# Women Journal (I)

Vol. 88 No. 1 FALL 2002



NAWL past, present and future Presidents greet Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg before the 2002 Annual Luncheon, including Gail Sasnett, Ellen Pansky, Justice Ginsburg, Liz Bransdorfer and Zoe Sanders Nettles, shown L-R.

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# **2002 ANNUAL MEETING**

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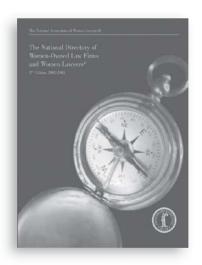
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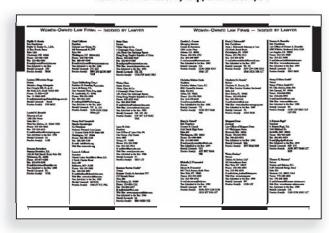
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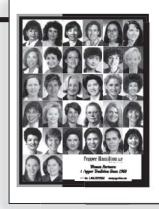
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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: The previous volume (Vol. 87, No. 3) of the Women Lawyers Journal was erroneously printed with the date Fall 2002. Vol. 87 No.3 should have been dated Spring 2002. Vol. 88 No.1 is correctly listed as Fall 2002.

## About NAWL

Founded in 1899, NAWL is a professional association of attorneys, judges, law students and nonlawyers serving the educational, legal and practical interests of the organized bar and women worldwide. Women Lawyers Journal®, National Association of Women Lawyers®, NAWL®, and the NAWL seal are registered trademarks. ©2002 National Association of Women Lawyers. All rights reserved.

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# **About Women Lawyers Journal**

**EDITORIAL POLICY** Women Lawyers Journal is published for NAWL members as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information. Views expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect NAWL policies or official positions. Publication of an opinion is not an endorsement by NAWL. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

**ARTICLES** Book reviews or articles about current legal issues of general interest to women lawyers are accepted and may be edited based on the judgment of the editor. Editorial decisions are based upon potential interest to readers, timeliness, goals and objectives of the association and quality of writing. No material can be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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# Mary Alice Duffy: A Reminiscence

by Gerard St. John

Before there was a Boulevard Extension between Broad Street and the Schuylkill Expressway, Hunting Park Avenue was the "neighborhood highway," the route that experienced drivers took to get from Northeast Philadelphia to City Lien Avenue. Every morning, on the way to school, we drove out Hunting Park Avenue, half-asleep and barely noticing the row houses beyond the busy highway. But that changed in the spring of 1959 when the radio broadcast the details of an early morning murder.

The two suspects were brothers. John and William Coyle. One of the brothers stole a bottle of milk from a row house doorstep shortly after the milkman dropped it off. There had been prior thefts in that neighborhood and the milkman had notified the police. An unlucky policeman confronted the thief and was ruthlessly gunned down not far from Hunting Park Avenue. The Coyle brothers then allegedly stole a car, kidnapped its owner and fled to New England, where William Coyle was killed in a shootout with the Massachusetts State Police. John Coyle was apprehended and returned to Philadelphia to stand trial on charges of first-degree murder.

It was an open-and-shut case. No one in Philadelphia had any doubt of Coyle's guilt. The major question in the newspapers of the day was which of the high-profile criminal lawyers would be appointed to defend Coyle at his trial. There was widespread surprise when the representation was announced. The defense lawyer would be Mary Alice Duffy, along with her sister, Sara.

In the 1950s there were precious few women lawyers and, at least insofar as the general public was concerned, none of them defended violent criminals. When the trial began, we learned that Mary Alice Duffy could indeed defend a client accused of cold-blooded murder. John Coyle was eventually found guilty as charged, but the district attorney had to fight every inch of the way. Mary Alice was as tough as nails.

She would not concede the time of day. Attempts by her adversary to find common ground would be met with uncommon resistance. When Mary Alice latched onto an idea or an objective, she did not let go. Right or wrong, she was never in doubt. In many respects, these characteristics were well suited to a lawyer who practices criminal law, where the stakes are high, the participants are often unreliable and "street smarts" may be more important than citations to legal treatises. The need for toughness was even greater for a woman lawyer, and Mary Alice met that need with plenty to spare. Her adversaries noted the appropriateness of her initials: M.A.D.

I first met Mary Alice about twenty years after the Coyle case was tried. I was assigned to defend a North Philadelphia bar that was being sued by a patron who had been injured in a latenight brawl. Mary Alice represented a West German social worker who was in the United States on a church-sponsored program. She brought suit against the bar and a hospital to which the youth had been taken for emergency treatment. My colleagues warned me that Mary Alice was very difficult. She was described in terms usually reserved for Russian tank commanders. Most of the "old-timers" had a story or two about their experiences in cases involving Mary Alice. On the other hand, I knew that Mary Alice was a cousin of my law school classmate Bill Fair, and I had every reason to expect that Bill would have mentioned my name in a favorable context.

Suffice it to say that Mary Alice Duffy lived up to her advance billing. We

met in a small courtroom on the third floor of City Hall. It was being used at that time for hearing argument on motions, for calling the trial list and as a waiting room for the lawyers who were involved in the next three cases that were likely to be assigned to trial. (The lawyers in the next seven cases after that were permitted to return to their offices with the stipulation that, upon telephone notice, they would return within thirty minutes with their witnesses, if necessary.)

It was raining outside and Mary Alice was having a "bad hair" day. She was wearing a shapeless tan raincoat and was carrying an oversize Schlessinger briefcase. A solid, large-boned woman, Mary Alice glared steadily at me, much like a linebacker in a football game glares at the offensive linemen on the opposing team. But her voice was friendly and respectful. We were adversaries but we could also be friends.

We were in court that day to argue a discovery motion filed by Mary Alice to compel my client to provide some particular information about the bar. I cannot recall the subject matter of the requested information but we had legitimate ground to oppose the request and had filed a brief in support of our position. Judge Stanley M. Greenberg was on the bench that day. When our case was called, Judge Greenberg looked at the two of us for a moment and then announced, "I have reviewed this motion and the briefs and I am granting the motion." With an exaggerated sweep of his right hand, he signed the proposed order that Mary Alice had attached to the front of her motion and called out, "next case!" Recognizing defeat, I said, "Thank you, your Honor," and turned to walk awav.

Mary Alice stood her ground.
"Your Honor," she said, "I want to call to your attention the following cases that support my position on this motion." She reached out toward the judge, extending a batch of photocopied pages. Judge Greenberg stammered, "But Miss Duffy, I have granted your motion. You won. There is no need to argue." "Your Honor," continued Mary Alice, "it is impor-

tant that you understand the law on this subject. . ." "Next case!" called Judge Greenberg with noticeable exasperation. By that time, I had reached the courtroom door and increased my stride down the hallway toward the stairwell.

Eventually, the case was assigned to trial. A telephone call from a clerk in Civil Listings told us to report to Judge Bernard J. Goodheart in his chambers in the One East Penn Square Building across Market Street from Wanamaker's and adjacent to the old city Hall Annex. I knew the judge, having previously tried cases before him. When Mary Alice and the lawyer representing the hospital arrived, we were shown in to the judge's chambers.

The judge greeted the three of us and asked Mary Alice to explain her plaintiff's claim. When she finished describing the fight, the emergency treatment at the hospital and the failure to diagnose a concussion, the judge asked whether the plaintiff had a legitimate claim against the hospital inasmuch as the standard treatment for concussion is discharge and bed rest, exactly what happened in this case. Mary Alice assured the judge that she had researched the issue and that there was a Pennsylvania case report that supported her position.

Judge Goodheart looked directly at me and said, "Mr. St. John, I know exactly what this case is about. When I was an assistant district attorney I tried hundreds of cases involving bars just like the one that you represent, in North Philadelphia and in other neighborhoods just like it." He then described my client's business with amazing accuracy, the absentee owner, the operation by a fulltime manager, the African-American neighborhood clientele, most of them under the lawful drinking age, a tough crowd, loud music from a jukebox. He even named some of the artists and the tunes — and the inevitable fights.

Mary Alice's client, a West German and a pacifist, was out of his element in this bar filled with young men who either were drafted or were about to be drafted into the army to serve as cannon fodder in Vietnam. Having accurately The need for toughness was even greater for a woman lawyer, and Mary Alice met that need with plenty to spare. Her adversaries noted the appropriateness of her initials: M.A.D.

She was described in terms usually reserved for Russian tank commanders.
Most of the old-timers had a story or two about their experiences in cases involving Mary Alice.

stated the facts of the case, the judge turned his attention to Mary Alice Duffy. Before Mary Alice could even open the case book, the judge announced that, due to a conflict in his schedule, he could not handle this case and was returning the filed to Judge Greenberg for reassignment.

It was about a week later that I received another call from Civil Listings assigning the case to trial before Judge Joseph P. Braig. This time, we were told to report directly to a courtroom on the ninth floor at Five Penn Center. The court leased two floors of that building for civil courtrooms before the Criminal Justice Center was built. At the courtroom, we were informed that a panel of prospective jurors had been requested and that we should proceed immediately with jury selection. If any problems arose, we were to contact Judge Braig by telephone.

A group of about thirty people soon arrived and were seated in the courtroom according to the numbers they had been assigned by the jury commissioner. It was Mary Alice's prerogative as lawyer for the plaintiff to begin the *voir* dire, the questioning of the prospective jurors to determine whether they had any views that would affect their ability to serve as impartial jurors. Lawyers are not supposed to argue their cases during voir dire, but everyone does that and some lawyers are so subtle in this technique that it's almost impossible to object while they achieve a tremendous advantage. Mary Alice was about as subtle as a Sherman tank. Three minutes into the voir dire, the hospital's lawyer was on the phone to Judge Braig's chambers, complaining about one of Mary Alice's comments. We were told to report immediately to chambers in the One East Penn Square Building.

I had never been before Judge Braig. He had recently been elected to the bench. We seated ourselves in three chairs in front of Judge Braig's desk. The hospital's lawyer started to describe the circumstances to which he objected at voir dire. "Judge, the problem is that Mrs.

Duffy asked the entire panel. . ." That was as far as he got. Mary Alice exploded, "It is MISS Duffy! And my name is Mary Alice." From that point on, it was downhill.

Rather than try to resolve the legitimacy of the *voir dire* question, Judge Braig chose to try to settle the case. Following the customary procedure, he asked the hospital lawyer and me to step out of the room while he discussed settlement in confidence with Mary Alice. We stepped out into the secretarial area.

After about five minutes, the door opened and Mary Alice told us that it was our turn to talk to the judge. It was like déjà vu all over again. Judge Braig told us he was not inclined to spend the next week or so in the abrasive atmosphere that his past experience with Mary Alice told him would be the case, a prospect she confirmed in the brief session he had just completed. He told us he would call Mary Alice back into the room and he would inform the three of us that his present schedule would not permit him to sit on this trial. He then did just that and handed us the file, telling us to take it back to Judge Greenberg for reassignment.

On the way back to the office, I did some quick mental calculations. My real client was the insurance company that had issued a general liability insurance policy to the bar. The policy had a maximum coverage of only about \$25,000. Although we might prevail at the trial, there was no question that we could lose and the cost of continuing defense was growing larger every day. Under the circumstances, I recommended that we offer the policy limits of \$25,000 and settle the case. The client quickly agreed with my analysis. I called Mary Alice and we settled the claim against the bar for the amount of the policy limits. The plaintiff would proceed with his claim against the hospital only.

About a week or so later, I received a call from Civil Listings stating that the case had been assigned to Judge John J. McDevitt III, and that we should report to his courtroom in Five Penn

Center. McDevitt was a "no nonsense" judge. Rumor had it that he had been an insurance defense lawyer, and when he became a judge he set out to avenge the many wrongs that had been inflicted upon him by his former clients in the insurance industry. I had tried other cases before him and I knew he meant business. While the panel of prospective jurors assembled in the courtroom, the lawyers met with Judge McDevitt in the small anteroom behind the bench.

Judge McDevitt was pleased when I told him that the bar had settled with the plaintiff and that the only open claim was against the hospital. He expressed surprise when I asked that my client be dismissed from the case and excused from participating in the trial. He said the normal procedure is for a settling defendant to continue to be in the case but without any potential liability. I had anticipated that reaction and had discussed it in advance with Mary Alice and with the hospital's lawyer. Also, I had a Supreme Court case supporting the dismissal of my client. I handed a copy of that case to Judge McDevitt. The judge acknowledged that the case said what I represented, and he asked the hospital's lawyer whether there was any objections to the bar being dismissed from the lawsuit. The lawyer stood, and as I expected, said he had no objection to the bar being dismissed.

"There is no settlement!" screamed Mary Alice. "We brought this case against both the bar and the hospital, and the trial will be against both of them." I was stunned. The judge and the hospital's lawyer both looked surprised. The judge said we would take a short recess.

I followed Mary Alice out to the hallway. "What's going on?" I said. "We had a settlement and you agreed that the bar would be dismissed," I reminded her. Mary Alice looked at me blankly. She said, "You heard him. He said he wanted the bar to be dismissed. If he is for it, it must be harmful to my client! I could not go along with a settlement under those circumstances." I should have suspected

that Mary Alice would practice law according to principles developed by Clausewitz.

Almost in a trance, I walked back into the judge's anteroom. I knew I could not enforce an oral settlement. I kicked my mind into another gear, trying to get ready for *voir dire*, opening statements and the cross-examination of the plaintiff, to say nothing of how I would explain the development to my client. Vaguely, as if in a dream, I heard Judge McDevitt say, "after looking at my calendar, I cannot accept assignment of this trial and I am sending this file back to Judge Greenberg for reassignment to another judge." Here we go again.

Over the next few weeks, Mary Alice and I discussed this case on several occasions. We put the settlement back in place and we agreed that the hospital's position would not affect our argument. Then, the case was assigned to Judge Lawrence Prattis, a judge with a very lowkey personality but one who had the unwavering respect of trial lawyers. Judge Prattis said the bar was out of the case and proceeded with the trial against the hospital alone. Deo Gratias. I later heard that the jury returned a verdict in favor of the hospital for much the same reasons that had been stated by Judge Goodheart when the case was first assigned trial.

Over the years, I lost track of Mary Alice. Representing the Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania, however, I was aware of claims involving telephone listings in the white pages and in the yellow-page directories. At one point, the pro-choice crowd took the position that a pro-life group should not be allowed to list its phone number in the vellow pages under the heading "Abortion Clinics." They claimed that this was fraud. They argued that the listing was intended to mislead people who wanted to arrange for abortions, and that instead of getting advice on how to get an abortion, the "clinic" would try to change the caller's mind about having the abortion in the first instance. I was not involved in that dispute. The telephone company's in-house lawyers handled it.

her adversary
to find
common
ground would
be met with
uncommon
resistance.

Attempts by

Continued on page 17

# **Highlights from 2002 Annual Meeting**

August 2002, Washington, D.C.



NAWL award winners gather before the award ceremony, including Angelo Arcadipane, Managing Partner of Dickstein, Shapiro, Morin & Oshinsky, Katherine Henry, partner at Dickstein, Shapiro, Morin & Oshinsky, Justice Ginsburg and Stephanie Scharf and Deanne Maynard, both partners from Jenner & Block.



NAWL Executive Officers greet Justice Ginsburg. From L-R, Lorraine Koc, Stephanie Scharf, Katherine Henry, Gail Sasnett, Ellen Pansky, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Liz Bransdorfer, Zoe Sanders Nettles, Sally Lee Foley, Hon. Susan Fox Gillis, Margaret Foster, Nancy J. Nicol and Leslie Lewis.

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# Recipients of the President's Award

Dickstein, Shapiro, Morin & Oshinksky, Washington, D.C. Jenner & Block, Chicago, IL



DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN か OSHINSKY

NAWL outgoing President Liz Bransdorfer presents Managing Partner of Dickstein, Shapiro, Angelo Arcadipane, with the President's Award. Dickstein Shapiro was recognized for its support of women, including NAWL and its mission.



NAWL Officers Liz Bransdorfer and Zoe Sanders Nettles listen from the head table as Stephanie Scharf accepts the President's Award on behalf of her firm, Jenner & Block, which was honored for their policies that support women and for being a trailblazer in the legal profession.

# **Margaret Brent Luncheon**

**Highlights from 2002 Annual Meeting** 



NAWL members congratulate Myrna Raeder, winner of the Margaret Brent Award at the luncheon where she accepted the award. From L-R, Sally Lee Foley, Diana Kempe, Katherine Henry, Liz Bransdorfer, Myrna Raeder and Ellen Pansky.

# NAWL Midyear Meeting SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Plan now to attend NAWL's 2003 Midyear Meeting to be held in Seattle, Washington, on February 7-8, 2002. Meet and network with fellow NAWL members and officers, learn about the latest NAWL news and attend the 2003 Midyear Luncheon.

**Executive Board Meeting**, Friday, February 7,2003 2:00-4:00 p.m. **General Assembly**, Saturday, February 8,2003 9:00-11:00 a.m. **Executive Board Meeting**, Saturday, February 8, 2003 12:00-3:00 p.m. All meetings will take place at Stoel Rives, LLP, 600 University Street, Suite 3600, Seattle, WA

Featuring NAWL Midyear Luncheon with Judy Clarke, past President of National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and counsel to Zacarias Moussaoui, speaking on the topic "The Bill of Rights Post 9/11." Washington State Court of Appeals Judge Anne L. Ellington will also be honored with the NAWL President's Award.

**Midyear Luncheon,** Friday, February 7, 2003 12:30-2:00 p.m. Seattle Hilton, Pacific Ball Room, 130 6th Avenue, Seattle, WA

Visit www.nawl.org for more information or call (312) 988-6186

# 2002 Installation and Award Luncheon

Remarks by NAWL President Ellen Pansky

I welcome you today to the 103rd meeting of the National Association of Women Lawyers with a question: Why are you here? I believe I know the answer:

We are here because each of us is dedicated to ridding the world of injustice and inequality, to fulfilling the biblical instruction to repair the world.

Some of us work to protect the environment, some of us to ensure fairness in the criminal justice system, some to promote integrity and ethics in the legal profession, and some to achieve bias-free treatment under the law for every person. Today, please join me for just a few minutes to acknowledge the efforts of a few of the courageous women who have worked through adversity to actualize equality for women.

In a short while, NAWL will present its highest award in the name of Arabella Babb Mansfield, the first woman formally admitted to any state bar in 1869. Three years later, the first African American woman lawyer, Charlotte Ray, was admitted. In 1879, Belva Lockwood became the first woman admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. And in 1899, in New York City, the first women's bar association was formed, and ultimately became NAWL.

From its earliest days, NAWL advocated on behalf of equal rights for women, including lobbying in 1912 for women's right to vote. NAWL continued to support the Suffrage movement until the 19th Amendment was ratified.

In 1918, the ABA finally admitted 2 women lawyers. By 1943, the ABA had named NAWL as an affiliate organization, only the tenth organization to be accepted as an affiliate at that time.

As more women became admitted to practice, NAWL began to advocate for broader rights for women throughout

society. Perhaps the younger among us do not recall that before the 1950's most states did not permit women to serve on juries. In addition to working tirelessly for the inclusion of women jurors, NAWL also lobbied for the appointment of women judges. In 1934, President Roosevelt appointed NAWL member Florence A. Allen of Ohio as the first female federal judge. NAWL president Burnita Sheldon Matthews of Mississippi was the second woman appointed to the federal bench in 1949. There were only about 50 judges in total during these years. NAWL continues to advocate for the appointment of female judges, as the federal bench still is 80% male.

During WW II, NAWL members formed and staffed the first Legal Advice Bureaus, providing volunteer services to the military and their families. After the war, NAWL members were appointed to serve on national and international boards, and NAWL was accorded official observer status at the newly formed United Nations. In 1947, NAWL became a charter member of the International Bar Association.

Through its first 50 years, NAWL actively participated in repairing the world. In its second 50 years, NAWL continued this tradition, urging adoption of the U.N. Genocide Convention, and in 1989, endorsing the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, a project NAWL member emeritus and past president Virginia Mueller continues to promote today.

Although it has yet to be ratified, NAWL was instrumental in the Senate's passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972, as well as the adoption of the Equal Pay for Women Act, the Uniform Divorce bill, and has presented innumerable educational programs on societal

Today we thank these individuals for the construction of a platform of opportunity and fair treatment on which we now stand.

problems including juvenile violence, domestic abuse, workplace violence, healthcare reform, sexual misconduct by lawyers and others, advancement of women to law firm leadership and bar association governance.

NAWL members too numerous to mention have served as leaders of the legal profession. I must mention a few with whom I have been privileged to work.

- Hon. Mary S. Parker, a superior court judge in Los Angeles, who served for many years as NAWL's ABA delegate
- · Selma Moidel Smith, a two-term NAWL president, a Lifetime Service Award recipient, a lawyer with an encyclopedic catalog of bar activities, NAWL's beloved historian, and a truly wonderful person I am honored and grateful to know personally
- Law Professor Myrna Raeder, a champion of criminal justice, a tireless worker for women's rights, a two-term NAWL president and this year's most deserving recipient of the Margaret Brent Award. We salute you Myrna!

Today, NAWL continues to work to repair the world. In 1999, before most of us had heard of the Taliban, NAWL published Eva Herzer's expose of the Taliban's reign of terror against Afghani women and children. NAWL applauds the vision of Bar Association of San Francisco's president Angela Bradstreet,

who, after the terror of September 11, conceived and brought to fruition a law school scholarship awarded to an Afghani woman to study law in the United States.

All of these women, and many other women and men, deserve to be acknowledged for their commitment and generosity. Some of them were the first in their category. Many of them however, contributed in more modest ways, renewing annual memberships year after year, serving on committees, writing articles, presenting legal education programs, adding their respective building blocks until, over time, a monument to the collective effort has been created. Today we thank these individuals for the construction of a platform of opportunity and fair treatment on which we now stand, and we are especially grateful to those women who had no female role models, who were not supported by any mentors, who cut their own lonely paths.

I thank also my mentors, starting with my friend Sheila Kuehl, the many women and men in so many bar associations, who personify leadership and volunteerism, my parents, brother and sister-in-law, my beloved husband Jerry Markle and darling daughters Angela and Valerie. We all need our friends and family to hold sight of the big picture, to avoid becoming self-absorbed, and to help us remember to repair the world.

# Presentation of the Arabella Babb Mansfield Award

Remarks by Ellen Pansky

And now, it is NAWL's deep honor to introduce a true visionary, the perfect icon of NAWL's traditional aspirations of equality, justice and fairness, a matriarch of the women's rights movement.

In 1956, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a young wife and mother who was one of nine women in a Harvard Law School class of over 500. This minority status did not prevent her from becoming an editor of the

Harvard Law review. After her second year, her husband Martin Ginsburg graduated from Harvard Law School and accepted a position in New York City. Ms. Ginsburg then transferred to Columbia, where she graduated first in her class.

Despite her outstanding law school performance, Ms. Ginsburg was offered neither a Supreme Court clerkship nor a position with a prestigious law firm. After completing a

lower federal court judgeship, Justice Ginsburg began teaching at Rutgers, Columbia and Harvard, and litigated cases for the ACLU.

In the early 1970's she and her husband represented Charles Moritz in a gender discrimination case against the IRS, winning an extension of the dependent care tax deduction for a man who supported his elderly mother. Previously, the deduction was allowed only for female care givers.

Justice Ginsburg proceeded to argue 6 gender equality cases before the U.S. Supreme Court in the three-year period between 1973 and 1976, and won 5 of the 6. These cases included challenges to gender-based classifications brought on behalf of both female and male plaintiffs, including a case establishing the right of teachers to continue to teach while pregnant.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed Justice Ginsburg to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, where she served for 13 years. She worked on cases addressing a woman's right to choose abortion, gay and lesbian rights and affirmative action.

In 1993, President Clinton appointed Justice Ginsburg the 107th justice of the Supreme Court, the second woman Supreme Court Justice in history.

Since her appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg has continued her commitment to ensure that all orgus. Citizens are afforded equal treatment under the law. In 1996, she authored the court's opinion in United States v. Virginia Military Institute, which held that VMI's exclusion of women violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

In recognition of Justice Ginsburg's unwavering commitment to civil rights, she was awarded the ABA's Thurgood Marshall award for the Advancement of Civil Rights. She has also been awarded the Margaret Brent Woman Lawyer of Achievement Award.

Today, we gratefully acknowledge Justice Ginsburg as the personification of egalitarianism. Why, just this month, she was mentioned in a national magazine because her husband Martin is a gourmet chef who bakes cakes for the other Justice's birthdays. She has been an equal partner in marriage, she has raised two children - her daughter Jane is a law school professor at Columbia - and . . . .

She has graciously, intellectually, respectfully, politely, and with unyielding steely resolve, changed our world for the better.

Justice Ginsburg, it gives me immeasurable pleasure to present you with the National Association of Women Lawyers' Arabella Babb Mansfield Award.



NAWL President Ellen Pansky presents the organization's highest honor to Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Ellen Pansky currently serves as the 2002-2003 President of NAWL. An officer of NAWL since 1995, Ms. Pansky is a principal in the law firm of Pansky & Markle, which specializes in legal ethics and professional liability matters. Ms. Pansky is a past president of the Association of Professional Responsibility Lawyers, a past chair of the Los Angeles County Bar Association Ethics Committee, a charter member of the ABA Center for Professional Responsibility, and is a lifetime member of both California Women Lawyers and Women Lawyers of Los Angeles.

# Remarks by Myrna Raeder

# Concerning Women Offenders and their Children

by Myrna Raeder

Myrna Raeder was one of the 2002 recipients of the Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award, an award sponsored by the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession to celebrate women lawyers who have achieved professional excellence within their area of speciality and have actively paved the way to success for other women lawyers. Margaret Brent was the first woman lawyer in America. In 1648, she formally demanded a "vote and voyce" in the Maryland Assembly, which the governor denied. The following is a transcript of Myrna Raeder's remarks at the luncheon after accepting the award. Myrna Raeder is a past President of NAWL and was nominated for this award by NAWL and others.

This is a truly overwhelming event. It is humbling simply being at the same table as these dynamic women. The fact that I am also one of the Brent recipients is scarcely within my comprehension. I am not a household name, and I am really touched by the fact that people think I can help make a difference.

I have always been passionate about topics concerning fairness. Fighting discrimination and providing equal opportunity for all have been core issues for me, and I have always believed that the raised voices of many who share the same interest is the best way to effect change. That is why I have devoted much of my energies outside of teaching to the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL), the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA) and the ABA Criminal Justice Section. Each of these groups provided a way to further issues I cared deeply about.

On a local level, WLALA let me meet fabulous women who faced similar problems about juggling work and child rearing. Lifelong friendships



Margaret Brent Award Winner Myrna Raeder(center) with NAWL President Ellen Pansky and past President Elizabeth Bransdorfer at the Margaret Brent Luncheon.

evolved from what we then called the Mothers Support Group, which also functioned as an informal job network for those who wanted family friendly hours and firms.

I turned to NAWL when I was concerned about gender bias and the status of women because of NAWL's strong presence for the last hundred years in support of women around the world, as well as in the United States. My concerns about creating a system

that is fair to both women and children who are victims of crime, as well as to criminal defendants, led me to the Criminal Justice Section (CJS) of the ABA, which is known for tackling the tough policy issues of the day and crafting solutions that have had significant import in the broader criminal justice debates.

My hope today is to enlist you in a cause that needs the support of the raised voices in this room: The Plight of Non-violent Women Offenders and their Children. I listened when Dovey Roundtree, a former Brent recipient, made an impassioned plea about saving girls from becoming criminals. I know I was not alone in being moved by her words, but we are still needlessly tossing away the lives of women offenders and their children, incarcerating mothers and sometimes inflicting even harsher consequences on their children.

Who are these people and why should we care? Nearly, 100,000 women are imprisoned, a tenfold increase in the last 25 years. Racial disparities, which some attribute to the war on drugs, result in a disproportionate percentage of minority women and their children being impacted. When the number of women in jail, on probation and parole are included, more than a million women are currently under correctional supervision in this country. And it is not an exaggeration to say that more than five million children have been impacted by having a mother arrested.

This skyrocketing offender population is not caused by women becoming more violent, but by society becoming more punitive. Nationally, more than 60% of the women we imprison are victims of sexual and physical abuse, and many turn to drugs as a way to avoid dealing with deeper traumas that have scarred them.

We sentence these women based on male models of criminality and vio-

lence, giving them long sentences for non-violent drug and property offences that ignore the disruption that children face when their sole or primary parent is incarcerated. The federal system is particularly harsh in discounting family ties as a reason to lower sentences, basically ignoring the fact that many of these non-violent female offenders are single parents.

Unlike the children of male offenders, who overwhelmingly reside with their mothers, children of single mothers are typically shifted to other relatives, friends or foster care, often resulting in siblings being separated and living in unstable environments.

We are one of the few countries that routinely separates mothers from infants when women are incarcerated. Most keep young children with women and provide alternatives to prison, intuitively recognizing that parental bonding is a necessary step in the development of a healthy child. Even when these women have served their sentences the myriad collateral consequences of incarceration threaten reintegration of their families.

The timelines in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) can result in even an 18-month prison sentence being a death penalty for their parental rights, sentencing them to a lifetime without their children. And we assume these children have a better place to be, while the numbers tell us there are not enough foster care parents or homes for adoptions. Yet we still sever parental bonds without checking to see if we are substituting anything in their place.

Even if a single mother avoids termination of parental rights, in a majority of states she will be denied federal cash assistance and food stamps due to her drug-related felony conviction, as well as denied public housing or assistance to pay for private housing, and educational benefits. Conditions of her release — such as work and

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drug treatment- typically take no account of her childcare responsibilities, resulting in ever increasing numbers of women being incarcerated for technical violations, not new crimes.

You may wonder, why tell me? What can I do, even if I agree that such wrongheaded policies cause true hardship and substantially increase the risk of intergenerational crime by children who follow in their mother's footsteps? Isn't this something for Congress or state legislatures to fix?

Without support of community and legal leaders, nothing happens. Legislators are starting to recognize

the harshness of our policies on non-violent women and their children, and that it is counterproductive to public safety. But as long as doing something takes courage and can be attacked as being soft on crime, they will only act if they hear more voices on this issue.

I know you have too many

demands on your time, but you don't need to spend huge amounts of time to make a difference. Each of you can pick up the phone to contact state or federal legislators to support appropriate legislation for community correctional facilities where mothers can reside with children or ask why they don't exist. Demand to know why Congress has never funded the legislation it passed 10 years ago to build such alternatives to incarceration.

Support recently proposed legislation that is aimed at providing services to children of incarcerated parents, and protest the impact of our sentencing laws and civil disentitlements on non-violent women and their children. For those in the ABA House of Delegates, you can support the upcoming CJS policy resolutions about

sentencing and future policy on collateral consequences.

Many of you are active in your local bar associations or know people who are. Women offenders and their kids are a great pro bono project. We're not talking litigation. What many need is simply a notarized power of attorney to keep their children with family members who can't otherwise place them in school or get them medical treatment. They need information about civil questions related to family matters.

Women with children in the dependency system often need someone who can follow the status of their case



Award winner Myrna Raeder approaches the podium to give her remarks. She is applauded by ABA President Bob Hirshon.

and arrange visitation, which is often a problem since women often get placed further from home than men. Women coming out need help to navigate social services systems. Create a brochure for women offenders on child issues and social services that focus on local laws and agencies. Work with interested people to set up a job fair; have clothing that women can borrow when interviewing for jobs; discuss how to interview and answer any question regarding their offenses.

Judges, prosecutors and defense counsel can visit facilities; and ask

questions. Often interest by outsiders sparks innovative new programs or fixes problems. The DA in Brooklyn, NY is creating a residential alternative for female drug offenders with children. Ask your DA what is being done in your community.

For the judges in the room, has your court used the curriculum developed by the National Association of Women Judges on sentencing women offenders as part of your judicial education? Ask your presiding judge, why not? My guess is that many do not even know of its existence.

Some communities have small but wonderful organizations working with women and their families, like Our Place here in DC. Donate to these private agencies that assist these women and their children, often providing referrals for housing and jobs and buses for children to visit their moth-

ers, or give toys for visiting rooms.

Suggest to your local church, synagogue or temple to volunteer to help the children of women offenders. Not all of these suggestions require lawyers or extensive time commitments.

Our communities are failing these families. We must prevent the creation of an army of children who grow up thinking society has no use for them. If we don't we shouldn't be surprised when they follow their mothers footsteps into the criminal justice system. As community leaders, we all can do better. We need to demand that the voices of these children be heard. Our humanity, not just theirs, is at stake. If even a few of us pick up the phone, we can help make a difference.

Thank you again for the great privilege you have given me by placing me at this table. I will always cherish this award and the memory of this day.

Myrna Raeder is a Professor at the University of Southwestern University School of Law. She served NAWL as President for two terms, was a past chairperson of the ABA Section of Criminal Justice and spent nearly 10 years coordinating the "Mom's" Support Group for Women Lawyers of Los Angeles. Ms. Raeder is a nationally recognized expert on gender disparities in sentencing guidelines, particularly focusing on issues concerning incarcerated mothers.

# continued from page 7

Mary Alice represented the prolife organization. She was asked whether she thought people were deceived when they looked under "Abortion Clinics" and were given a pro-life service. The response was typical Mary Alice. "Do you think that persons who call a cancer clinic want instructions on how to get cancer?" The local newspapers picked up on it and, once again, Mary Alice was in the headlines as she had been defending John Coyle.

Ten years ago, I saw a notice in the newspaper that Sara Duffy had passed away. Then, a year or so later, I was on an elevator in the One East Penn Square Building after a pre-trial conference. As the elevator doors opened at the lobby, silhouetted in the doorway was a large-framed woman wearing a tan raincoat and carrying an oversized briefcase. "Mary Alice," I said, "how are you?" She stared straight ahead, looking right through me, and said, "Lousy!" As we walked across the small lobby, the lawyer who had been with me at the pretrial conference turned and said, "Who—or what—was that?" "That, my friend, was Mary Alice Duffy," I replied. There will never be another like her.

Mary Alice Duffy passed away on March 18, 2002.

Gerard St. John is a retired partner of Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis, LLP. His concentration is in general civil litigation.

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# Congratulations, Lizabeth Moody!

# by Selma Moidel Smith

A first-time event deserves special notice. This is especially true when it concerns a member of NAWL.

Lizabeth A. Moody is the new Chair-Elect of the ABA Senior Lawyers Division, and as such, she achieves the distinction

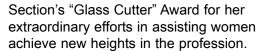
> of being the first woman to reach this office. She will automatically take office as Chair in August 2003.

Highlights of her career include her current position as Dean Emeritus and Distinguished University Professor at Stetson University College of Law in Florida. She served as Dean from 1994 to 1999.

Her career spans many areas of the law: in practice, as a partner in the Cleveland law firm of Metzenbaum.

Gaines & Stern; as the first woman to be elected president of the Cleveland Bar Association; as the recipient of the Ohio State Bar Medal, the association's highest award for "unusually meritorious service to the profession, the community and humanity."

For the ABA, she was chair of the Drafting Committee of the Model Nonprofit Corporation Act, and was the ABA advisor to the Uniform Unincorporated Nonprofit Association Act. She was a member of the House of Delegates from the Section of Business Law and, of special interest to NAWL members, in 1997 she received that



In Florida, she is a member of the Supreme Court's Commission on Professionalism.

Many women lawyers have received recognition from their peers. Recognition has come to Lizabeth Moody as well from her husband, Alan Buchmann, as seen in the article that follows. He presents her story in a thoughtful retrospective on the status of women in the law. (It was written at my request and first appeared in *Experience*, the magazine of the ABA Senior Lawyers Division, under the title, "Ivy Walls, Glass Ceilings," Fall 2001, 12:1. It appears here with minor revisions.)



Lizabeth Moody

# Ivy Walls, Glass Ceilings by Alan Buchmann

A recent *New York Times* article announced, with what seemed to be a tone of mild shock, that "women are close to being [a] majority of all law students." While the *Times* reported this news—which could have come as no surprise to anyone familiar with legal education today or who has visited a law school campus lately—on the key right-hand side of its front page, it did so quietly.

The *Times* went on to point out that, although the 50-50 statistic means that the law school student population is now divided more or less evenly as to gender, its readers should not jump to the conclusion that this fine balance extends throughout the profession. Indeed, it does not. Judges, law school deans and pro-

fessors, counsels general of Fortune 500 companies, and managing or even ordinary partners in major law firms are not evenly divided with respect to gender. Despite the fact that two women were recently American Bar Association presidents, over time they are way behind in numbers.

There has, of course, been considerable improvement in all of these categories in recent years, but even so one must read the statistics carefully. For example, a recent *ABA Journal* reported that the number of women law school deans has almost doubled since the 1980s, which sounds pretty good. But it does not take much to find that "almost double" means an increase from 12 to 20 out of more than 180.

The Times concluded that women in our profession have a long way to go to achieve numerical parity at all levels, a proposition amply confirmed by the letters to the editor that ensued. The series of articles in the Journal had, naturally, reached the same conclusion. Both suggest that increased female attendance at law schools opened up numerous, nonlegal opportunities for women, in business and politics for example, and both warned against undue optimism. And of course, there is a long way to go before we reach that happy stage where the profession has achieved—not really equality—but a climate where gender simply does not come up as a topic when we are talking about law school admissions or partnerships, and where these sorts of body counts are neither necessary nor interesting.

The real danger to achieving this ideal is that, with apparent and immediate equality in numbers, modern law students may neither see nor understand the need to forge ahead to extend that equality upward through the various levels and branches of the profession. They may not even be very aware of these differences at other places. They may not, surrounded with a group of colleagues evenly divided as to gender, realize that there is still a need for an effort on the part of

women to shoulder aside the lingering feeling on the part of some judges that the women may not really understand the "man talk" in criminal court or, even more unlikely, play with the big boys in an M&A situation.

Perhaps articles such as that in the *Times* help to alert us to this continuing problem: that the ease with which women enter law schools today and play a major role in classrooms and law school activities will blunt the drive, so to speak, with which some of their predecessors got us to this point.

This was really not so long ago, although it may seem like ancient history to those who have come after us. We are, however, not talking about what we have read in books, but of what has gone on in our own professional lifetimes. Women were certainly not 50 percent of my class at Yale 45 or so years ago, or of the class before, or the class coming after. They were about 5 percent, six or seven or eight out of about 160. They could not fade into the back rows of the classroom even if they chose, and though there was a subtle difference between never being called on and always being summoned to perform, neither was particularly desirable. They stood out. They had to be good.

I am not at all convinced that every female law student in those days necessarily saw herself as a crusading representative for her entire gender. There was surely enough personal involvement and exposure to make achievement important for any student, female or male. However, when one of a 50-50 population split drops the ball in class, an entire gender has not been let down as much as when one of a 5-95 minority does, and the boys go out shaking their heads in contented sympathy.

The current concern is that women form a disproportionately small part of the number of law school deans or managing partners. When we graduated from law school, the problem was a lot more basic. The job market was very tough indeed. Oddly, my wife sent me to interview with

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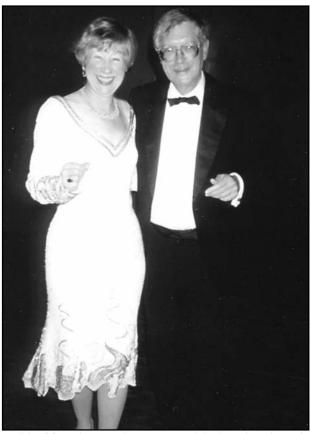
the firm where I spent 35 years because she was impressed when she was invited to their hometown for a summer clerkship interview as the firm's first such invitee, even though it eventually decided it was not yet ready to hire a woman. After all, where would she eat lunch? Most of the men ate at men-only clubs. While the firm did have a female member of the bar on the premises at the time, the librarian, I do not recall how long it was before we actually hired a woman as a lawyer and, of course, it was years before there was a woman partner. Then, showing that some things never change, we had a crisis over whether she could go up the front steps to the Cleveland Union Club to the monthly firm meeting or had to go through the back to the ladies' entrance. Certainly, it was hard for her to join her partners for a post-meeting stirrup cup in the Men's Grille.

It was not at all easy for women to find any satisfactory legal employment in those days. A barrier, and one that persists today, was hostility from other women in clerical or less responsible positions, who resented reporting to a woman. My wife, who had worked as a litigator during my senior year in New Haven, was offered a position by one firm to practice in an area in which she eventually became one of the state's, and later the country's, leading experts—but with the proviso that they would not put her name on the door or their letterhead.

Eventually, she did get a job in Cleveland as a lawyer with, not coincidentally, an older woman who had really been on the cutting edge a generation earlier and by that time ran the small firm founded by her father. After several moves, my wife became the first woman partner in a major local law firm, and her partners eventually included a man who became a U.S. Senator and another who became a federal Court of Appeals judge. She became the first woman president of the local bar association, with 5000 or so members. Even there, however, she first had to endure, and lose, the first election for the bar association board of trustees that had been contested within memory. She held state and federal appointments,

served as interim dean of Cleveland State Law School, and received the Ohio State Bar Association medal (the association's highest award) and, more recently, the Glass Cutter Award presented by the ABA Section of Business Law, all before moving to Florida to become dean of the oldest law school in that state.

My wife was not the only woman from the Yale Law School of that era who succeeded in the profession. There were, of



Liz Moody on the town with her husband and author Alan Buchmann.

course, not very many of them at that time, but I can think of a member of the Cabinet, a state attorney general, lawyers nationally and indeed internationally who became recognized as experts in their fields, academics who led breakthroughs in American and international law, and at least one general counsel of a major corporation. There was always a kind of spotlight on these women, partly self-generated, reflecting an obligation to be out

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# **Balancing Relationships**

# by Susan Ann Koenig

Even though our lives are full and rich with our careers, communities, families and interests; we often ask ourselves whether we are giving enough time to the important relationships in our lives. We sometimes experience frustration at the inability to meet the expectations of others, or at our own failure to treat the people we love as though they are a priority in our lives.

Since September 11, 2001, each of us has reflected anew on the preciousness of our co-workers, friends and families. As you begin a new year, examine how your thoughts are impacting your feelings about your roles in relationships and whether your actions are consistent with your true intentions.

# Examining Our Thoughts About Our Roles

"I feel so guilty" is a phrase women attorneys often speak when they feel as though they have not lived up to a certain standard of fulfilling their roles as daughters, sisters, mothers and friends. We must live in accordance with our own values about what it means to be a good life partner or daughter-in-law, for example, so it is useful to question whether we are applying our own values — or those of someone else.

To help gain clarity, you could ask yourself these questions about each of the relationship roles you have:

- 1. Where did I acquire my beliefs or standards about fulfilling this role?
- 2. Whose voices do I hear tell me how I should be fulfilling this role?
- 3. How does society say I should be fulfilling this role?
- 4. How much time do I spend trying to achieve someone else's idea of how I

should fulfill this role, as contrasted to my own beliefs?

- 5. How often do I worry about what other people will think of me if I do not live up to their expectations of how I should fulfill this role?
- 6. How much energy do I spend feeling bad about how I am fulfilling this role?
- 7. What is really important to me about fulfilling this role?
- 8. What bothers me most when I think about how I have been fulfilling this role up until now?
- 9. What is one small action that I could take to authentically fulfill my intention as it relates to this role? By when am I willing to take this action?

By asking yourself these questions, you may become aware of how much of your energy is spent thinking about the values of others rather than fulfilling your own.

# Shifting From Judgment to Gratitude

When it comes to the relationships we care about, it is easy for us to feel loving thoughts and to want to take action to demonstrate our feelings. But what about those other relationships?

You know the relationships I'm talking about:

The opposing counsel who makes personal attacks.

The family member who has never accepted you.

The co-worker who is a constant source of frustration.

The friend who exhausts you every time you spend time with her.

The client who can never be satisfied.

Living with these relationships, in a way that does not leave us full of negative self-judgment or holding on to our anger and resentments, requires some new ways of thinking.

Every litigator has had the experience of being before a judge who decided the outcome of a case prior to hearing the evidence. Once the opinion is formed in the judge's mind, the tendency is to look only for the facts which support the judgment which has already been formed.

This behavior is typical of most humans. We form first impressions of others, based upon our perceptions or interactions with them. For example: "She's really controlling." "He's never on time." "They are simply uncooperative." "He's a deadbeat."

Once we have this first impression, we gather evidence to support it. At every opportunity, we track every fact which we think further demonstrates the judgment we have formed. "There she goes again, having to have it her way." "He's late again." "Of course they are refusing to produce the documents." "He'll never pay."

Not only do we gather evidence to support our opinion, but we filter out important evidence to the contrary. We ignore any facts which tend to contradict the opinion we have formed about the other.

Take a moment to reconsider some of the persons in your life with whom you have relationships that are less than fulfilling. Ask yourself some of these questions:

What qualities does this person have that I appreciate?

What lessons can I learn from being in this relationship?

Why am I willing to be in this relationship?

Am I willing to forgive this person?

Am I willing to stop gathering evidence?

Am I willing to end my criticism and judgment of them?

We never feel good after we have gossiped or spoken badly about another. It

not only costs the person listening to us and the person judged, but it also reduces our own personal energy.

Try going a full week making a conscious effort to be generous when evaluating the people in your life you don't usually give the benefit of the doubt. Doing so will give you an opportunity to observe how often our negative thoughts come to mind, and how questioning them may open new opportunities for understanding how being different does not mean being worse or being wrong.

# **Considering Letting Go**

Sometimes the time comes for us to move on from a relationship, or demand a change in a relationship.

If you find that you are investing more time and energy into a relationship than you want to invest, consider whether it is time to be truthful to yourself and that person about the need for a change in the relationship.

As we grow and our lives change, we see that the time that some people have in our lives is due for a shift. If you have been spending time with the same friend every Tuesday night for the last 5 years, but are no longer sure why, you may want to look more closely at the relationship. Consider:

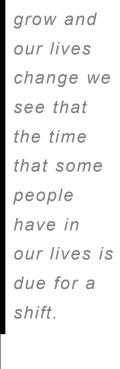
Do I need to put more into the relationship to find more fulfillment in it?

Am I clear that this is someone with whom I want this type of relationship?

Am I willing to be truthful to myself and the other person about a needed change?

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Susan Ann Koenig is an attorney in Omaha, Nebraska where she practices family law, estate planning, and gay and lesbian rights. She teaches Women and the Law at Creighton University School of Law. Susan writes and lectures on spirituality and the law.



As we



The young women law students of today must not get the idea that, because they are there in the classroom, the war has been won.

# Continued from page 20

there and doing, a responsibility to accomplish new things so that it would become easier for others to do them.

On this, I speak of things I know. This sort of achievement is, on occasion, recognized even by husbands. It should not be thought for a moment, however, that awards, no matter how grand, tell the whole story. There have been setbacks along the way, as might be expected, but there have been laurels aplenty. The young women law students of today, even surrounded by all the other young women in the finely divided, 50-50 classroom, must not get the idea that, because they are there in that classroom, the war has been won.

It is not enough to double the number of women law school deans to something like nine or ten percent of the total. In this there is no safety in numbers. Despite the gains that have been made, we are not so far from the days when there were no legal jobs for women—or, when available, they were anonymous, with no name on the door—that we can rest content with the current situation, happy as it appears when we look around the classroom. The task is no different than it was when my wife and I were in law school; there are

just more helping to accomplish it, and if the students of today have the stamina of those of our generation, they will.

Alan Buchmann is former Chair of the ABA Section of Public Utility Law, and is section delegate in the House of Delegates. He practiced law for 35 years in Cleveland before moving to Florida, where he is now involved in bar association activities. He is also a member of the Experience magazine editorial board of the ABA Senior Lawyers Division.

Selma Moidel Smith is the NAWL liaison to the ABA Senior Lawyers Division, where she is a Council member and immediate past chair of the Experience magazine editorial board. She is the author of NAWL's Centennial History (1999), and has also received NAWL's Lifetime of Service Award. She is a past president of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles.

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What would it feel like if my relationship with this person changed?

What action am I willing to take to be in integrity with this relationship?

A closer look at each of our relationships can help us to get clear on the choices we make about them.

# **Setting Goals**

Relationships can require a great deal of energy. Those which give our lives meaning and fulfillment are the ones in which we most want to invest. These may not be the easiest relationships, to which anyone who has parented teenagers can attest, but they are the most precious ones.

If you have a relationship with a loved one which needs some attention, consider setting a goal to fulfill your intention. Possibilities include:

Writing a note of apology this week

Call to schedule a lunch in the next month

Visit a friend by a certain date

Plan a trip together in the next 6 months

Send a gift for an upcoming holiday or birthday

Take a look at the relationships in your life, and plan to have a year full of enjoyment in each of them.

# Do No Harm

# Every Patient Deserves Freedom of Choice in Reproductive Matters

by Jennifer Pizer

"First, do no harm." This fundamental command has guided physicians since Hippocrates. A case pending before the 4th District Court of Appeal gives the command new meaning. Benitez v. North Coast Women's Care Medical Group, D040094 (Cal. App. May 1, 2002).

Lupita Benitez is a 30-year-old San Diego woman who always had looked forward to being a mother. She and her partner of 11 years planned carefully to be ready emotionally and financially to start their family. But Benitez suffers from polycystic ovarian syndrome. Small cysts in her ovaries cause her egg cells to be fragile. Although the eggs can travel to her uterus, they don't survive long. The sperm must be right there to allow fertilization. For Benitez, like many women with this condition, vaginal insemination did not cause pregnancy. She required intrauterine insemination, which must be done by a physician.

Except in one respect, Benitez and her partner are just like other couples who can overcome fertility and experience the joys of parenthood through modern medicine. But they encountered an obstacle. The physicians at North Coast Women's Care Medical Group, the only obstetrics-gynecology provider offered by Benitez's health plan, refused to perform intrauterine insemination for her.

Although they had accepted payment and treated her in various ways for nearly a year and did not dispute that her plan authorizes the procedure, they refused to perform it because of their personal opinions about her sexual orientation. Benitez is a lesbian, and her physicians claim

that their religious beliefs permit them to perform insemination only for heterosexual married women.

The shock and humiliation of being shunned by her own doctors because of who she is have left Benitez emotionally scarred and vulnerable. Although she ultimately obtained treatment elsewhere, and now is the blissfully sleep-deprived mother of an adorable 7-month-old, no other "in network" doctors were available to her. Consequently, in addition to inflicting emotional harm by meting out religious judgment instead of medical care, North Coast cost Benitez thousands of dollars.

For lawyers, at least, the blatancy of this discrimination should be surprising. For two generations, it has been established that California's Unruh Civil Rights Act forbids discrimination in the provision of medical services. Washington v. Blampin, 226 Cal. App. 2d 604 (1964). For even longer, it also has been clear that "business establishments" may not turn people away based on their sexual orientation. Stoumen v. Reilly, 37 Cal.2d 713 (1951) (applying the Unruh Act's predecessor): see also Curran v. Mount Diablo Council of the Boy Scouts, 17 Cal.4th 670 (1998) (discussing Unruh's ban on sexual orientation discrimination but finding that the Boy Scouts are not a "business establishment").

Benitez's physicians assert two defenses against her civil rights claim: They contend that it is preempted by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, the federal law regulating employee benefit plans. They also claim a right of religious freedom to refuse to treat patients who are not heterosexual. The trial

The fact that a health plan pays the bills does not nullilfy rules forbidding physicians to grant or withhold treatment based on medically irrelevant aspects of the patient's identity such as race. national origin or sexual orientation.

court accepted the first argument and dismissed Benitez's complaint. Both contentions raise issues transcending Benitez's case.

Given the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ERISA decisions, the Court of Appeal should reject North Coast's pre-emption defense readily. The federal law generally does not displace state laws regulating physicians' duties to patients. Pegram v. Herdrich, 530 U.S. 221 (2000) (noting that malpractice rules are not preempted); Dishman v. UNUM Life Ins. Co., 269 F.3d 974 (9th Cir. 2001) (holding intentional tort claim not preempted and explaining that "the objective of Congress. . . was not to provide . . .blanket immunity from garden variety torts which only peripherally impact daily plan administration").

The fact that a health plan pays the bills does not nullify rules forbidding physicians to grant or withhold treatment based on medically irrelevant aspects of the patient's identity such as race, national origin or sexual orientation.

Benitez's doctors do not even cite the health plan to excuse their patient dumping. They acknowledge that she was entitled to the insemination, and they say they would have done it for her had she been heterosexual and married. Because the contents of the plan are so incidental to her claims, the appellate court should reverse the demurrer and reinstate Benitez's case.

The doctors' religious freedom objection likewise should fail. First, the Unruh Act contains no exemption for those who profess religious motivation. Unlike the Fair Employment and Housing Act, the Unruh Act doesn't have an exemption for religious institutions.

But even if it did, North Coast is secular and its staff is trained in medicine, not scripture. As a constitutional matter, California courts have held, consistently with federal law, that neutral laws of general applicability not targeting religion do not burden religious exercise impermissi-

bly. Brunson v. Dep't of Motor Vehicles, 72 Cal.App.4th 1251 (1999); accord Employment Division v. Smith, 494 U.S. 872 (1990); see also 12 Cal.4th 1143 (1996) (religiously motivated landlord must comply with fair housing laws).

California does allow doctors to decline to perform abortions. Health and Safety Code Section 123420. But this statutory "right of conscience" pertains to abortion only and confers no broad ability to withhold other medically warranted treatments on religious grounds. Moreover, the right to refuse to provide abortion does not allow physicians to do so or not based on medically irrelevant characteristics of the patient. Plainly, Section 123420 does not shelter from the Unruh Act a eugenics proponent who performs abortions for women of particular races while refusing it to others.

Sadly, invocation of religion to justify discrimination is not novel. In past generations, some doctors probably would have objected to helping a white woman become pregnant by a non-white husband or sperm donor. Religious tenets certainly were cited to support similar objections.

As a Virginia court stated in upholding a criminal law against interracial marriage, "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. . .The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend [them] to mix." Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1 (1967) (quoting the trial court).

Yet religion was no shield for discrimination after the U.S. Supreme Court in *Loving* pointed out the equality and due process protections against official meddling with deeply personal matters such as with whom one falls in love and wishes to create a family. In sum, neither constitutional nor statutory protection of religion permits California physicians to withhold appropriate care based on a patient's race, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation.

Lambda Legal, the National

Health Law Program and the California Women's Law Center are supporting Benitez because of the prevalence of the problem that her case represents. There is still a widespread lack of understanding that the desire to create family can be just as strong among gay people as among heterosexuals.

In addition, public health studies increasingly document that sexual orientation bias pervades the nation's health care system. See, e.g. Kate O'Hanlan, "Lesbian Health and Homophobia: Perspectives for the Treating Obstetrician/Gynecologist," Curr. Probl. Obstet. Gynecol. Fertil.

18:93-136 (1995).

Two years ago, the U.S. Health Resources Services Administration funded an assessment of these studies. The resulting report, "Healthy People 2010: Companion Document for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Health," confirms the pervasive nature of this bias and its adverse public health consequences.

Experiencing discrimination at the hands of a caregiver in whom a patient has placed trust inflicts significant dignitary injury, which in turn deters future medical visits and honest communication. As a result, chronic conditions like high blood

pressure and the early stages of illnesses like cancer go undetected until treatment has become more difficult and expensive. See Companion Document; see also lan Meyer, "Why Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Public Health?" Am. J. Pub. Hlth., Vol. 91, NO. 6 (June 2001).

The Companion Document complements "Healthy People 2010," the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' blueprint for this decade's public health priorities, which made it a national priority to reduce health disparities related to sexual orientation.

In California, progress towards this goal will accelerate, and health outcomes will improve. as physicians realize that their duties under our state's civil rights laws are merely logical outgrowths of their Hippocratic Oath. For all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Californians, let us hope that the 4th District underscores forcefully the long-standing right of patients to seek medical care without fear of invidious discrimination. And where medical science offers the prospect of motherhood to women like Benitez, that patient's right includes a freedom of reproductive choices irrespective of marital status and sexual orientation.

Jennifer C. Pizer is Senior Staff Attorney with Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, where she litigates civil rights cases on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, with particular focus on the needs of lesbian and gay parents and on ending discrimination in employment, health care and marriage. Pizer is an adjunct professor at USC Law School and Loyola Law School. She is co-counsel with Lisa Simonetti and Stroock & Stroock & Lavan for amici curiae in support of appellant in Benitez.



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