

# THE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

## A CATALYST FOR 2002



Women and the Law Section Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2002 Vol. 22, No. 2

### 2001-2002 WAL OFFICERS AND COUNCIL

#### CHAIR:

Deborah L. Ingraham  
300 W. 15th Street, Suite 502  
P.O. Box 13025  
Austin, Texas 78711-3025  
Office: 512/936-0727  
E-mail: [Deborah.Ingraham@soah.state.tx.us](mailto:Deborah.Ingraham@soah.state.tx.us)

#### CHAIR-ELECT:

Misty M. Ventura  
1717 Main St., Suite 2800  
Dallas, Texas 75201  
Office: 214/939-5462  
E-Mail: [VENTURM@HughesLuce.com](mailto:VENTURM@HughesLuce.com)

#### IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR:

Irene Jackson  
613 N. O'Connor, Suite 23  
Irving, Texas 75061  
Office: 972/259-7517  
E-Mail: [ijatty@gte.net](mailto:ijatty@gte.net)

#### VICE-CHAIR/MEMBERSHIP:

Teresa Oxford  
4010 Tallulah  
San Antonio, Texas 78218  
Office: 210/308-1232  
E-Mail Work: [taoxford@usfunds.com](mailto:taoxford@usfunds.com)

#### VICE-CHAIR/NEWSLETTER

EDITOR: Vacant

#### SECRETARY:

Carolyn F. Moore  
P.O. Box 959  
Lubbock, Texas 79408-0959  
Office: 806/744-4569  
E-Mail: [carolyn.moore@twcc.state.tx.us](mailto:carolyn.moore@twcc.state.tx.us)

#### TREASURER:

Judy L. Ney  
12242 Brookvalley Dr.  
Houston, Texas 77071  
Office: 713/723-1937  
E-Mail: [judylneyjd@aol.com](mailto:judylneyjd@aol.com)

#### CHRONOLOGIST:

Avo Stevens Butler  
100 N. Travis Street, Suite 402  
Sherman, Texas 75090-0016  
Office: 903/893-3581  
E-Mail: [avobutler@hotmail.com](mailto:avobutler@hotmail.com)

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Louise B. Raggio, *Dallas*

#### COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING 2003

Lisa Smith, *San Antonio*  
Christy Drake-Adams, *Austin*  
Mara Asya Blatt, *El Paso*  
Ronnie E. G. Harrison, *Houston*  
D'Metria Benson, *Dallas*

#### COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING 2002

Suzanne M. Duvall, *Dallas*  
Sherry Wetsch, *Houston*  
Ralph H. Brock, *Lubbock*

#### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

##### Board Advisor

Elizabeth Lang-Miers, *Dallas*

##### Alternate Board Advisor

Amy Dunn Taylor, *Houston*

## ARE YOU A SEARCHER?

At a career seminar I recently attended, the seminar leader told us we were the searchers—the people who kept searching for career satisfaction. Are you a searcher? Well, if you are—if you search for ways to encourage and facilitate women's active and effective participation in the legal profession and the community, equal opportunity, equal pay, fairness toward both genders in law and its application, and attention to current issues affecting women in and out of the profession—then you need to join or renew your membership in the Women and the Law Section today.

This past bar year, the Section conducted a successful fundraiser for the Women's Advocacy Project, retooled its Newsletter with different content, color, and a more efficient production schedule, presented the Sarah T. Hughes Award to Justice Barbara Rosenberg and the Ma'at Justice Award to Paula W. Hinton, sponsored two CLE programs, the first a retrospective of important women trailblazers and the second, *The Unfinished Agenda: Gender and Diversity in the Legal Profession*, with nationally known speakers Professor Deborah Rhode from Stanford Law School and Angela F. Williams a D.C. attorney and member of the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, which the Section co-sponsored with TexasBar CLE.

As Chair, building and bringing our new website on-line was for me the Section's biggest accomplishment! Thank you to our terrific designer, Aaron Wells, for his excellent website design and for executing my many design ideas. Thank you also to Carey Jung with IT Freedom, an Austin-based information management company generously hosting our website. Next year, as Immediate Past Chair I hope to lead the Website Committee and make [www.txwomenlawsection.org](http://www.txwomenlawsection.org) your GoTo site for everything from Texas legal resources to information addressing the unresolved gender issues still hindering our profession, our justice system, and our communities.

Deborah L. Ingraham  
Chair, Women and the Law Section

# CANDIDATES FOR 2002-2003 WAL COUNCIL

Pursuant to the bylaws, the WAL Nominating Committee recommends to the Section membership the following candidates for election to the Women and the Law Section Council for the 2002-2003 Bar Year. Please join us in Dallas and vote on the slate at the Section's Annual Meeting, June 14, 2002, 9:30 a.m., at the Wyndham Anatole Hotel.

## OFFICERS

<b>Chair:</b>	Misty M. Ventura, Hughes & Luce, LLP, Dallas
<b>Chair-Elect:</b>	Judy L. Ney, Texas Workers' Compensation Commission, Houston
<b>Immediate Past Chair:</b>	Deborah L. Ingraham, State Office of Administrative Hearings, Austin
<b>Vice-Chair/Membership:</b>	Teresa A. Oxford, U.S. Global Investors, Inc., San Antonio
<b>Vice-Chair/Newsletter:</b>	Cynthia A. Reppert, Ryan & Co., Austin
<b>Secretary:</b>	Carolyn F. Moore, Texas Workers' Compensation Commission, Lubbock
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Lisa Hernandez, Attorney, Frisco
<b>Chronologist:</b>	Suzanne M. Duvall, Attorney-Mediator, Dallas

## COUNCIL MEMBER NOMINATIONS

### Terms Expiring 2004

Avo Stevens Butler, Attorney, *Sherman*  
Sherry R. Wetsch, Attorney, *Houston*  
Ralph H. Brock, Attorney, *Lubbock*  
Ellen C. Stone, Law Office of John Ventura, *Brownsville*

The following Council members were elected last year to terms expiring in June 2003:

Christy Drake-Adams, Bickerstaff, Heath, Smiley, Pollan, Keever & McDaniel, LLP, *Austin*  
Mara Asya Blatt, Senior Staff Attorney, 8th Court of Appeals, *El Paso*  
Ronnie E. G. Harrison, Harrison Law Office, PC, *Houston*  
D'Metria V. Benson, Law Office of D'metria V. Benson, *Dallas*  
Lisa Smith, Attorney, *San Antonio* (Appointed)

## APPOINTMENTS

On May 7, 2002, Chair Deborah L. Ingraham made the following appointments to the WAL Council:

**Cynthia Reppert**, an attorney in Austin, will serve as Newsletter Vice-Chair until June 13, 2002, when she will become the Newsletter Vice-Chair candidate for the June 2002 -June 2003 council term.

**Lisa Smith**, an attorney in San Antonio, will complete the remainder of Nancy Farrer's council member term, which expires in June 2003. Lisa will also serve as co-editor of the Newsletter.

# DISPARITY IN THE ACADEMIC RANKING WOMEN PROFESSORS IN LAW SCHOOL

By Carolyn F. Moore

Law schools in Texas do not currently have many women with the rank of full professor with tenure, but they have more today than they had in 1994. Credit for the increase in the number of women professors at law schools in Texas goes, in part, to the work of the State Bar of Texas Committee on Women in the Profession.

The Committee has tried to raise the consciousness of law schools so that more and more women can be hired and promoted as professors. For example, in 1994 and 1998, the Committee sent questionnaires to law schools in Texas asking the schools to list the number of women in the position of full professor, associate professor, and assistant professor at each school. The Committee did not send Texas Wesleyan School of Law a questionnaire in 1994 because the school had just received provisional accreditation; the Committee sent the school a questionnaire in 1998. The law schools returned the following information to the Committee:

School	Women as Full Professor		Women as Associate Professor		Women as Assistant Professor	
	'94	'98	'94	'98	'94	'98
St. Mary's	4	8	2	2	1	0
Univ. of Houston	1	6	2	2	1	1
The Univ. of Texas	6	8	0	0	5	2
Baylor	0	3	1	2	2	0
Southern Methodist	0	3	5	6	5	2
Texas Tech	1	3	1	2	3	1
South Texas	7	11	2	0	9	5
Thurgood Marshall	1	3	2	3	2	0
Texas Wesleyan		1		5		0

The Committee reviewed the responses to the questionnaires in 1995 to determine if there was a disparity in the academic ranking of female professors in comparison to male professors in Texas law schools. Once the disparity was confirmed, the Committee members realized they had identified a barrier that prevents women lawyers from full participation in the work, responsibilities, and rewards of the profession. Identifying such barriers and seeking a solution to the barriers was one of

the goals of the Committee. Paula Weems Hinton, Terrie Sechrist, and Ellen Grimes have guided the Committee in seeking solutions to eliminate the disparity.

In 1995, Paula Hinton wrote each law school dean requesting that the dean meet with one or more members of the Committee in the dean's office to discuss ways that the Committee might help law schools increase the number of women law faculty with the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor at law schools. The Committee wanted to help women to move from writing and clinical jobs that typically provide little pay or status into positions of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor with tenure, which provide good salaries and esteem.

In 1996, Committee members began meeting with representatives of most but not all Texas law schools to discuss ways that the Committee might help encourage more women to apply for faculty positions in law schools. Terrie Sechrist reported that by the end of 1998, Committee members had met with deans of each law school in Texas. Ellen Elkins Grimes coordinated additional interviews in 1999 and 2000. More than one dean commented that law schools in Texas have a difficult time recruiting non-Texans to apply for positions with Texas law schools because the best qualified law professors want to live on the East or West Coast of the United States. Several deans said that at times applicants, both male and female, have turned down positions at Texas law schools because the law schools have not been able to find a suitable position for the prospective faculty's spouse. One dean stated that faculty positions rarely open at his school because his faculty is very stable.

The Women in the Profession Committee will continue to ask for additional information on the number of women faculty and to request meetings with deans of Texas law schools until the number of women professors, associate professors, and assistant professors becomes more in parity with the number of male professors, associate professors, and assistant professors.

## NOMINATE A NOTABLE WOMAN FOR THE SARAH T. HUGHES AWARD

In 1992, the State Bar Women and the Law Section established the Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement Award. The award honors the accomplishments of women who have achieved outstanding recognition in their professional area and who, by doing so, have paved the way for success for other women attorneys. The award criteria honors women attorneys who have achieved excellence their respective fields and have:

- Influenced other women to pursue legal careers, or
- Opened doors for women lawyers in a variety of job settings that historically were closed to women, or
- Advanced opportunities for women within a practice area or segment of the profession, or
- Have otherwise served their profession or community in a manner that has benefited the legal profession.

Past recipients of the award are:

- 1993 Louise B. Raggio and Harriet Miers
- 1994 Dean Barbara Aldave
- 1995 Barbara Jordan
- 1996 Frances "Sissy" Farenthold
- 1997 Justice Shirley W. Butts
- 1998 Gaynelle Griffin Jones
- 1999 Evelyn H. Biery
- 2000 Justice Ann McClure
- 2001 Justice Barbara Rosenberg

Submit your nomination to Judy Ney at (713) 723-1937 or [judylneyjd@aol.com](mailto:judylneyjd@aol.com), or to Sherry Wetsch at (713) 974-2115 or [swetsch@flash.net](mailto:swetsch@flash.net) by May 24, 2002.

## MA'AT JUSTICE AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE MAY 24

Ma'at, the Egyptian goddess of justice, symbolizes truth, order, righteousness, and the emergence of order out of chaos. The Women and the Law Section established the Ma'at Justice Award in 1995 to recognize and celebrate individual attorneys or an association of attorneys who have contributed to the furtherance of justice in our society. Every year the Women and the Law Section presents the Ma'at Justice Award to an individual who is actively addressing the needs and issues affecting women both in the legal profession and in the community.

Past winners are:

- 1995 Jonita Borchardt of Denton
- 1996 Nancy Bethurem of Dallas
- 1997 Ralph H. Brock of Lubbock
- 1998 Ana Mejia-Dietche of Austin
- 1999 Collin A. Petty of Houston
- 2000 Iris Hefter Robinson of Houston
- 2001 Paula W. Hinton of Houston

Nominate someone you know today by contacting Teresa Oxford at (210) 308-1232 or [taoxford@usfunds.com](mailto:taoxford@usfunds.com) by May 24, 2002.



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR Women and the Law Section Section Annual Meeting and CLE Program at the State Bar Annual Meeting Wyndham Anatole Hotel, Dallas

**Friday, June 14, 2002**

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

*Keynote Address*

**Rani C. Garcia,**

Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P.

**Breastfeeding and the Working Woman-  
A Legal Perspective**

(approved for 1.0 hour of CLE credit)

Reception underwritten in part  
by the Dallas Women Lawyers Association

# DALLAS COUNTY WOMEN LAWYERS ON THE MOVE

By D'Metria Benson

This promises to be an exciting year for politics at the statewide and local levels. The many candidates, variety of contested primary races, and the number of seats in play will in all certainty captivate our attention as we watch the election process unfold. This article focuses on local judicial politics involving women lawyers in Dallas County.

As many of you may know elections in Dallas County in the recent past have been pretty one-sided. Few Democrats have dared to venture into the hostile territory of a predominantly Republican electorate. But, as a result of the last presidential election, the latest census and demographic data, and recent redistricting activity, a new wind is blowing through Dallas County.

For the first time in twenty years, the Dallas County Democratic Party is touting not only a full ticket, but an impressive slate of judicial candidates as well. Women com-

prise a significant portion of the overall slate and represent one quarter of the candidates seeking judicial benches in Dallas County. Worthy of mention is the race for Dallas County Democratic Party Chair, where Dallas attorney Susan Hays is looking to unseat current Party Chair, Bill Howell.

Women lawyers on the Democratic Ticket in Dallas County are seeking to fill civil, family, and criminal court benches at both District and County Court levels. In pursuit of District Court benches are Sarah Saldana, Lena Levario, and Lisa McKnight. At work on the County Court level are D'Metria Benson, Sally Montgomery (former Republican) and Elizabeth Davis Frizell. While none of these women faced opponents in the primary election, some of their Republican counter-parts were not so lucky. Contested races in the Republican Primary included the 255th District Court, County Court at Law No. 1 and County Criminal Court No. 10. The list of the women candidates involved in Dallas County judicial races is set out below.

<b>COURT</b>	<b>DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE</b>	<b>REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE(S)</b>
44th District Court (Civil Bench-vacated seat)	Sarah Saldana	David Kelton
204th District Court (Criminal Bench)	Lena Levario	Mark Nancarrow
255th District Court- (Family Bench)	Lisa McKnight	Craig Fowler Lia Rardin
County Court at Law No. 1 (vacant seat)	D'Metria Benson	Russell Rodin Kim Shambley
County Court at Law No. 3	Sally Montgomery	Bob Jenevein
County Criminal Court No. 10	Elizabeth Davis Frizell	Julie Clancy Lisa Fox

## THE WAL WEBSITE IS ON-LINE!!

The Women and the Law Section's website is on-line at [www.txwomenlawsection.org](http://www.txwomenlawsection.org)! Thanks to our designer, Aaron Wells, for doing a terrific job designing the site. Thanks also to IT Freedom and Carey Jung for generously hosting the site. Check it out!

# RONNIE'S REEL REFLECTIONS

By Family Law Attorney Ronnie Harrison

The following is a review of the motion picture *Liar Liar*, starring Jim Carey, by Family Law Attorney Ronnie G. Harrison.

As my clients and I sat in a small conference room in a medium-size law office of our big, influential mediator, we discussed all of the unfavorable things we wanted to tell the mediator about the other side's parenting skills, or lack thereof. "We" were the grandparents and "They," of course, were the parents. I agreed wholeheartedly with my clients' criticisms of the parents until the grandmother complained that the mother (her daughter) took the child, the subject of the suit, an 8 year old boy, to see the movie *Liar Liar*, starring Jim Carey.

I had seen *Liar Liar* in the privacy of my hotel room at the Marriott River Center in San Antonio while attending the Advanced Family Law Seminar. I especially enjoyed seeing *Liar Liar* at the situs of the Advanced Family Law Seminar, just as I enjoyed seeing *Escape From LA* in LA, and seeing *Escape From New York* in New York. Don't get me wrong, Jim Carey is no Kurt Russell, but as they say: "location, location, location."

*Liar Liar* focuses on an attorney whose key case is a divorce-child custody-property division trial. No lie! The attorney's son has been disappointed by his fibbing father's fabrications too many times, but not as many times as the mother/ex-wife. Years after the decree, the ex-wife is about to commit the final act of divorce: remarry and move with the son clear across the country. In an act of desperation, the son puts a "curse" on the father so that the father cannot tell a lie for a whole day. And what a

day 3/4 the day of the father's big make or break partnership trial! Heavens! How hard he tries to win at trial on *truth* alone. He can't. But he finds a technicality.

Lawyers should see *Liar Liar* because it is funny, good-natured, and has a happy ending, thereby delivering much needed fantasy to our lives.

Children should see *Liar Liar* because it touches on issues that are difficult for them to identify and discuss with others. They can see that a kid has the power to influence the behavior of his or her parents. They can also see that it is not the child's fault if his or her parents don't get along.

Parents and grandparents should see *Liar Liar* because it points out how their actions affect the children they love. It reminds adults that even though they know they love the children, they must demonstrate their love to the children by their actions.

I recommend *Liar Liar*. But beware, it touches sensitive areas, so little children should see it with their parents or grandparents. I also recommend that the party taking the child to see *Liar Liar* be prepared after the movie to sit down with the child and discuss the movie over a snack, such as a soda or vanilla milk shake or chocolate fudge sundae with nuts or a piece of pecan pie a la mode or hot dog with chili and cheese. As you attempt to engage in a serious conversation with the child, while casually munching on one or all of the above, be careful not to bite your tongue-in-cheek.

On Friday, May 17, 2002, the Women and the Law Section, in conjunction with TexasBar CLE, presented the Section's annual CLE program. In a telephone seminar, Professor Deborah Rhode of Stanford Law School and Angela Williams of Bryan Cave LLP, in Washington, D.C. and member of the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession discussed: **THE UNFINISHED AGENDA: DIVERSITY AND GENDER ISSUES IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION.**

We were fortunate to have such impressive and accomplished national leaders address this important topic. Thanks to Ami Larson of TexasBar CLE for organizing the program. If you missed it, watch the Summer 2002 Newsletter edition for a summary of the unfinished agenda.

**WOMEN AND THE LAW (WAL) SECTION**

FULL MEMBERSHIP: \$20.00  
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LAW STUDENT MEMBERSHIP: \$5.00  
(Membership Year: June 1 through May 31.)

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\_\_\_\_\_ FAX #: \_\_\_\_\_

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E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

STATES WHERE YOU ARE LICENSED: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR AREAS OF PRACTICE: \_\_\_\_\_

LAW SCHOOL ATTENDED: \_\_\_\_\_

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOL ATTENDED: \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF A LOCAL WOMEN’S BAR: \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF OTHER LEGAL ORGANIZATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

Please designate one or more WAL Committees on which you would like to serve:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Ma’at Justice Award   | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Columnist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sarah T. Hughes Award |   |

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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