



## Centennial Section

# Talented writer gives NAWL more than words

BY PEGGY L. GOLDEN

Selma Moidel Smith not only writes about history—she makes it. A woman of many talents, her most recent accomplishment is her appointment as the first woman to chair the Editorial Board of *Experience* magazine, the publication of the ABA Senior Lawyers Division.

You will not only find her in the first (1977) and other editions of *Who's Who in American Law*, but also the *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers* (1987), the first (1958) and other editions of *Who's Who of American Women*, the *Royal Blue Book* (London, 1969), and other biographical references.

She is as fluent in Spanish as she is at the keyboard of a piano. Her writing skills are not limited to legal briefs or historical research, but include published poetry and over 100 piano and instrumental pieces.

Her "Espressivo—Four Piano Pieces" received orchestral premiere in 1986 and was performed at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in 1989.

Ms. Smith is legendary in Los Angeles. At the 1998 installation and awards dinner of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA), she was awarded the first honorary life membership by the association. She has been a member of WLALA for more than 55 years, serving two terms as president (1947, 1948) of the Southern California Women Lawyers and leading the movement to unify SCWL with the

Women Lawyers Club in 1964, which created WLALA.

She was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1943, practicing law with her brothers at Moidel, Moidel & Smith. She

continued to practice law for nearly 45 years before retiring.

Now a Special Member of NAWL, she began chairing committees in 1946 and remained actively involved through 1968. In 1996 she agreed to serve as NAWL liaison to the ABA Senior Lawyers Division, as chair of the Board of Elections for 1997 and 1998, and as a member



Selma Moidel Smith

of the Centennial Committee, authoring the two-part article on NAWL's history which first appeared in *Experience* and is reprinted in this issue of *Women Lawyers Journal* as a centennial tribute and special supplement.

But WLALA, NAWL and the ABA Senior Lawyers Division are not the only beneficiaries of her prodigious talents. She has been involved in numerous civic, bar and arts organizations. For instance, in 1953 Ms. Smith became a charter member of the National Board of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania (now the Medical College of Pennsylvania), founded in 1850 to enable women to train as physicians. During 1980-82 she served as president of that board and in 1998 was honored for 45 years of service.

Selma Moidel Smith will again be honored for her service, this time in Atlanta as part of NAWL's centennial celebration, when NAWL President Susan Fox Gillis presents her with the association's Lifetime of Service Award.

*Peggy L. Golden has been executive director of NAWL from July 1994 to August 1999.*

A Special Tribute Section  
for the

# National Association of Women Lawyers



## Centennial Anniversary

1899-1999

Researched and written by Selma Moidel Smith



## THE CENTENNIAL OF THE NATIONAL



## THE FIRST

An anniversary year will soon commence. The event to be celebrated is the 1899 founding of the first nationwide association of women lawyers in the United States.

In this centennial age, when the presence of women in the law has become a daily reality, let us revisit a time when women lawyers were an innovation. Let us look back to the formative decades of the National Association of Women Lawyers, and to a few highlights of those years.

### Foundations

The entrance of American women into the formal practice of law began in 1869 with the admission of Arabella Babb Mansfield to the Iowa bar. It was accomplished by a liberal Justice's inclusion of women in the meaning of "white male

person"—by novel application of a law which stated that masculine words may include females. The barrier of race was broken in 1872 by Charlotte E. Ray, a graduate of Howard University, who became the first African American woman lawyer when she passed the District of Columbia bar. In 1879, Belva A. Lockwood became the first woman admitted to the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court when she persuaded Congress to open the federal courts to women lawyers, and later she was the first to argue a case before this Court.

By 1899, a group of 18 women lawyers in New York City gathered to form The Women Lawyers' Club. Twelve years later, "Club" gave way to "Association," and in 1923, a growing nationwide membership was reflected by the prefix,

By Selma Moidel Smith

# ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS



Photographs courtesy of the National Association of Women Lawyers

◀ NAWL's first national convention in 1923 with Chief Justice Taft in center.

## 50 YEARS

"National." The organization quickly became the home—and the voice—of women in the law. Its first national convention was held August 28–29, 1923, in Minneapolis, with Chief Justice William Howard Taft attending.

The issues of importance to NAWL were those affecting women in general, and women lawyers in particular. Public expression of those concerns began in 1911 with the founding of the *Women Lawyers' Journal*, a magazine that continues to appear (minus the apostrophe) each quarter, and may be found in most law and university libraries. Recurring topics in the early decades were the legal status of women, laws of marriage and divorce, property rights of married women, and proposed legislation affecting women, as well as the disabilities or

opportunities encountered by women lawyers. Regular features ranged from news of inventions patented by women to surveys of the situation of women lawyers in Europe and Latin America.

### Suffrage and Service

The first major project undertaken by NAWL was support for women's suffrage. As early as 1912, Olive Stott Gabriel, an active three-term president, argued for women's voting rights before audiences across the country. When the 19th Amendment was passed by Congress in 1919, NAWL members were mobilized to work for ratification by the states. The National American Woman Suffrage Association then hosted a special conference for women lawyers in February 1920 with sessions on women's issues of

Smith is the NAWL liaison to the Senior Lawyers Division.



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the day, including addresses by reformer Jane Addams and suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, who went on to found the National League of Women Voters in the same year.

The success of the suffrage movement was hastened by the increased visibility of capable women during World War I. Women lawyers took their place among this group. In New York, war work for women lawyers included service with male lawyers on the Exemption Boards, and in Massachusetts, women lawyers were added to the Legal Advisory Boards. For the first meeting of the Boston Preparedness Committee, the rules of the Harvard Club were suspended to permit attendance by women.

**Jurors and Judges**

NAWL members recognized that equality of justice for women depended on the presence of women among those sitting in judgment. An early example cited by the *Journal* was the panel of woman physician judges of the court for the insane at the Chicago detention hospital, which, at its first sitting in 1914, saved two women from an attempt by their husbands to incarcerate them in order to be rid of them.



**Olive Stott Gabriel**

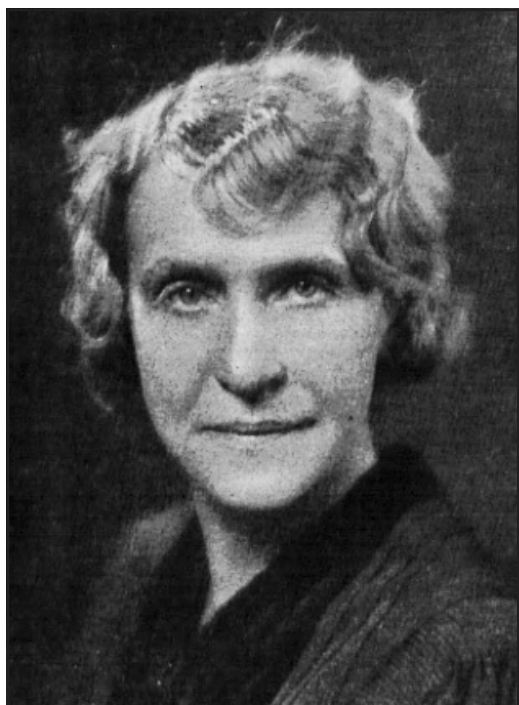
A constant goal of NAWL members, commencing before World War I and extending past World War II, was to obtain for women the right to serve on juries. In 1918, NAWL prepared a bill on jury duty for the New York legislature, and worked for its passage until 1937. A 1939 survey by NAWL showed that 12 states required women to serve on juries, and that 11 others made such service optional. As late as 1947, it remained for NAWL to declare that one of its prime objectives was to obtain jury service for women in the 14 states that still barred them, and within a few years the goal was reached.

Companion to the drive for women jurors was the need for women judges. When NAWL's vice president for California, Georgia P. Bullock, was appointed the first woman Police Judge in Los Angeles in 1924, she received letters threatening her life if she attempted to serve. Yet serve she did, and soon she was elevated to the Municipal Court, and thereafter to the Superior Court. The public accepted the idea of a woman judge, and in 1931 Los Angeles had the nation's first woman judge elected directly by the people without political appointment to any office. She was Ida May Adams, president of NAWL's Southern California Council, and she had a long and honored career on the Municipal bench.

NAWL member Florence E. Allen of Ohio became the nation's first woman federal judge and highest ranking woman jurist when President Roosevelt appointed her to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in 1934, and she remained in this position until retiring in 1959. A survey by NAWL in 1947 found a total of 53 women judges in federal, state, and local courts.

**Role Models**

In its early decades, the *Women Lawyers' Journal* carried as a regular feature the stories of the "first woman lawyer" of each state. One such was NAWL member Clara Shortridge Foltz of California, who in 1878 became the first woman lawyer on the Pacific Coast. She was self-taught and, wishing a formal education, applied to the Hastings College of Law at the state university. She was turned away with the now famous remark, "... it's a



**Judge Ida May Adams**

well known fact that the rustling of a woman's skirts distracts the minds of male students." She persevered and was admitted by court order.

In her career of more than 50 years, she was the author of the state's parole law, and the law providing for public defenders. She caused enactment of laws that permitted married women to serve as executors of estates, banned the use of iron cages for transport of prisoners to court, required the separation of juvenile and adult prisoners in jails, and also required seats for shop girls working behind counters.

Presidents of NAWL have included the accomplished practitioners of their time. An example is Burnita Shelton Matthews of Mississippi, president in 1934-35. She earned master's degrees in law and patent law at National University Law School in Washington, D.C., and was admitted to the bar there in 1920. In 1949, she became the nation's second woman federal judge when President Truman appointed her to the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia.

Judge Matthews practiced law for 20 years, and taught at the Washington College of Law, founded in 1896 by Ellen Spencer Mussey specifically to enable women to earn a law degree. She held

prominent positions in women's and legal organizations. She is recognized as the author of laws that permitted women to serve as jurors in the District of Columbia, eliminated the preference for males in inheritance in Arkansas and New York, gave equal pay for equal work to women teachers in New Jersey, allowed married women in South Carolina to sue and be sued in their own names, and for amendments to the Cable Act, which extended women's citizenship rights.

#### **Social Legislation**

NAWL's agenda for social legislation reflected its times. In its first four decades, NAWL worked consistently for an end to child labor. Concurrently it supported the enactment of minimum wage laws. From its earliest years, NAWL participated in work to expand the Uniform Laws, particularly in areas of personal status, children's welfare, and domestic relations.

Of special relevance to NAWL members were legislative issues pertaining to working women. One fight was against so-called protective laws, which limited women's working hours, and effectively barred entire industries to women workers. A success in this arena was the

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**Judge Georgia Bullock**



defeat in 1927, by a coalition of business and professional women, of a proposed California law that would have excluded women from all occupations other than domestic service if overtime work might be required. A typical—but landmark—accomplishment was the passage in 1943 of a bill to remove the legal disabilities of married women in Florida. It was the result of eight years of statewide speaking and lobbying by Ethel Ernest Murrell, NAWL's vice president for Florida, who gained the support of the Florida Bar Association in her campaign.

During the Great Depression, the natural effect of economic measures that treated women differently from men was that women would benefit least or would be the first to suffer. The federal Wages and Hours Act of 1938 was, therefore, a signal achievement for women. As originally proposed, it would have provided lower minimum wages for women than for men. Concerted action by NAWL and other national women's organizations resulted in the elimination of this provision. A second example of successful legislative work was defeat of a 1939 California bill known as the "Spouse Bill." It would have prevented employment of married women in public offices or as teachers if the joint income of hus-



Judge Florence E. Allen



Laura Miller Derry

band and wife exceeded \$250 per month. It too was defeated by joint action of business and professional women's groups.

### Form and Substance

What's in a name? If the rose be a woman lawyer, there may be more than the reminder of a pleasant scent. There may also be "a property interest and sufficient good will attached to it" that she will not willingly change it. So it was with NAWL member Antonia E. Rago of Chicago, who in 1944 successfully appealed an order that required her to register to vote only in her married name. An earlier attempt by Ruth Hale, wife of columnist Heywood Broun, to obtain a passport in her own name was reported by the *Journal* in 1921, but it was Judge Burnita Matthews who later secured the State Department ruling that a married woman who had not changed her name need not do so to obtain a passport.

And what of attire? An issue that little disturbed male lawyers was a continuing quandary for the women. In 1907, The Women Lawyers' Club endorsed the wearing of robes in court. The idea did not spread, but the wearing of "outrageous" hats did. Four years later, Marion Weston Cottle, the president from 1911 to 1922, advised a "dignified street costume," with hat removed before addressing the judge. In 1944, NAWL member Helen Carlross of Washington, D.C., related that the Supreme Court requires either a dark suit with long sleeves or a coat suit. She added that, "of course, women do not wear their hats...I should not have supposed that women wore hats in any court, but apparently there are places where they do."

### Into the Mainstream

In 1918 the first two women lawyers were admitted to the American Bar Association. In 1939, NAWL announced that 37 women had been appointed to 54 important positions in the ABA, many of the women being NAWL members.

Formal recognition of NAWL and women lawyers by the ABA was accomplished by NAWL president Marguerite Rawalt in 1943, when NAWL became the tenth national legal organization to be an Affiliated Organization of the ABA. This entitled NAWL to a seat in the ABA



Speakers at luncheon honoring United Nations Women Representatives. Left to Right: Fryderyka Kalinowska of Poland, Way Sung-New of China, Judge Marion J. Harron of Washington, D.C., Dr. Elisabeth Scheltema of The Netherlands, Present Adele I. Springer of New York, Judge Dorothy Kenyon of New York and guest, Louise Yim of Korea.

House of Delegates. Marguerite Rawalt, herself a distinguished lawyer and past president of the Federal Bar Association, was selected as the first NAWL delegate. The event in Chicago's convention center on March 29, 1943, was headlined by the *American Bar Journal*, "First Woman Delegate is Seated in the House." The *Women Lawyers' Journal* described with pride how the new delegate was escorted to the platform by ABA president George Morris and other high officials. Judge Florence E. Allen was elected to serve as NAWL's second delegate in 1944.

#### Wartime Service

As is well known, World War II created an unprecedented demand for the talents of working women, including women lawyers. The services of women lawyers were needed in volunteer work, government employment, and in the military.

The first call for women lawyers was for their work in servicemen's legal aid. The legal aid societies, which in peacetime had served the indigent, expanded to serve the millions of men in uniform,

as well as their families, who could not afford legal services. NAWL member Ruth Lewinson of New York, also a National Director of American Women's Voluntary Services, established Legal Advice Bureaus throughout the country, which were staffed by women lawyers. She reported at the end of 1942 that the New York City bureau had already handled nearly 500 cases. In these and other such agencies, the typical problems were marital status, citizenship, allotment pay, taxes, preparation of wills for servicemen, and the inability to pay rent or debt without a civilian income.

Other volunteer work, unrelated to the law, but in which many NAWL members took leadership positions, were disaster relief committees, first aid detachments, War Council speakers' bureaus, War Loan drives, and the Red Cross Service Corps. Members of the Queen's Bench, the women lawyers association of San Francisco, raised funds for seeing-eye dogs for blinded servicemen.

The rapid expansion of the government, coupled with the loss of male civil-



Marguerite Rawalt





ian lawyers, created a demand for women lawyers in government work. The office of Defense Transportation and the legal staff of the Treasury Department are two examples of government offices in which women lawyers pursued legal careers.

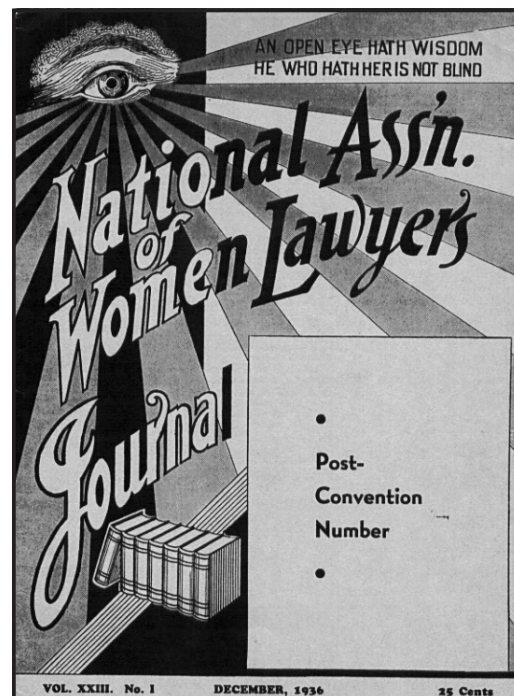
Finally—and most visibly—women had their first opportunity to serve in the military. With the creation in 1943 of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (later, the WACS), followed by the Navy WAVES and the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, women could serve in uniform. Women lawyers were considered especially suitable as officers. By the end of the war, approximately 150 NAWL members were in military service, and more than three quarters of them were officers, with ranks from lieutenant to major. Ten percent of the pilots in the Army's Civil Air Patrol were women, among them former NAWL vice president Mary Francis.

Aiding the WACS in recruiting and public affairs was their Civilian Advisory Committee. Among its leaders were NAWL members Reva Beck Bosone, the only woman judge in Utah, and Laura Miller Derry of Kentucky, president of NAWL in 1945-46. NAWL members served in WACS districts throughout the country.

#### Planning for Peace

In May 1944, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt called a White House conference of 13 national leaders of women, including NAWL president Daphne Robert, on the theme of women's post-war responsibility. The discussion centered on ways and means of having qualified women serve as U.S. representatives on national and international boards. This led to an expanded meeting in June, at which 75 women's organizations were represented, and at which NAWL member Lucy S. Howarth shared the speakers' platform with Congresswoman Margaret Chase Smith, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, and distinguished others. At NAWL, the meeting resulted in a campaign to propose qualified members for such appointments.

At the end of the war, NAWL was one of the organizations accredited by the State Department as an official observer at the new United Nations. This immediately gave NAWL members the opportunity to meet with women lawyers and others



from around the world, and to participate in meetings of National Observers at the State Department. In December 1946, the NAWL convention in New York City honored the women members of the U.N. General Assembly. Among them were women lawyers from Poland, China, and the Netherlands who spoke on the legal status of women in their countries.

NAWL's commitment to women in the post-war world was symbolized by the 1946 appointment of the chair of NAWL's Section on International Law, Judge Dorothy Kenyon of New York, as U.S. Delegate to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. NAWL's intention to build bridges of cooperation beyond the borders of the United States is also found in the action of NAWL president Adele I. Springer, who enrolled NAWL as a member of the new International Bar Association at its 1947 charter meeting in New York.

#### Fifty plus Fifty

NAWL celebrated its golden anniversary in 1949 with gala affairs at its annual meeting in St. Louis, and soon NAWL will complete its second half-century of service.

In the continuation of this centennial review, to be published in the Winter 1999 issue, we will turn our attention to the NAWL of today. ■



VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

FALL 1998

# EXPERIENCE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SENIOR LAWYERS DIVISION • AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION



**A Century  
of Achievement**  
NAWL's First 50 Years

The first half of the NAWL centennial history appeared as the cover story of the Fall 1998 issue of *Experience*, the magazine of the Senior Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association. On the cover (above) is a photo of the December 14, 1946 NAWL luncheon in New York City in tribute to the women representatives of the U.N. General Assembly. The second half appeared in the Winter 1999 issue of *Experience* and continues here.



## THE CENTENNIAL OF THE NATIONAL



**NAWL'S** earliest decades marked the entrance of women lawyers into the life of the organized legal profession. NAWL's second half-century has demonstrated the increasing role of women lawyers in the profession and society. Now let us review a few highlights of the association's recent decades.

### **NAWL and the World**

NAWL has been a constant participant in the international arena.

In 1950, NAWL member Agatha La Londe spoke before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on behalf of "women lawyers from all states of the Union" to convey NAWL's unanimous resolution urging adoption of the U.N. Genocide Convention. In 1989, the NAWL Assembly endorsed the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and in 1994, NAWL member Frances Scanlon told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "It is never too late to do the right thing . . ."

Mary H. Zimmerman, president in 1951-52, represented NAWL at the 1951 Inter-American Bar Association meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay, where she became a

Photographs courtesy of the National Association of Women Lawyers

**By Selma Moidel Smith**



# ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAWYERS



◀ July 10, 1957. The NAWL 58th annual banquet. NAWL President Neva B. Talley is second row, right.

## THE SECOND 50 YEARS

Council member. In 1952, she represented NAWL in the House of Deputies of the International Bar Association at their meeting in Madrid. She also represented NAWL in Istanbul at the 1952 meeting of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, of which she was U.S. vice-president. NAWL has continued to participate in these and other organizations.

Under the presidency of Helen Viney Porter, NAWL presented a program at the 1974 IBA meeting in Vancouver on economic and legal policies affecting women. In preparation for International Women's Year in 1975, the IBA Council passed a NAWL-sponsored resolution urging each country's bar to work to remove legal inequities based on sex.

Virginia S. Mueller, president in 1985-86, has been a continuing advocate for international human rights and an international liaison for NAWL.

As chair of the ABA

International Courts

Committee in the 1970s,

she secured ABA

endorsement of the  
Genocide and Racial  
Discrimination

Conventions. Working

for U.S. adoption of

CEDAW is one of her

current projects. She

chairs the International  
Committee of the ABA

Senior Lawyers Division.

Eva Herzer, chair of NAWL's

International Law Committee, has observed the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women since 1994, and in 1995 represented NAWL at the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

### Legal Status of Women

In 1935, NAWL was one of the first national organizations to endorse the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, first introduced in Congress in 1923. Passage of the ERA was high priority for NAWL in 1953 and again in 1959. In 1960, letters were sent to every senator urging passage. When Congress finally passed the amendment in 1972, the campaign for ratification by the states became NAWL's major project for the following decade.





Virginia Mueller

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Past president Marguerite Rawalt, appointed in 1961 by President Kennedy to the President's Commission on the Status of Women, spearheaded the campaign. In concert with other women's organizations, NAWL members lobbied their legislators. In 1974, the *Women Lawyers Journal* carried a comprehensive review of the need for the ERA written by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, then the first tenured woman law professor at Columbia University, and in 1993 the second woman to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court.

The failure of the ERA in 1982 was met by Rawalt's, "The ERA will rise again." It was also tempered by the success of NAWL's work for specific civil rights. An example is the goal of "equal pay for equal work" (prior to the current concept of "comparable worth"). As of 1953, only 13 states had Equal Pay laws. In the knowledge that the goal of an ERA would not soon be accomplished, NAWL promoted Equal Pay laws. NAWL worked with the National Committee for Equal Pay, and in 1963, Congress was persuaded to pass the "Equal Pay for Women" bill. When the bill became effective in 1964, NAWL attended the celebration given by President Johnson at the White House.



Katherine Henry

### **The Uniform Divorce Bill**

"The greatest project NAWL has ever undertaken" is the description given by committee chair Matilda Fenberg to NAWL's pioneering work to create a Uniform Divorce Bill. At the 1947 NAWL convention in Cleveland, it was voted to draft and promote a bill that would embody the ideal of no-fault divorce. A draft prepared by Fenberg, working with NAWL past presidents Helen M. Cirese and J. Helen Slough, was approved at the 1952 convention in Berkeley, Calif.

Although the National Conference of Commissioners of Uniform State Laws had attempted to produce such a bill since its founding in 1892, Fenberg was informed that the conference could receive bills or suggestions only from the ABA. Fenberg—who had been the first woman student at Yale Law School in 1919—then undertook a campaign to convince the ABA to create a Family Law Section. Three years later, in 1955, the Section was approved. Fenberg was appointed chair of the Subcommittee on Migratory Divorce. In 1960 the bill was introduced to the ABA, which sent it to the conference.

In 1965, the conference commenced the task of drafting, and in 1970 produced, the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act (amended in 1971 and 1973). By 1977, the divorce portions had been adopted by nine states. Following this, the momentum for uniformity waned, but the ideal of no-fault divorce became the guiding principle for reform of divorce laws in the majority of states.

### **A Year in the Life . . .**

What activities does the NAWL year include? The year 1965–66 was both a typical year and a year of special events.

In September 1965, the Washington World Conference on World Peace Through Law was attended by more than 3,000 judges and lawyers from 118 countries. This included a delegation of 17 NAWL members headed by the Hon. Mattie Belle Davis, president, and Mary Louise DeMarco McLeod, president-elect. NAWL's northeastern regional director, Mildred E. Bixby, and four other members served on committees.

In November, Judge Davis and other leading members of NAWL were among





**Dedication of Hulett memorial by the Women Lawyers of San Diego County commemorating Alta M. Hulett, the first woman to be admitted to law practice under an enabling statute, October 24, 1957.**

the 2000 attendees at the White House Conference held to observe U.N. International Cooperation Year. The Hon. Sarah T. Hughes, distinguished NAWL member from Texas, was prominent among those serving on committees.

The midyear meeting of NAWL was held in Chicago in February 1966, and regional meetings were held during the year in Seattle, Boston, and San Francisco. In August, the 67th annual meeting was held in Montreal. Each of these included panels and presentations on legal topics of concern to women lawyers.

During the year, Judge Davis—the only woman on the Metropolitan Court of Dade County—represented NAWL at conferences throughout the country, including those of the State Department on Foreign Policy and the National Commission on the Status of Women. In her own field of expertise, Davis was

elected to the Board of the National Safety Council and helped to create their now-famous Defensive Driving Courses. Among her many honors was the creation in 1987 of the Judge Mattie Belle Davis Award to be given annually to the Floridian who contributes most significantly to the advancement of women in the legal profession. In the same year, the Fellows of the American Bar Foundation honored Judge Davis with an award recognizing her 50 years in the law. In November 1998, she was inducted into Florida's Hall of Fame by Gov. Lawton Chiles. She is presently vice-chair of the ABA/SLD Judiciary Committee.

#### **Issues and Education**

A primary goal of NAWL is to provide its members with timely educational programs. The following are examples from recent decades.



**Mattie Belle Davis**



**Juanita Kidd Stout**



In 1965, a Conference on the Legal Status of Women at Harvard University was co-sponsored by NAWL, the Department of Labor, and the state and local bar associations, both general and women's. The theme, "Are Marital Rights in Balance?" encompassed a comprehensive review of social and economic rights in varying U.S. jurisdictions. One topic—the use of *inter vivos* trusts by husbands to deprive wives of a share of assets—has reemerged as a leading issue in relation to "off-shore trusts" in the 1990s.

In 1977, the annual meeting in Chicago was addressed by Elizabeth Hanford Dole of the Federal Trade Commission on the subject, "Enforcement of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act." In 1979, NAWL panel discussions in Dallas included the topics, "Effective Participation in Bar Associations" and "Time and Career Management."

In 1982, NAWL, the Florida Association for Women Lawyers, and FAWL's Dade County Chapter sponsored a seminar entitled "Networking," which included among the speakers Samuel S. Smith, president of the Florida bar.

In 1994, the annual meeting in New Orleans featured a panel discussion on "Single Sex Education and the Law," on the attempt by women for admission to



Veronica Boda



Constance Baker Motley



Susan Fox Gillis

military prep schools. The program was moderated by Professor M. Isabel Medina and was published in the *Loyola of New Orleans Law Review*.

The *Women Lawyers Journal* has been NAWL's vehicle for sharing topical discussions with members at a distance. Veronica C. Boda received NAWL's Distinguished Service Award in 1996 for her work as president in 1992–93, followed by four years as editor of the *Journal*. As president, and as editor, she highlighted emerging issues, such as discrimination in health care, for the education of NAWL members and other women's organizations.

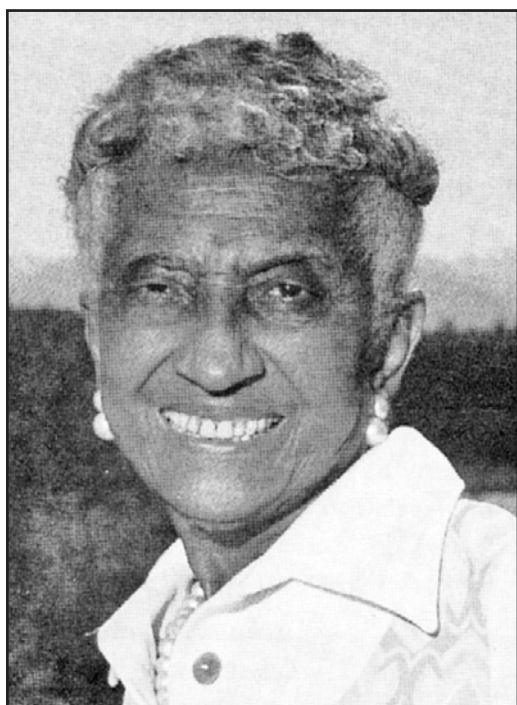
NAWL's commitment to the women lawyers of tomorrow is expressed by its Outstanding Law Student program. Originated by Gail McKnight Beckman, president in 1989–90, it recognizes annually the outstanding woman law graduate of each ABA-approved law school. In addition to academic achievement, the criteria for selection include their working to improve the position of women in society and promoting the goals of women in the legal profession. Ninety-eight women were selected by their law schools in 1998 to receive the NAWL Outstanding Law Student Award.

### The Mansfield Centennial

In 1969, NAWL celebrated the 100th anniversary of the achievement of Arabella Babb Mansfield of Iowa. She had become the first woman to be admitted to any state bar.

Professor Louis A. Haselmayer of Mansfield's alma mater, Iowa Wesleyan College, researched and prepared a biography that appeared in the Spring 1969 issue of the *Women Lawyers Journal*. The June commencement program at the college was devoted to honoring Mansfield and American women lawyers. NAWL president Ruth Gentry Talley was chosen as commencement speaker, and honorary doctorates were awarded to U.S. District Court judges Sarah T. Hughes and Constance Baker Motley, both of them NAWL members. President Nixon sent a letter to NAWL president Talley at the site in Iowa, joining in the celebration of this event.

The college then created the Mansfield Scholarship for Pre-Law



**Mahala Ashley Dickerson**

Women, which was given each year for the following decade to a student selected by a committee of distinguished NAWL members, including Judges Hughes and Motley. Judge Motley's autobiography, *Equal Justice Under Law* (1998), highlights her appointment in 1966 by President Johnson as the first African-American woman to be named to a federal court.

#### **To the Bench**

The promotion of qualified women lawyers for judicial office has been an essential NAWL activity. NAWL published surveys of women in public office in 1953 and again in 1961 to document both the progress and the scarcity of women judges.

In the 1960s, NAWL noted two judicial firsts for women: NAWL member Lorna E. Lockwood was the first woman to be elected to the Arizona Supreme Court, and in 1965 she was chosen by her fellow justices to be chief justice, becoming the first woman chief justice of any state.

In 1961, President Kennedy appointed the Hon. Sarah T. Hughes to the United States District Court, as his first appointment of a woman to a federal judgeship. She became the first woman

judge to administer the oath of office to a President when, immediately following Kennedy's assassination, she was called to President Johnson's airplane in Dallas.

Long before the appointment of women to the U.S. Supreme Court became a national issue in the 1980s, NAWL had begun to lobby for such an appointment. In 1957, NAWL President Neva B. Talley met with Atty. Gen. Herbert Brownell, Jr. and Deputy Atty. Gen. William Rogers to urge that President Eisenhower nominate Judge Florence E. Allen. Then in 1964, NAWL's Committee on Women in Public Service urged President Johnson to appoint Justice Lockwood or Judge Hughes to the next vacancy on the Supreme Court. In 1981, NAWL was among the first to lobby President Reagan to honor his campaign promise to appoint a woman justice.

By 1979, the number of American women judges had increased sufficiently that the National Association of Women Judges was formed. NAWJ president and founder Joan Dempsey Klein, Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal of California, was the keynote speaker at the 1982 NAWL annual meeting in San Francisco. She emphasized that "a high correlation exists in California and other states between well-organized women lawyers' groups and the number of women on the Bench."

Long-time NAWL member, Juanita Kidd Stout, was honored in 1988 with her appointment to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, becoming the first African-American woman to serve on a state's highest court. Her appointment by Governor Robert Casey was confirmed unanimously by the state senate. NAWL had honored Stout in 1965 for her work with juveniles. In 1988, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* profiled her as "A Justice of Quality," and she was the National Association of Women Judges' Honoree of the Year.

A survey article in the September 1994 *Women Lawyers Journal* featured the careers of the 12 women who had served as state chief justices. The article also pointed out that 24 percent of American lawyers were women, but that only 9 percent of judges were women.



**Sally Lee Foley**



### **NAWL and Society**

NAWL has presented American women lawyers to American society.

When the American Thrift Assembly determined in 1956 to remedy the lack of retirement accounts for the self-employed, the only representative of women on their 15-member board was NAWL President Neva B. Talley, followed by her successors, until eventual passage of the Jenkins-Keogh Act.

When President Eisenhower proclaimed May 1 as Law Day USA, NAWL past president Adele I. Springer planned extensive Law Day celebrations, commencing in 1960. These included essay, court motto and song contests with celebrity judges Raymond Burr and Gail Patrick Johnson, star and producer, respectively, of the popular *Perry Mason* TV show.

In 1965, NAWL member Edwina Austin Avery marked 20 years of service representing NAWL at the National Conference on Citizenship, which brought together 600 organizations each year in Washington, D.C. In 1976, NAWL president Kathleen Ryan Dacey and president-elect Lee Berger Anderson were invited by Chief Justice Warren Burger and the ABA to attend the National Conference in St. Paul on the Causes of Popular Dissatisfaction with the Administration of Justice, an event honoring the 70th anniversary of Roscoe Pound's address to the ABA on that subject.

First Lady Pat Nixon received NAWL members in 1969 at a White House Tea organized by past president Maurine Howard Abernathy and president Jettie Pierce Selvig. In 1972, President Nixon praised NAWL's selection of NettaBell Girard Larson as president, saying she "brings great distinction to my Administration as Chief of the Legal Section of Interstate Land Sales in the Department of Housing and Urban Development." He congratulated NAWL on its achievements and promised "equal participation of women in public office."

### **NAWL and the ABA**

The role of women in the ABA has grown steadily since the first women members were admitted in 1918, and NAWL's delegate was seated in the House of Delegates in 1943.

NAWL President Grace B. Doering was

the first woman elected to the ABA Assembly. She was elected by acclamation to fill a vacancy during the New York and London ABA convention of 1957. As president of NAWL, she was given every honor, both professional and social, including attendance at the Queen's garden party. She and NAWL were also much publicized for her marriage, while in London, to pioneer aviator Jack McCord. A highlight of the concurrent NAWL convention was an address by Judge Rose Heilbron, who had recently become the first woman judge in England.

In 1979, ABA President S. Shepherd Tate addressed the NAWL convention in Dallas, saying, "I am committed to bringing women into leadership positions in the organized bar." He informed his audience that he had significantly increased the number of women appointees to important positions on ABA committees, and that his successor, Leonard Janofsky, was committed to ensuring the presence of women on every ABA committee by 1980. Tate concluded by commending NAWL for promoting the role of women lawyers in the profession.

To further this objective, the 1986 midyear meeting of the ABA House of Delegates in Baltimore unanimously adopted the ABA's ninth goal: "To Promote Full and Equal Participation in the Profession by Minorities and Women." The result was the creation in 1987 of the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, chaired by Hillary Rodham Clinton. Its first act was to solicit testimony on the situation of women lawyers, and NAWL President Sylvia Marks-Barnett responded with a statement describing the difficulties faced by women lawyers and extended NAWL's cooperation in addressing them. By 1985, NAWL was already granting membership to male applicants in the profession.

For decades, NAWL was the voice for organized women lawyers in the ABA House of Delegates. The Hon. Mattie Belle Davis represented NAWL for 12 years between 1967 and 1981. At present, NAWL's delegate is the Hon. Mary S. Parker of Los Angeles, now serving her second two-year term. In 1991, NAWL welcomed the addition of two more voices for women in the ABA House of Delegates: the National Association of



**Myrna Raeder**



**Martha Barnett**

Women Judges and the National Conference of Women's Bar Associations. In 1995, Roberta Cooper Ramo became the first woman president of the ABA.

A link was created in 1996 between NAWL and the ABA Senior Lawyers Division. At the request of Victor Futter, then chair, a liaison to the Division was appointed by Sally Lee Foley, incoming president of NAWL. Futter's sensitivity to women's issues was demonstrated when he initiated the SLD Diversity Committee in 1995, appointing Judge Parker as its first chair.

Both NAWL and the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession have recognized the value of awards in bringing public attention to achievements of women lawyers:

On two occasions, the Commission's Margaret Brent Award has been given to a past president of NAWL. In 1995, the Brent Award was won by Mahala Ashley Dickerson, the first African-American president of NAWL in 1983-84, whose autobiography, *Delayed Justice For Sale* was published in 1998 in Anchorage. She had been the first African-American woman lawyer in her native Alabama, later becoming a homesteader in Alaska, and that state's first African-American lawyer. In 1996, the Brent Award was given to Nina Miglionico, a pioneer woman lawyer in Alabama, noted for her service as a dynamic president of NAWL in 1958-59.

In 1997, Martha W. Barnett, a long-time member of NAWL, became the first recipient of NAWL's highest honor, the Arabella Babb Mansfield Award. Barnett was the first woman to serve on the ABA Board of Governors, and she is now the unopposed candidate to serve as president of the ABA in 2000-01.

#### **The NAWL of Today . . .**

In the years immediately preceding NAWL's centennial, the organization has displayed a youthful vigor coupled with maturity of purpose.

Myrna S. Raeder, who served as president for two terms from 1994 to 1996, promised a "rededication to policy issues: domestic violence, health care, gender bias, quality of life for women and children of this country and the world." Raeder, who is a professor of law at Southwestern University in Los Angeles,

presently serves as chair of the ABA Section of Criminal Justice, and is a frequent media commentator on legal issues.

Under the leadership of Sally Lee Foley, president in 1996-97, NAWL member Rebecca A. Speer authored a series of articles on the "Legal Implications of Workplace Violence," and presented the first of several conferences on the subject at NAWL's 1997 annual meeting in San Francisco. At that meeting, Foley also presented the Outstanding NAWL Member of 1997 Award to Gloria Allred for her work on behalf of women's rights. Foley continues her commitment as an international liaison for NAWL.

In 1998, the range of NAWL's concerns was evidenced by the women chosen to receive awards. Janice L. Sperow, president from 1997-98, gave NAWL's Arabella Babb Mansfield Award to Judge Ilana Diamond Rovner of the U.S. Court of Appeals in recognition of her distinguished career on the bench. Dianna Kempe of Bermuda, the first woman nominee-apparent for the presidency of the IBA, was honored for her professional achievements. Also during 1998, Sperow honored the two women senators from California: Barbara Boxer received the President's Award for the Advancement of Women, recognizing her work as author of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, and Diane Feinstein was given the President's Award for Lifetime Service.

Susan Fox Gillis of Chicago is the current president for 1998-99. Her successor will be Katherine J. Henry of Washington, D.C., for 1999-2000. Gillis reflects on the "impressive accomplishments of the pioneer women of the legal profession," saying,

"It is important today that we remember their sacrifices. Each of us must continue their good works, so that the profession and the world will be better places for the future generations of women in the profession."

#### **. . . and Tomorrow**

The century that began in 1899 with the election of NAWL's first president, Rosalie Loew, has seen the advancement of women lawyers from the periphery to the mainstream. With a nod to the past—and its face to the future—NAWL now commences its centennial celebrations. ■

**In 1918  
the first  
two women  
lawyers were  
admitted  
to the ABA.**



**Janice Sperow**