

THE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE A CATALYST FOR 2011

Women and the Law Section Newsletter
www.txwomenlawsection.org

May 2011

Vol. 31, No. 3



2010-2011 WAL OFFICERS AND COUNCIL

CHAIR

Carol Jendrzej
Cox Smith Matthews Inc.
112 E. Pecan, Suite 1800
San Antonio, TX 78205
Office (210) 554-5558

CHAIR-ELECT

Patricia Blackshear
Flahive, Ogden & Latson
504 Lavaca St., Ste 1000
Austin, TX 78701
Office (512) 435-2180

VICE-CHAIR MEMBERSHIP

Mary Evelyn McNamara
Brown McCarroll, L.L.P.
111 Congress Ave., Ste. 1400
Austin, TX 78701
Office (512)472-5456

SECRETARY

Melissa Dorman
Hartline, Dacus, Barger,
Dreyer & Kern, LLP.
6688 N. Central Expressway, Suite 1000
Dallas, TX 75206
Office (214) 369-2100

TREASURER

Ralph H. Brock
Ralph H. Brock, PLLC
P.O. Box 959
Lubbock, TX 79408
Office (806) 762-5671

CHRONOLOGIST

Ronnie Harrison
Harrison Law Office, P.C.
411 Fannin, Suite 350
Houston, TX 77002
Office (713) 223-4034

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Hon. Carolyn F. Moore
Texas Dept. of Insurance,
Division of Workers' Compensation
P.O. Box 959
Lubbock, TX 79408
(806) 744-4569 ext. 600

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Andrea Johnson
Partner
Burlison Cooke LLP
Houston Pennzoil Place
711 Louisiana Street, Suite 1701
Houston, TX 77002
Office (713) 358-1700

COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING 2011

Mara Blatt, El Paso
Tonya D. Carter-Clary, Katy
Deborah L. Cordova, McAllen
Suzette Patton, San Antonio

COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING 2012

Alison Colvin, Brownsville
Marissa Helm, San Antonio
Hon. Judy Ney, Houston
Marlene Williams, Houston

Non-Voting Contributing

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Carmen Samaniego, San Antonio

Board Advisor

Cori A. Harbour, El Paso

Alternate Board Advisor

Yvette Ostolaza

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIR



IT IS TIME TO STEP UP FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE

by Carol E. Jendrzej

Over the past several months there has been a great deal of press about the shortfalls in our federal and state budgets. Most everyone has an opinion on the issue, and many have proposed solutions. At least for me, seeing the proposed cuts to various programs frustrates me. With all the bright minds in our country – why can't we fix this problem without hurting those who need our help the most? Clearly, our section cannot fix all the problems our nation and state now face. However, we can take steps to help alleviate some of the problems people in our state face when it comes to equal access to justice.

Texas' poverty rate last year was 17.3 percent, the sixth-highest in the nation. Currently in Texas, there are approximately 5.7 million people who qualify for legal aid. To assist the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation meet this need, many of the state bar sections, including ours, are making a donation to the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation this year. Our section will donate \$2,500 to the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation and we encourage you to also make an individual donation. We understand that many in our membership have their own financial challenges. However, if every member was to donate even \$5.00, you are looking at \$2,700 coming to the Foundation.

For those of you who are not as familiar with all the issues that this population faces, here is just a sampling:

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- Spouses and children of domestic abuse;
- Elderly wrongly denied life-sustaining prescriptions and food stamps;
- Veterans wrongly denied critical medical care and disability and other benefits;
- Families whose homes were wrongly foreclosed upon and are forced into shelters and/or the streets;
- Individuals requiring legal documents for medical treatment and related services.

Although legal aid organizations help more than 100,000 low-income Texas families each year, due to a lack of resources, only about 23 percent of the civil legal needs of low-income and poor Texans are being met. With a significant increase in the poor population and declining revenue for legal aid, this percentage will decline.

In the past, a primary source of legal aid funding was interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA). However, this revenue declined dramatically when the Federal Reserve lowered its benchmark interest rate to an all-time low of zero to .25 percent in 2008. IOLTA revenues have plummeted from \$20 million in 2007 to barely \$5 million in 2009, resulting in a crisis in legal aid funding for the state. In 2010, IOLTA revenues were projected to remain flat at just over \$5 million. This drop of over \$20 million a year in IOLTA funding devastated the state's essential capability to maintain the critical safety net for Texans in dire need of legal help.

There is state legislation being proposed to address the funding crisis. **HB 2174** seeks to establish an account for the additional financial support. The account would be funded through certain county service fees and court costs. **HB 2502** relates to the fees collected by the district court clerks on the filing of certain civil actions or proceedings. HB 2174 recently was amended to include provisions from HB 2502 and voted favorably from committee. However, Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation still needs your support.

I hope that my remarks have encouraged you to step up to help the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation. The process to donate easy – just go to www.texasbar.com/atjdonations. For those of you who have firms that pay your state bar dues through the automatic billing process, remember to make your own arrangements to make a donation to the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation. Again, it is time to step up and donate what you can to the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation. In mere minutes, you can make a donation that can have lasting effects on someone's life.

Lastly, this is my last column as Chair, so I want to thank our wonderful newsletter editor, Carolyn Moore for her hard work on the newsletter this year. I also want to thank our very hard working Council members and officers, Patricia Blackshear, Mara Blatt, Ralph Brock, Tonya Carter-Clary, Alison Colvin, Deborah Cordova, Melissa Dorman, Ronnie Harrison, Marissa Helm, AJ Johnson, Mary Evelyn McNamara, Judy Ney, Suzette Patton, and Marlene Williams. It was truly an honor to work with each of you. Thank you for your support.

DOING WHAT WE CAN TO STAY HEALTHY

by Carolyn F. Moore, Newsletter Editor



Our members have always supported the Council's decision to sponsor continuing legal education seminars around the State that focus on law and medicine. Speakers at the seminars have included attorneys, physicians, nurses, and professors of law and medicine. Members have attended the seminars, bringing family, staff, and friends to learn about Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, and tips on maintaining healthy lifestyles. While the focus of the seminars has been on issues concerning women, attention has also focused on needs of men and children.

At one seminar in Lubbock, an oncologist told attendees that the number 1 killer of women in the United States is cardiovascular disease, which includes heart problems, hypertension, and stroke. At the same time, she stated that 1 in 25 women die of breast cancer. She commented that many women who are diagnosed with lung cancer have not been smokers but have lived with, or worked around, people who smoked tobacco.

Most speakers at the seminars tell attendees that the best way to maintain a healthy lifestyle is to increase their physical activity, eat a balanced diet, and to get plenty of sleep. In addition, speakers suggest that people lose weight, stop smoking and, limit their intake of alcoholic beverages. The advice, while reasonable, is difficult to follow because it means that many people will have to make major changes in their daily habits.

While there are no quick fixes for many of the physical conditions that are a result of our current lifestyle, there is at least one new publication for us to review and follow. It is *A Lifetime of Good Health – Your Guide to Staying Healthy* published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health. It has 69 pages of valuable information. Most importantly it is online at <http://www.4woman.gov/pub/pg.cfm>

A Lifetime of Good Health – Your Guide to Staying Healthy is a product of the federal agency responsible for protecting our health. The publication is well written, giving up-to-date information on all the topics that our previous seminars have emphasized. In addition, it recommends preventive screening tests and immunizations for women, lists the warning signs of a heart attack, discusses cervical health, gives reasons for breastfeeding, and suggests ways to cope with stress and with menopause. It also recommends questions to ask doctors and gives hints on how to talk with doctors and nurses about our personal health. It is a tool for us to use in reaching a goal of good health. Take time from your busy schedule to download and read this informative publication.

SECTION TO PRESENT AWARDS

by Patricia H. Blackshear

Since the mid-90s, the Women and the Law Section has recognized women who are outstanding in their fields through the Ma'at Justice Award and the Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement Award.

The Ma'at Justice Award was established to recognize and celebrate individual attorneys or an association of attorneys who have contributed to the furtherance of justice in our society. Ma'at is the Egyptian goddess of justice, who symbolizes truth, order, righteousness, and the emergence of order out of chaos.

The Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement 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.

This year, the Section is so pleased to announce that the Ma'at Justice Award is being awarded to Deborah Fitzgerald Fowler and the Sarah T. Hughes Award is going to Mary Korby. Both of these women are shining examples of how we in this profession can change lives every day! The awards will be presented at the Annual Meeting on June 23, 2011 in San Antonio.

Ms. Fowler graduated from Tulane University and received her law degree from Lewis & Clark College's Northwestern School of Law. Currently, she is the Deputy Director for Texas Appleseed, a public interest law center that provides attorneys with the tools to better advocate for those in need. As her nominators stated, "Ms. Fowler is an attorney who has contributed significantly to the advancement of the rights of individuals with disabilities and within that work specialty, she has worked tirelessly on issues impacting women with disabilities, both the young and the elderly." Ms. Fowler has been instrumental in an impressive list of reforms for Texans in need, including Texas Youth Commission policies, school discipline policies legislated by the State, and the creation of Travis County's Mental Health Public Defender system. Her list of accomplishments is long and impressive and her work on civil rights issues has reached many women in a very positive way, especially those who are in vulnerable circumstances.

The Women and the Law Section believes that Ms. Fowler is indeed a woman who is actively addressing the needs and issues affecting women both in the legal profession and in the community.

Ms. Korby is a corporate partner in the Dallas office of Weil, Gotshal & Manges, LLP. She is a graduate of Baylor University (B.A.) and Southern Methodist University (J.D.). Ms. Korby's law practice focuses on public and private mergers and acquisitions and international joint ventures.

Her work includes multi-million dollar transactions for several prominent domestic and international companies. She is a leader in a field that traditionally has not had many female partners, but during her tenure as hiring partner, the Dallas office of her firm hired an equal number of male and female associates. Ms. Korby has been a mentor and recruiter of young women associates and is regularly recognized as a leading attorney in her field. Her work as an excellent attorney and her heavy involvement in women's issues within her firm and the community is truly inspiring. Her nominators noted that Ms. Korby is deserving of this award for "her relentless efforts in achieving professional excellence in her legal career and paving the road for other women to enter the profession."

The Section chose Ms. Korby for this award as she has influenced other women to pursue legal careers, opened doors for women lawyers, and has certainly advanced opportunities for women within a practice area, all of which are accomplishments that the Sarah T. Hughes Women Lawyers of Achievement Award was meant to recognize.

We hope that you will join in San Antonio to congratulate these two outstanding examples of women lawyers in Texas.



THE WOMEN AND THE LAW SECTION

wish to congratulate

Deborah Fitzgerald Fowler

Ma'at Justice Award

Mary Korby

Sarah T. Hughes Award

Plan to attend the our annual meeting for the awards' presentation followed by *Perspectives on the Changing Roles of Women and Men in the Workplace and the Family* with Associate Dean Leah Jackson, Baylor Law School, Dr. Raquel Marquez, UTSA, Chair of the Sociology Department; Loretta Cross, Grant Thornton, Managing Partner; Maurleen Cobb, former Air Force Judge Advocate, Pam Huff, Cox Smith, Shareholder; and Patricia Blackshear, moderator.

The Women and the Law Annual Section Meeting

Thursday, June 23 • 1:45-3:00 p.m. State Bar Meetings (San Antonio)

Also plan on joining us for *En Banc on Wines of Texas*, a discussion of wines from Texas by Justice Benavides, Justice Lehrman and Justice Simmons at our free reception that evening from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. hosted by The Women and the Law Section, Bexar County Women's Bar Association and Texas Women Lawyers.

WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION, A STATE BAR COMMITTEE

by Judy L. Ney, Chair

Since June 1, 2010, the committee has continued publicity for its book on the history of the lives and careers of women lawyers in Texas, *Rough Road to Justice: The Journey of Women Lawyers in Texas*, by Betty Chapman, published by TexasBar Books. The book was presented to each Board member at the State Bar Board of Director's meeting April 29, 2011 in Lubbock. Plans are being developed to honor those women legal pioneers, still living, identified in the book. Another ongoing project of the committee is the creation of short videos for After the Bar Exam, a project to advise recently licensed women lawyers in their search for work either at a law firm or in solo practice. Also work is progressing on the creation of a continuing legal education roundtable aimed at human

resources and diversity officers in the law firm management arena. The committee is coordinating efforts for a program in conjunction with The University of Texas Women's Law Center. Committee members participated in the interviews for a new Minority Director of the State Bar. Members continue to support the Texas Minority Counsel Program, usually having a meeting in conjunction with the program. The committee is available as a resource for women veterans. As always, the committee continues to work with other bar groups and sections, in particular with the Women and the Law Section, to promote the interests of women in the profession.

WHO'S COOKING DINNER TONIGHT?

by Carol E. Jendrzej

I am sure that you have seen the commercial of the man working late at night when his wife calls to find out if he remembered their anniversary. Of course he has forgotten, but technology saves the day because he can surf the web to find a restaurant and make the reservation, all the while talking to his wife on his nifty smart phone. Well, technology in the workplace is not all that is changing.

The workplace is beginning to see a difference, or are we, in who is working outside the home and who has chosen to stay at home. Are we seeing an increase in "stay at home dads"? Is there still a glass ceiling? What effect might culture have on these roles? How does it affect retention of lawyers? What effect if any can we expect to see in the courtroom? The legislature?

You will not want to miss a very animated discussion from the various points of view offered by **Leah Jackson**, Baylor Law School's Associate Dean; **Dr. Raquel Marquez**, UTSA's Chair of the Sociology Department; **Loretta Cross**, Managing Partner at Grant Thornton; **Maurleen Cobb**, prior Air Force Judge Advocate, now in private practice; **Pam Huff**, Shareholder at Cox Smith Matthews Incorporated and **Patricia Blackshear**, in private practice and the panel's moderator.

Join us at our Section Membership Meeting and Awards Program at the Annual State Bar Meeting on June 23, 2011 from 1:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. for *Perspectives on the Changing Roles of Women and Men in the Workplace and the Family.*

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SECTION'S COUNCIL MEETING ON APRIL 16, 2011 IN AUSTIN

Responded to the IOLTA funding crisis facing Texas by donating \$2,500.00 to the Texas Access to Justice Foundation and challenged our members to each donate at least \$5.00 to the Foundation.

Learned that attendees at the Council of Chairs meeting on April 15, 2011 elected two women, *Michele Wong-Kraus* and *Susan Nelson*, to be Section Representatives to the State Bar Board of Directors and that speakers at the meeting complimented our Section's newsletter as being people-centric.

Voted to give a free year of membership in the Section to this year's winners of the Sarah T. Hughes Award and the Ma'at Justice Award.

Asked Judy L. Ney and Carolyn F. Moore to recommend how the Section can best recognize Louise Raggio's contributions to women lawyers and to the profession.

Found out that the Government Lawyers Section voted to nominate Carolyn F. Moore for the State Bar of Texas Presidents' Award which is given to a bar member who has rendered outstanding service to the State Bar during the past year. This year, Ms. Moore has been active in Sections and with the Lubbock County Bar Association. In addition to being our newsletter editor, she is secretary of the Workers' Compensation Section and council member of the Individual Rights and Responsibilities Section and Government Lawyers Section. She is the immediate past president of her local bar and is a mentor, along with her husband Ralph H. Brock, to five protégés in a local bar project modeled on the State Bar program. She uses the knowledge she acquired from previously serving as a Section Representative to the State Bar Board of Directors and as Chair of the State Bar College Board to encourage lawyers to be volunteers in bar activities.

TEXAS | ACCESS to JUSTICE
FOUNDATION

May 3, 2011

Ms. Carol Jendrzey
State Bar of Texas, Women and the Law Section
c/o Cox Smith Matthews, Inc.
112 E. Pecan, Suite 1800
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Dear Ms. Jendrzey:

On behalf of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, please accept our sincerest gratitude to you and the entire membership of the Women and the Law Section of the State Bar of Texas for your generous gift in the amount of \$2,500.

The Section's donation will help legal aid providers provide critical civil legal assistance to indigent Texans throughout our state. Your gift is so very important now as we see the need for basic civil legal services increasing during these challenging economic times, while our revenue from Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) continues to diminish.

We truly appreciate your support of our mission as we strive to ensure all Texans, regardless of income, have access to the civil justice system.

Sincerely,



Betty Balli Torres
Executive Director

*The Texas Access to Justice Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. 100% of your donation is tax deductible. This letter will serve as your receipt. No goods or services were provided.
Tax Identifications #74-2354575.*



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