kansas City, Missouri Municipal Court Judges. Tournament day went smoothly thanks to our many volunteers: Julie Anderson, Tracy Bornman, Rosalie Borgardts, Kristin Bobbitt, Erica Briscoe, Catherine Brite, Sean Bright, Leigh Burke, Arimeta DuPree, Ashley Fenton, Kim Fournier, Christine Hall, Christina Hahn, Allison Hardy, Uri Idstrom, Susan Ikazaki, Amber Jeffers, Kim Jones, Jenny Redix Jordan, Erin Kurtenbach, Patrick McAndrews, Johnathan McDowell, Sandra McDowell, Kate Nolan, Sheryl Nelson, Gillian Ruddy, Kelly Thompson, Laura VanNote and Larry Wright. A special thanks to the Honorable Gary Witt and the Honorable Vernon Scoville, who drove the beverage carts.

With the hard work and dedication of the Golf Committee we were able to obtain more than 70 raffle prizes, obtain 15 new hole sponsors and raise more than \$14,000 for AWLF. This year, the Committee was fortunate to have the very organized Elizabeth Tassi! Our meetings were graciously hosted at the lovely new home of Immediate Past President Mira Mdivani. And, once again, we were expertly guided by President-Elect Phyllis Norman. Kudos to the Golf Committee members: Julie Anderson, Jessica Beever, Sonal Bhatia, Erica Briscoe, Catherine Brite, Leigh Burke, Cindy Dodge, Arimeta DuPree, Nicole Fisher, Allison Hardy, Uri Idstrom, Susan Ikazaki, Amber Jeffers, Kim Jones, Sandra McDowell, Kate Nolan, Phyllis Norman, Gillian Ruddy, Rachel Stahle, Elizabeth Tassi, Laura VanNote, Kathy Wuzer and Tracy Wrisinger. On behalf of AWL and AWLF, we thank each member of the Golf Committee for donating her time and talents to continue the tradition of a suc-

Thank you to our Goodie Bag Donors

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Thank you to our Hole Sponsors

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Other

Law Offices of George A. Barton, PC
The Hon. John J. Borron, Jr.
Mitch Langford
Megan McCurdy
The Hon. Margaret L. Sauer

Golf Tournament Winners

Front Nine Winners		
1st – score 27 Jessica Agnelly Athena Dickson Rob Harken Jeff Mullins <i>*Indicates Scorecard Playoff</i>	2nd – score 30 Ivan Komoroski Jim Komoroski Chrissy Knopke Nicole Fisher	3rd – score 32* Hon. Jackie Cook Sharon Westhoff Jane Carter Julie Highley
Back Nine Winners		
1st – score 24 John Watt Paul Penticuff Kristen Henderson Whitney Lloyd	2nd – score 25 Shelly Ericsson Casey Tourtillott Chris Korth	3rd – score 28 Hon. Vic Howard Jeff Keal Karen Krauser Hon. Laura Stith
Hole Prizes		
#4 Men's Longest Putt Made	Scott Schatman	
#4 Women's Longest Putt Made	Jackie Cook	
#5 Men's Longest Drive	Scott Schatman	
#5 Women's Longest Drive	Georgina Mullin	
#6 Men's Closest to the Pin	Adam Graves	
#6 Women's Closest to the Pin	Marty Means	
#13 Men's Closest to the Pin	Scott Martin	
#13 Women's Closest to the Pin	Brandee Bower	
#14 Men's Longest Putt	Chris Korth	
#14 Women's Longest Putt	Kristy Hartman	
#17 Men's Longest Drive	Paul Penticuff	
#17 Women's Longest Drive	Ashley Baird	

AWL Members Volunteered for Women Veterans

by Beth Murano

Eighteen AWL members volunteered their time to assist and answer legal questions posed by women veterans participating in the Regional Women Veterans Conference on October 28-29, 2011. The theme of the conference that was held at Macedonia Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri was Women Veterans as Change Agents for the Future. The conference was organized by the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau to honor and provide resources to the women who serve and have served in our armed forces.

Women veterans signed up to meet with AWL volunteer attorneys and ask questions that pertained to their legal needs. AWL members were able to provide guidance to the women veterans about the steps needed to resolve specific legal problems and inform them of resources available within the legal community. Questions received by AWL members were diverse and ranged from estate planning, employment, debtor/creditor, traffic and family law. Overall, AWL was able to provide the women veterans with knowledge and guidance as they addressed their legal issues and also take the opportunity to demonstrate to the women how thankful we are for their service. Additional information about this conference can be found at <http://kcowomenveterans.wordpress.com/>. AWL plans to continue to support this event in upcoming years.

Thank you to the following AWL members for volunteering their time for the event this year: Jeanne Foster, Kelly McCambridge, Alicia Koranda, Ashley Felton, Shelley Ericsson, Betsy Lynch, Jenny Redix Jordan, Susan Ikazaki, Meredith Webster, Rosalee Borgardts, Stephanie Burton, Arimeta DuPree, Sophie Woodworth, Lynn Weddle Judkins, Katherine Wurzer, Nadia Sangster, Amber Steinbeck and Beth Murano.

Noteworthy News from AWLF

The Association for Women Lawyers Foundation (AWLF) is pleased to report that we had a successful year of providing financial assistance to women in our legal community.

During the 2011 calendar year, AWLF awarded \$5,628.33 in scholarships to our fellow female attorneys in need.

AWLF awarded scholarships to 13 local women to attend the following programs:

- 1) MATA Annual Meeting
- 2) KCMBA Bench Bar
- 3) Missouri Bar Family Law Conference
- 4) KCMBA Leadership Academy
- 5) KCMBA Inn of Court
- 6) AWL CLE in the City

AWLF hopes that women in our community in financial need will continue to look to AWLF for assistance in attending those programs that will greatly enhance the experience and commitment to become a great legal leader.

For more information, please check of the AWL website and check the "Quick Links" section for the AWLF Scholarship Program Application.



Lathrop & Gage LLP CEO Joel Voran and Diversity and Associate Development Manager Dionne King are working to develop programs that increase recruitment and professional development of diverse legal talent for the firm.

Fostering a Diverse and Inclusive Environment at Lathrop & Gage

by Shelley Ericsson

Lathrop & Gage LLP has been a pillar in the community for more than 130 years. As a forward-thinking firm, Lathrop & Gage views the nation's changing demographics as an opportunity to increase its efforts to recruit, develop, advance and retain the best group of diverse talent. The firm's mission to employ a qualified workforce and maximize the contribution of every diverse talent to offer the best service to clients and communities hasn't changed. However, the method for achieving this has.

Firm leadership, including CEO Joel Voran, actively and enthusiastically advocates diversity at every opportunity. Voran's efforts have resulted in him being named a 2012 CEO Leadership in Action by Profiles in Diversity Journal.

To further this mission, Voran appointed Allison Bergman, a partner in the firm's real estate department, chairperson of the Diversity and Inclusiveness Com-

mittee. As a member of the firm's Executive Committee, Bergman brings credibility and commitment to issues of diversity and inclusion. Bergman regularly briefs the Executive Committee on diversity efforts, ensuring that appropriate goals are identified and ultimately reached. Bergman has been selected among the Kansas/Missouri Super Lawyers since 2007, was named "Best of the Bar" by the Kansas City Business Journal, and was previously named to the Kansas City Business Journal's "Women Who Mean Business" list.

Earlier this year, firm leadership felt it needed a trained and dedicated diversity professional. They sought Dionne King to develop, promote, and oversee the firm's diversity and attorney development endeavors. As the diversity and associate development manager, King serves on the Diversity & Inclusiveness, and Associate Development Committees. She joins Voran and Berg-

man to constitute the Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee Leadership Team, which guides the committee's work, identifies goals and measures success. On the addition of King to the firm, Voran says:

"Our diversity and inclusiveness program has been a high priority for our firm for several years, but without a full time diversity manager to help focus and guide our efforts, our firm's progress had not been as fast as I would have liked. With our addition of Dionne King earlier this year, we now have that person.

Dionne has brought professional knowledge and experience to the firm's program, and has taken a leadership role in creating and refining the ways in which Lathrop & Gage can be more effectively implementing its diversity and inclusiveness initiatives. She has also done a terrific job helping our clients understand our commitment to diversity and the ways we can work with them to attain their diversity goals. Dionne brings great energy to the job and our firm is excited to have her talents."

King earned her master's in science management from Friends University in Wichita, Kan. and her bachelor's in political science and business studies from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. She has enjoyed a career in legal diversity and community service for many years. King is structuring the firm towards a formal diversity and inclusion education program.

"Education is the first imperative to creating a more inclusive culture. It's of no use to implement a plan without education," King says.

The firm's new education program consists of a "Diversity Road Show" for all of its 11 national offices, diversity orientation for all new employees, a "Diversity Speaker Series" for firm affinity groups, an online Diversity

Resource Center, and Quick Hits, an e-newsletter that keeps the firm updated on what's trending in diversity, associate development, and business development. Quick Hits also provides mini-training sessions for firm attorneys.

Further, Lathrop & Gage hosted a diversity retreat for its ethnically and racially diverse attorneys. This retreat addressed unique challenges and opportunities for attorneys of color. It also provided a forum for business and professional development, personal branding, training from notable diversity experts, leveraging mentor relationships, and maintaining networking opportunities.

The firm's Associate Development Committee also recently revamped its efforts to provide a more focused schedule for the training and development of all associates, including minority and women associates.

Other recent structural changes include reorganizing Lathrop & Gage's associate attorney evaluation process to remove hidden bias and incorporate a more competency-based process with year-to-year benchmarks. Firm goals are to remove vague queries that may invite biases or fail to elicit meaningful feedback; focus more on core competencies, work habits and behaviors that are important to associate development and provide more direct guidance on areas needing improvement; and create a balanced evaluation rating system.

"Stay tuned because Lathrop & Gage will be even more visible in the community with its enhanced initiatives – that includes stronger client relationships, marketing, and attorney development. Our continuing diversity and inclusiveness efforts are not only cultivating a better-quality work environment for our attorneys and staff, but are also allowing us to offer superior service to our clients and communities," says King.

How to Open a Law Practice . . . or not to . . .

by Betsy Sharp Lynch

Four months after I opened my own law firm, I am sitting down to write this “confession” so that others hoping to follow my example and become their own boss will know of not only the perks but also the pitfalls associated with it. I’m happy to report that I now officially answer only to myself. I can honestly say that there’s no greater feeling than dropping everything on a Friday afternoon to take your kid to the park . . . without getting any looks from associates or assistants who might disapprove of this idea while they are sitting at their desks. Or going out to lunch every day of the week “networking” with some of the finest legal minds in Kansas City and then calling it “work.” You’ve got to love the American dream.

About a year ago while I was on maternity leave, I went to lunch with an attorney I knew from church who owned his own firm. His words echo in my mind constantly, “If you work for someone else, you will have income security but not job security. If you work for yourself, you will have job security but not income security.” I knew myself well enough that I could handle those ups and downs, so I got out my to-do lists and did some research. #1: Find a location. A buddy from law school offered me a deal on an office that I just couldn’t say “no” to. It included phone, fax, copier, Internet, and a receptionist to answer my phone. Once I finally checked “health insurance” and “get a line of credit” off my list, I was off and running. It was scary – really scary. But I kept telling myself that if I didn’t feel scared it probably meant that I wasn’t taking it seriously.

I was a 31-year-old woman married to a stay-at-home dad with an 8-month old son, a \$1,200 per month health insurance premium, a mortgage, and student loans. Could you pick a worse time to open a practice? But there was no turning back by then. My family was counting on me. I’d made my decision, and failure was not an option. Plus, if I had to leave my child every day, I certainly wasn’t going to leave him so I could make somebody else rich for the rest of my life.

When I left my firm, I thought I might end up taking two or three clients with me. I ended up with forty-eight. “WOW!” was my

first thought, and my second was, “How in the world am I going to survive without an assistant?” Although I pride myself in the fact that I have not missed a deadline, I have had some very interesting first-time experiences. I tried my hand at criminal law and remembered why I’m a bankruptcy lawyer. I don’t have a magic wand that keeps people out of jail. I wish I had a sign on the door to my office that says, “Failure to plan on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.” I also regret to say that I have done the unthinkable: I actually took a client for his word. You see, my assistant at my old firm would have been the one to double check a client’s story to make sure I was properly prepared for Court. But now I live life without an assistant . . . and I’ve learned to do my own double-checking! (FYI: I still call my former assistant once a week!)

In Court, I’ve had to put my powers of persuasion to good use when my client doesn’t have a shred of law on his side but does have an “*it’s the principle of the matter*” argument that we all know and love. My next mistake was taking a case to do something I’ve done 100 times before, but for a unique client who couldn’t find an attorney. Sounds easy enough, right? Well, let me give the newbies a piece of advice: always charge an hourly fee for anything involving ex-spouses. And get a retainer. A big one.

These experiences have taught me a lot. It is as important to know what you’re not as much as it to know what you are. I am a bankruptcy lawyer. I am not a family lawyer or a criminal lawyer or an estate planner. I am not a trial lawyer. I have no interest whatsoever in going to court. I actually hate going to court. In fact, if I never went to court again for a day in my life, I would be a very happy woman. In six years of practicing law, I’ve taken two depositions and conducted one trial. Now I can recite you the Missouri exemption laws off the top of my head and talk about income qualifications for filing Chapter 7 all day long . . . but ask me to offer something into evidence and I will give you a look of bewilderment that would even make a tax collector laugh. But these days, I’m doing a lot of things outside my comfort zone in order to bring in some money.

With all the bad days and bad cases, there’s still no substitute for driving to work every day with a smile on my face. Because now my successes and my failures are solely a product of my own making. Only I will determine the

kind of lawyer I’m going to be – and the kind I will not be. With all the bad clients, I try to remember the good ones. When asking a prior client to give me a quote to put on my website, the client stated, “*Filing bankruptcy was one of the hardest decisions we have ever made. Sitting in front of a complete stranger telling them your situation can be embarrassing and humiliating, however that was never the case with Betsy. Not only is she one of the most honest and professional persons we have met, she is compassionate. We don’t feel like ‘just another client’ because she is always available and responds to our needs at all times. Thank you Betsy for representing us and giving us the feeling of hope again!*” Now that makes you feel appreciated! That makes you remember why you’re doing what you’re doing.

There will always be bad days and bad clients and bad cases, but they will be few and far between. There are days when I will have to make a \$300 court appearance over a \$500 bill, but I won’t be doing that forever. Who knows? Those clients may get in a car accident tomorrow and come to me to get them a \$5,000,000 settlement. There will be days when cases blow up like bombshells, but at the end of the day, it’s all mine. It’s my firm, my practice, my paycheck, my family’s livelihood. I can honestly say that practicing law has never been so much fun.

AWL Elects 2012 Board	
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President Elect.....	Nikki Cannezzaro
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At Large.....	Anne Schiavone
At Large.....	Erica Briscoe
At Large.....	Samara Nazir

AWLF CONNECTIONS UPDATE:

As 2011 Comes to an End, We're Celebrating New Beginnings!

by Aubrey Gann-Redmon

As AWLF Connections wraps up another successful year, there are plenty of new beginnings to celebrate! This year, Samara Nazir Zaman (Connections 2010) and Kendra Mosley Ayuk (Connections 2010) are both expecting additions to their families in 2012. In addition to new babies, there are new relationships. Shauna Ripley (Connections 2010) is engaged! And Kelly McCambridge (Connections 2009) has recently merged her successful solo practice with Holman Schiavone, LLC. Congratulations ladies!

And while we're on the topic of new beginnings, AWLF Connections just kicked off its fourth year of mentorship by welcoming the 2012 group at the November 2, 2011 cocktail party. The 2012 group embodies the same enthusiasm and brilliance as the groups that have come before it. Theresa Otto credits much of her success to her mentors and is looking forward to paying it forward by mentoring through Connections in 2012. "As a new mentor I expect to learn as much from the less experienced mentees as I can teach. At the initial gathering for our class, I was impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of the mentees in our class. Most of all, I hope these relationships encourage my optimism and excitement for the practice and profession that we share," Otto explained. The mentees share the same enthusiasm. Otto's mentee, Meredith Webster shared her perspective on becoming a mentee:

"I hope for honest, blunt answers that help me to avoid the potholes that every young lawyer faces in the early years of her career. But perhaps for what I hope most is to make a friend. We go to networking events some times because they're fun, sometimes because we're hoping to generate business and establish ourselves in this community. When you're in a position like mine, where you went to law school elsewhere and have largely had to start forming connections from scratch, it's obviously more challenging. It takes more time to build relationships. Having a mentor is a unique opportunity to get to know a person beyond the superficial that occurs during a 15-minute conversation at a happy hour. I look forward to getting to know Theresa and learning from her."

Monica Smith, also a 2012 mentee, shares Webster's sentiments. "As a new attorney, I realize that I have much to learn and know that these connections and mentoring relationships will be beneficial for years to come. I hope that I can pay this investment forward in the future." Webster summed it up nicely: "If you're a young lawyer and are a member but not actively involved, get involved. Being a part of AWL has been so rewarding for me. In being selected as a mentee, I feel I have received a disproportionately huge return on my contributions to AWL. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to be part of this great group of women."

Finally, no update on the successes of the Connections family would be complete without extending a huge congratulations to Denise Henning, who continues to wow us all with her recent Super Lawyer award! Those of us in the 2009 group know that not only is Denise a Super Lawyer, she is a Super Mentor and we're thrilled for Denise's accomplishment.

Stay tuned. The women of Connections are sure to continue to dazzle us all with all of their enthusiasm, accomplishments, and new beginnings!



(Top) Kendra Mosley Ayuk (Mentee-class of 2010), Samara Zaman (Mentee-class of 2010), Margaret Dean (Mentor-class of 2011) and Ashley Felton (Mentee-class of 2011)

(Center) Kelly McCambridge (Mentee-class of 2009), Susan McGreevy (Mentor-class of 2011) and Sheila Seck (Mentor-class of 2009)

(Lower left) Samara Zaman (Mentee-class of 2010) and Nicole Fisher (Mentee-class of 2010)

(Lower right) Gillian Ruddy (Mentee-class of 2011) and Denise Henning (Mentor-class of 2009)

The Women's Foundation: Celebrating Twenty Years Of Advocacy

by Sherri Wattenbarger

Nearly twenty years ago, a visionary group of women came together in Kansas City to discuss forming a women's fund in Kansas City. Led by the Women's Metropolitan Roundtable, a consortium of 30 women's groups, and The Central Exchange, a professional women's organization, the group envisioned creating a new foundation funded and managed by women. Their work coincided with a broader movement occurring across the country in the 1980's begun by the Ms. Foundation. The dream of all these women was to replace the "feminization of poverty" with the "feminization of philanthropy." Today, more than 100 women's funds serve women and girls in the United States. Among them is the Women's Foundation of Greater Kansas City.

From its headquarters in Mission, Kansas, the Foundation's empowerment of women and girls reaches out across the 7 counties in the greater Kansas City area: Jackson, Clay, Platte, and Cass in Missouri and Johnson, Wyandotte, and Leavenworth in Kansas. Through a combination of strategies that includes fundraising, grant making, research, advocacy, education, and leadership, the Foundation strives to alleviate the causes and symptoms of inequality and inequities for women and girls and create a community where women, girls, and their families will thrive.

The Foundation began its fundraising efforts in March 1990, and the community immediately responded with contributions of nearly \$100,000. By 1996, the endowment had grown to more than \$3 million. I got involved in the Women's Foundation with the Campaign for Change 2000. I was excited to return to my home community after working in Washington, D.C., for three years and I was eager to invest my time and resources in causes important to me. The Women's Foundation appealed to me due to the breadth and strength of its impact across the community. The Campaign for Change 2000 raised almost \$3.5 million, more than doubling the endowment, which now stands at over \$7 million. These funds were donated by more than 2,000 women and men who share the vision of the Foundation.

Full disclosure: very little of that \$7 million came from me personally. Working as a government lawyer in 1999 at the age of 31, I didn't have a lot of money to give and neither did my friends. However, I liked the idea that my money would be pooled and invested with the money of thousands of others. So I engaged the "jar of philanthropy." That is, every two weeks when I was paid, I put \$40 in a jar so that I could donate \$250 per quarter. I encouraged my friends to do the same. We went out less often but relished seeing how our "jar dollars" were making an impact.

Nationally, less than 6% of all foundation and corporate dollars go to programs that specifically serve women and girls. Yet, women and girls are disproportionately affected by violence and poverty and still have not achieved equality in the workplace and in the institutions that govern our lives. That's why the work of women's funds is crucial. Through an investment board that stewards the money, and a grant-making board that evaluates grant proposals, the Women's Foundation has awarded 262 grants totaling more than \$2.8 million to 117 organizations. In 2010 alone, the Foundation granted \$268,000 to 15 organizations. The grants went to organizations like Operation Breakthrough, Hope House, the Don Bosco Center, and the Migrant Farm Workers Project, which is run by Legal Aid of Western Missouri.

The Foundation's grant-making priorities are informed and directed by research it funds to discover the needs and concerns of women and girls in the Kansas City community. Recently, the Foundation completed a two-year study that revealed alarming statistics about women and girls with respect to financial literacy and career development in Kansas City, including:

- Almost 80% of people living in poverty are women and their children;
- Women and their children make up 85% of the homeless in the greater Kansas City area;
- A girl who doesn't graduate from high school has a 90% chance of living in poverty and passing this "legacy" of poverty to her children;
- Two-thirds of all women employed earn only the minimum wage.

Based on this research, a primary focus of the Foundation's 2009-12 strategic plan is to increase the economic self-sufficiency of women and girls by targeting programs that address financial literacy, career development, and support for working women. The Foundation is achieving this not only through its grant-making abilities but also through its role as a leader, advocate, and convener in the community. For example, beginning in 2010, it partnered with the Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri to conduct a one-day workshop for girls in grades 4-8 called "Making Cents in the City." In 2011, over 200 girls attended the workshop. The Foundation also has partnered with Operation Breakthrough to educate political candidates about what life is like for families living in poverty without early care and early education programs for children.

The Women's Foundation achieves all of this and more through the stalwart generosity and hard work of its contributors and volunteers. The Foundation welcomes everyone, and the avenues for involvement are broad. They include the annual December Grants Awards Luncheon (with well-known speakers and attendance of nearly 1,000), the annual Celebration of Women Journal (with inspirational tributes to women in the community), and programs like the Rachel Alexander Girls Grants Project (teaching teens about philanthropy), the 360s (a philanthropic giving circle making its own grants), and Voices in Philanthropy, or "VIPs" (women and men who contribute their abundance of financial and strategic resources). Moira Forbes, publisher of *ForbesWoman*, associate publisher of *ForbesLife*, and daughter of Steve Forbes is the keynote speaker for the 2011 luncheon on December 2 at the Hyatt Regency. You can find additional information about the Women's Foundation and how you can get involved at www.wfgkc.org.

Sherri Wattenbarger is an AWL member from Overland Park, KS. She serves on the board of directors of the Women's Foundation, is a founding member of the 360s, chaired the 2010 luncheon, is chairing the 2011 luncheon, and is a VIP. She can be reached at kcsherri@kc.rr.com.

Step Up 2011

by Arimeta Dupree

On Friday, October 14, 2011, at 1:30 p.m., Courtrooms A, B, and C of the 16th Judicial Circuit Kansas City Municipal Division, were busy as usual. However, this Friday was different from other Fridays because Municipal Court Judges Ardie Bland, Anne LaBella, and John Williams, prosecutors, and staff, along with over 28 volunteer attorneys, worked together to resolve over 276 outstanding tickets and warrants for nearly 30 women. The women who participated in Step Up 2011 were from area domestic violence shelters and Operation Breakthrough.

This year was somewhat challenging considering the paperless system that had been recently implemented in Municipal Court. "This was the first year where we've had a paperless system," according to Megan Pfannenstiel, the First Assistant City Prosecuting Attorney, "the paperless system was implemented on August 29, 2011, in order to be more efficient and cost effective." The City Prosecuting Attorney's Office has participated with Step Up since its inception in 2007. Despite the challenges of the paperless system, with delays in entering Orders and waiving fees for the Step Up participants, "This year was a great program and important to continue," Attorney Pfannenstiel.

Prior to October 14, 2011, the Step Up Committee contacted several domestic violence shelters and Operation Breakthrough in order to find women who had active warrants in Kansas City Municipal Court. The Committee then turned those names over to the prosecutor's office. The prosecutor determined if the women actually had active warrants. "There were women who did not have active warrants; therefore, they did not qualify for Step Up," explained Attorney Pfannenstiel. "In order to qualify for Step Up, the applicant must have an active warrant, and if she participated in Step Up in previous years, she must have completed her probation obligations. Step Up is not an amnesty program." Once the prosecutors determined there was an active warrant on a case, the prosecutor reviewed the case, the participant's criminal history, and determined an appropriate offer in exchange for the participant's guilty plea. The offer was then extended on the 14th to the volunteer attorneys prior to court. Each attorney had ample time to advise their clients of the offer before the case was called.

The majority of volunteers do not practice criminal defense, but they received one hour of training from Howard Lotven, an experienced municipal court criminal defense attorney, prior to handling cases. Attorney Lotven explained the paperless system, how to negotiate a guilty plea agreement with the prosecutors, and finally how to conduct a guilty plea in court. Attorney Lotven reminded the attorneys of two important things, first to put the client first and second show respect to the court. The training paid off! Many cases were dismissed, but most cases ended with a guilty plea. Our volunteer attorneys handled an average of 9 cases with active warrants!

Each Step Up participant, regardless if the case ended in a dismissal or a guilty plea, was ordered to complete community service. The Municipal Judges could order a participant complete community service through Connections to Success, Metropolitan Community Service Program (MCSP) or Harvesters. Connections to Success assists individuals with professional attire, job readiness skills, personal and professional development, and mentoring. MCSP provides a plethora of volunteer opportunities to people who have been placed on probation. Usually, MCSP collects a signup fee; however, MCSP waived the fee for Step Up participants. Harvesters is a food pantry that provides not only food, but household items like laundry detergent, pampers, and even pet food, to people in need.

Around 4:00 p.m., Step Up 2011 was over. The volunteer attorneys were exhausted, but felt they offered help to many women who have been unable to help themselves. The participants were thankful and some were ready to

get started with their community service at Harvesters the following day. Step up 2011 was, once again, an amazing opportunity to help women in the community take control of their legal obligations so that they may go about their daily obligations without the fear of being arrested and thrown in jail. The Honorable Ann LaBella said, "Step Up is a necessary and worthwhile program. I appreciate AWL and all the volunteer attorneys who participate. I truly look forward to the event every year!"



above, and left:
Volunteers working AWL's
2011 Step Up for Women in
Shelters

AWL Awards

Congratulations to the AWL members who made Best of the Bar:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Joan Archer | John Kurtz |
| Ian Bartalos | Theresa Levings |
| Molly Bartalos | Whitney Lloyd |
| Thomas Bender | Susan McGreevy |
| Mary Beth Blake | Patrick McNerney |
| Tracy Bornman | Mira Mdivani |
| Stephen Bough | Sheryl Nelson |
| Brandee Bower | Carol Poindexter |
| Nikki Cannezzaro | Anne Post |
| Koriambanya Carew | Susan Robertson |
| Cathy Dean | John Rollins |
| Christine DeMarea | Tricia Scaglia |
| B. Janeen deVries | Anne Schiavone |
| Athena Dickson | Sheila Seck |
| Shelley Ericsson | Rik Siro |
| Tamie Fox | Eric Smith |
| Peter Goss | Amber Steinbeck |
| L. Annette Griggs | Daniel Thomas |
| Courtney Hasselberg | Beverly Weber |
| Denise Henning | Samuel Wendt |
| Heather Jones | Vicki Westerhaus |
| Nancy Kenner | Teresa Woody |
| Amanda Pennington Ketchum | |
| Christopher Korth | |

Also, congratulations to Denise Henning for receiving the Michael Coburn Community Service award!

Full-Time Women Lawyers Making Less Money than Men; Women's Income Decline Steeper in Economic Downturn: What the Missouri Bar Economic Survey Shows, and How to Take Control of Your Income

By Mira Mdivani

Survey Shows Full-Time Women Lawyers Making One Third Less Than Men; Solo Practitioners, Less Than 50%.

The [Missouri Bar 2011 Economic Survey's](#) results are in. The median income for full-time female lawyers in private practice (\$72,000) was one-third less than the median income of their male counterparts (\$110,000). As far as solo full-time practices go, males reported an income 50% higher than the income by females (whose median income is reported at \$50,000).

Women's Income Decline is Steeper in Economic Downturn

The survey revealed even more troubling information regarding the rate of income decline for female lawyers. For the first time in the history of the survey, on average, Missouri lawyers in private practice reported that their incomes decreased by 15.2%. Income comparison is not available for all private practitioners, but is available for solo practitioners. Income for all solo practitioners went down \$5,000 since 2008; for female lawyers, it was down \$7,204 (a whopping 29.6% steeper).

While the bar associations across the country are working on changing the climate that allows this disparity of incomes, there are several things I may share with fellow women lawyers that may be helpful in curing or preventing the income problem:

Take Control of Your Business

A law practice is a business. Unless a lawyer is doing pro bono work (which we all should), or is independently wealthy, all other work should be viewed as a business activity. Revenues and income should be thought of, planned, and worked on. This means, a written business plan, including a marketing plan, is a necessity, rather than a rarity, for a lawyer.

Specialize or Have Less Income

Lawyers who specialize in an area of law (healthcare law, median income: \$155,000,) make more money than lawyers who do not (general practice, median income: \$90,000.)

Chose a More Lucrative Area of Practice

Many women practice in areas of practice that make less money. Contrast family law (a lot of women lawyers), median income \$65,000, with environmental law, median income \$160,000 (less women lawyers). If you care about more income, consider choosing a more lucrative area of practice.

Want to Take More Income Home? Hire an Associate

Surveys from several bar associations show that practitioners with an associate can take more income home than those who do not. These numbers are not available from the MO Bar Survey, but the most recent Kansas Bar Association survey showed a difference in income of \$68,500 (without an associate) and \$91,000 (with an associate), a 25% difference.

Do Not Spend Revenue on Non-Productive Expenses

Take time to through your work flow. Eliminate expensive non-productive support labor by computerizing the flow. For example, a \$400 scanner, and a commitment by the attorney to scan and electronically file the incoming and outgoing paper and information, will eliminate the need to hire a person to file and retrieve documents. A law practice may save hundreds of thousands of dollars in expenses by replacing outdated staff functions with a computer-driven work flow.

Marketing is An Integral Part of the Law Business

Lawyers who think the world should telepathically know about how good we are at what we do, have a tough time making in in private practice. If the world does not know your name and your area of practice, clients can't call you. Research shows that women wait to be invited, while men tend to ask for what they want, including work. Lawyers sometimes lull themselves into thinking, I can't make it to association conference, or I can't spend time writing an article or teaching a CLE in my area of expertise, all of which may be great marketing, because I have so much work. Results of not finding time to do marketing may be this: you find yourself doing more work and receiving less revenue/income because you get the clients and cases that are not the best. The truth is simple: It is not work or marketing. It is work on a client's matter AND marketing.

Good ideas are welcome

If you have good ideas on how to reverse these troubling trends, please share your ideas with our members. Thank you.

Mira Mdivani is President of Corporate Immigration Compliance Institute and a corporate immigration attorney at the Mdivani Law Firm. She served as AWL President in 2010. Ms. Mdivani currently serves on the Board of Governors of the Missouri Bar Association and Kansas Bar Association.



DO YOU HAVE NEWS TO SHARE? If you are an AWL member and would like to share information or write an article for the LINK, contact Phyllis Norman, pnorman@langdonemison.com.

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