

In Motion

ASSOCIATION
FOR
WOMEN LAWYERS

February 2010

Using the Science of Positive Psychology to Excel in Law & Life

Tuesday, February 16

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Italian Community Center

631 E. Chicago St. (free parking in rear lot)

Upcoming AWL Meetings & Special Events

Tuesday, February 16
Noon - 1:30 p.m.

“Using the Science of Positive Psychology to Excel in Law & in Life” with Paula Davis-Laack of The Marie Elizabeth Company
Italian Community Center

Tuesday, March 9
6-8 p.m.

Wine Tasting & Leadership Reception
Vino 100

Tuesday, April 20
5 p.m.

Women Judges' Night
Keynote Speaker:
Hon. Diane Sykes
Italian Community Center

Paula Davis-Laack will explain what the field of positive psychology is all about, along with what positive psychology research shows about optimism, gratitude, positivity, resilience and other topics. We'll explore how these concepts can strengthen your business relationships and your personal well-being, including:

- Identify signature strengths to achieve personal and professional goals
- Create initiatives focused on positive health
- Become more resilient
- Pursue long-term goals with perseverance and vigor
- Learn techniques to improve optimism

The charge for the program is \$30 for AWL members and \$35 for non-members. Please RSVP with payment by Friday, February 12 at 5 p.m. using the form below. Registrations after the deadline will be \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members.

February Meeting Registration

Name	Firm	Member?
_____	_____	yes no
_____	_____	yes no
_____	_____	yes no
_____	_____	yes no

*Feel free to use additional paper if needed.
Please RSVP by Friday, February 12. Pre-registration is necessary. "No Shows" will be billed.*

Make checks payable & mail to:
Association for Women Lawyers
3322 N. 92nd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53222

Or e-mail to dana@barefoot-marketing.com
Or fax to 414-463-0759
If emailing or faxing, please bring a check made payable to AWL to the meeting



What's Going On

Asst. Atty. General Positions Open

The Department of Justice has two Entry Level Assistant Attorney General positions within the Civil Litigation, State Programs, Administration & Revenue (SPAR) and Criminal Appeals Units. The deadline to apply is **February 1**. For more information, contact Toriana Pettaway at 608-261-0677 or pettawaytt@doj.state.wi.us.

Mother/Daughter Judges Featured

Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Patience Roggensack and Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Ellen Brostrom are

the first mother-and-daughter to serve as judges in Wisconsin. At "On The Issues With Mike Gousha," they will discuss their respective careers, the changes they've seen in their profession, and the lessons that have been passed on from mother to daughter. The program will be held on **Thursday, February 4** at Marquette Law School, Room 325, 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. For more information and to register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/ygcytdm>.

Community Involvement Committee

The next AWL Community Involvement Committee meeting

will be held **Friday, February 12** at noon at Schott, Bublitz & Engel, s.c., Squires II Building, 16655 West Bluemound Road, Suite 270 in Brookfield. Attendees should bring a bag lunch and RSVP to co-chair Kristin Fredrick at kfredrick@sbe-law.com or 262-827-8916.

2010 ABA Bar Leadership Institute

Sponsored by the ABA Standing Committee on Bar Activities and Services and the Division for Bar Services, the ABA Bar Leadership Institute is the premier program for developing the skills and substantive grounding for leading a bar association with inspiration, insight and innovation.

Completion of the program will provide bar presidents with a framework for addressing the issues that lie ahead, and help realize a successful presidential year. The Institute will be held **March 11-12** in Chicago. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/ylpcp73>.

Bingo Party Volunteers Needed

If you are looking for another opportunity to network with fellow AWL members, please consider volunteering at the annual Bingo Party at Luther Manor Retirement Community, located near 92nd and Capitol. The party is sponsored by

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Member Profile

Michelle Johnson



By Mary Smith

Michelle Johnson, a partner at Simpson & Deardorff, S.C. since 2008 and a member of the firm

since her 2003 graduation from the University of Wisconsin Law School, specializes in insurance defense litigation. She was recognized by the *Wisconsin Law Journal* as an "Up and Coming Lawyer" of 2009. The *Law Journal* describes those so honored as "on the fast track to making a significant impact on the legal profession. They represent determination in legal work, in community betterment, and in improving their own law firms." From 2006 through 2009, Michelle was also selected by her peers as a Wisconsin Rising Star, as reported by *Milwaukee Magazine* in the "Wisconsin Super Lawyers" survey.

Michelle's areas of concentration include coverage analysis, toxic tort litigation and general personal injury defense. In addition to being a litigator she is also actively involved in appellate practice. She and partner Arthur P. Simpson are credited with the briefs for the Wisconsin Supreme Court in *Sukala v. Heritage Mutual Ins. Co.*, 2005

WI 83. Other cases in which Michelle has written briefs are pending in the Court of Appeals at this time.

In addition to the trial and appellate work, Michelle has also handled a pro bono case referred to her by U.W. law professor Ken Streit.

Michelle graduated in 2000 from Colorado State University with a B.A. in Political Science. She enjoys sailboat racing on Lake Michigan and downhill skiing. When interviewed by the *Wisconsin Law Journal* she stated that her favorite quote was, "If your life is free of failures, you're not taking enough chances." She is married, mother of one and a Wauwatosa native.

Michelle traces her interest in the law to her participation in high school in a government class and the "We the People" competition in which her class won the state championship. She and her peers travelled to Washington, D.C. for the

national competition. Michelle's high school, Wauwatosa East, has won the "We the People" state competition eight times since 1988. (In 2008 and 2009 Wauwatosa West won the state competition.) The State Bar of Wisconsin is a sponsor of the program, which involves semester-long instruction on the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights and teaches students critical thinking, problem solving, presentation and team work.

Although she has not personally experienced barriers based upon her gender, Michelle does note that the civil litigation defense bar tends to be male dominated.

Her advice to young attorneys is to be more prepared than your opponent, demonstrate your mastery of the material ("Show them you know your stuff"), present yourself in a completely professional manner and choose a firm with supportive management. Michelle opined that young women litigators do need

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What's Going On , cont.

AWL's Community Involvement Committee and will be held on **Saturday, March 13** from 1-3 p.m.

We provide snacks for the bingo players, so if you can bring some cookies or bars (simple finger food, no nuts), please indicate this when you RSVP. As always, we welcome your family members (including kids of all ages), co-workers and friends to participate too.

Contact Jennine Sonntag at jsonntag@hannanlegal.com or 262-754-1260 to volunteer or for further information.

Member News

Sheila Heitzig has earned the Certified Association Executive



Thanks for the Toys

Thanks to all our members and guests who donated to our Toy Drive in December. We received the following note from the recipient organization, Community Advocates.

"On behalf of our consumers, thank you so very much for your generous in-kind gift of toys to Community Advocates during the holiday season. Your donation brought smiles to the faces of women and children in several of our programs. Please know that your kindness made the holidays special for those we serve.

"Thank you, again, for thinking of our clients and supporting the work of Community Advocates. We wish you well and hope that 2010 is a wonderful year."

(CAE) designation from the American Society of Association Executives. The CAE is the highest professional credential in the association industry, and less than 5% of association professionals earn the CAE. Sheila is one of only three attorneys in Wisconsin to have earned this credential.

Gina Ozelie has accepted a job as a staff attorney with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the Milwaukee Regional Office.

Kelli Taffora has accepted a new position as Legal Counsel in the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration.

* * *

If you have an event to publicize or an item for member news, send it to dana@barefoot-marketing.com. Events should be specifically of interest to women attorneys. We use items as space allows and reserve the right to edit. Deadline for the next issue is February 9.



Seeking AWL Board Candidates

In early March, the Nominating Committee for the AWL Board of Directors will review Board candidates for the 2010-11 fiscal year, which runs from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011.

The Board meets monthly, currently at the Italian Community Center from 5:30-7:30 p.m. In addition to enhancing visibility in the legal community, being a Board member is an excellent networking tool and opportunity to apply your leadership skills.

This is a working board with responsibilities for planning and implementation of your Direc-

Leaders in Law, Leaders in Service

Helping Abuse Victims

By Jennifer Farley

AWL member Colleen Fielkow's interest in pro bono legal representation stems from her desire to assist women and children who have been affected by violence, homelessness, addiction and other tragic situations or conditions. Women in abusive relationships are often without resources – making them one of the most vulnerable populations.

Colleen coordinates a team of attorneys at Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren s.c. to obtain injunctions to protect low-income women who experience physical and emotional abuse. Colleen and her team receive referrals through Legal Action of Wisconsin's Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP). Colleen ensures that the VLP's overflow of domestic violence injunctions is covered at least two weeks of each month.

Colleen and her team received free CLE instruction from Legal

Action of Wisconsin about the process for obtaining domestic abuse injunctions. Legal Action offers training to all volunteers.

In addition to coordinating Reinhart's volunteer efforts, Colleen has personally helped many women obtain injunctions against abusers. The women have experienced unthinkable rape, beatings and repeated threats of physical violence.

Colleen is a shareholder in Reinhart's Litigation Practice and also manages the Product Liability group. She enjoys incorporating her commitment to pro bono work into her practice.

The VLP is always looking for volunteer attorneys to assist in its mission to provide legal services to low-income individuals regarding a variety of different subject matters. For information, contact Pat Risser at pzr@legalaction.org or 414-278-7722 x3063.

tor area. We have outstanding assistance from our Administrator, Dana Kader Robb, but the ultimate responsibility for the organization lies with the Board of Directors and their assistants.

Criteria for evaluating members to serve (or continue to serve) on the Board includes:

- Previous involvement in AWL
- Visibility and involvement in the legal community
- Attendance at AWL functions
- Fulfillment of previous AWL and/or Board responsibilities

The Nominating Committee evaluates each candidate

based on the above criteria. Deference need not be given to seniority or prior service on the Board. Nominations shall be within the sole discretion of the Nominating Committee, and the committee's proceedings shall be confidential. The committee will consider all nominations and present a ballot to members in the April newsletter.

If you would like to be considered as a candidate for the Board of Directors, or have any questions about serving on the Board, contact AWL President Cathy Ritterbusch at ritterbc@mtmary.edu by March 1.

Annual Wine Tasting and Leadership Reception



**Tuesday, March 9
6-8 p.m.**

Vino 100
219 E. Erie Street
Historic Third Ward

Tempt your palate with a variety of wines and hors d'oeuvres at one of Milwaukee's premier wine destinations, Vino 100 in the Historic Third Ward.

Relax and enjoy the company of fellow AWL members and guests, as well as the opportunity to meet your current and future State Bar leaders.

Join us for this popular annual event!

For more information, contact AWL President-Elect Sheila Heitzig at 414-467-8409.

AWL Members can attend for \$15.

Non-members and guests are invited to join us for \$20 per person.

Please RSVP by Thursday, March 4.

Registrations that are made and not kept will be billed.



Wine Tasting & Leadership Reception

Member Name(s) _____

Guest Name(s) _____

Please RSVP by Thursday, March 4. Pre-registration is necessary. "No Shows" will be billed.

Make checks payable & mail to:
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Or e-mail to dana@barefoot-marketing.com
Or fax to 414-463-0759
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made payable to AWL to the reception

Thoughts from the President

A Leadership Ethic

Who do you believe is in charge of U.S. society today? Politicians? Corporations? Banking institutions? Media moguls? Marketing mavens training our consumer brains? Some combination of the above? How would you say they are doing? As lawyers, surely we can apportion fault if things are not going as well as could be expected!

As much as our culture enjoys a rousing round of the blame-game, no single group or person is ever fully responsible for the world in which we live. Because, really, we're *all* in charge.

Do you view yourself as a leader? Do you recognize that your access to knowledge, power, people and opportunities are resources that you utilize every day, to the good or the detriment of others? Do you appreciate that others trust you to provide them with wise counsel? Do you realize that you are a guardian of the universal human need for justice? Whether we have considered ourselves as such, our position as lawyers [or students of the law] means that we are, in fact, leaders. The only question that remains is: what kind of leader will you be?

In my first column about renewal, I urged a renewed



Profile, cont.

to work harder to get respect and establish a reputation. She notes that her own boss has been supportive of her.

Michelle would like to see AWL present women speakers who have worked their way up in business or law. She also hopes to become involved with other AWL members who are also mothers of young children.

commitment to political and social equality for women and other marginalized groups. Last month, in the spirit of the new year, I asked you to revisit your own personal hopes and dreams, some of which may have lain dormant for years as you moved through demanding circumstances of everyday life. In my third and last column about renewal, I hope that we can renew our faith in our ability to be leaders in our families, in our communities, in the larger world.

In *The Servant as Leader*, Robert K. Greenleaf states: "The very essence of leadership, going out ahead to show the way, derives from more than usual openness to inspiration.... But the leader needs more than inspiration. She ventures to say 'I will go; come with me!' She initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success. She says 'I will go, follow me!' when she knows that the path is uncertain, even dangerous. And, she trusts those that go with her."

Where do we exercise leadership?

Leadership may be asked of you in your home, your friendships, your job, your school, other professional settings, your faith community and your volunteer organization.

How will you become a leader? If you serve others and do it well, leadership opportunities will flow naturally to you. The lawyer who serves clients and her fellow lawyers well in her firm will be invited to partnership. The lawyer who serves well on a committee will be asked to be on the board. The lawyer who serves her community in a broad variety of capacities may be asked to run for office.

So what is your response when such an honor is offered? It is critical to carefully consider whether you have the capacity and resources to devote to the task. Sometimes we think we should wait until everything is resolved in our own lives before going out to serve and lead in other capacities. We tell ourselves, if my children aren't getting straight As and/or my marriage isn't perfect and/or my home isn't spotless and/or my finances are messy and/or I'm having problems at work, I ought not go out and try to help somebody else right now. And, anyway, who in their right mind would think I could actually lead them?

This reminds me of a discussion we frequently have in my class about global justice. Should the U.S. be giving billions of dollars in aid to foreign countries to help refugees, when we have poverty and strife in the streets of our own cities? Should we be sitting in judgment on human rights violations in China, when we tolerate systemic injustice against certain groups in our own country? Certainly, there is wisdom in the notion that we ought to clean our own houses before moving on to another's, and strive for exemplary conduct in our own affairs. On the other hand, if I waited until I thought every issue in my life that needed changing was addressed before reaching out a hand to help someone else – well, let's just say I would not have left my house in the past ten years or so. We must be mindful of how we use our time and resources, while acting with courage when called.

What does the Lawyer-Leader look like?

In *Lawyers and Leaders*, Ben W. Heineman, Jr., former Senior VP and General Counsel at General



Electric for many years and a guy with all sorts of Ivy League affiliations, wrote: "Leadership demands important qualities of mind that go beyond the core competencies taught in law schools. We need lawyers who can create and build, not just criticize and deconstruct. Lawyers must be able to ask and answer 'what ought to be' questions, not only 'what is' questions – and in their answers they must respect the tensions between competing values that are inherent in most important decisions.

"Lawyers should be able to build and lead organizations. They should be able to develop the vision, the values, the priorities, the strategies, the people, the processes, the checks and balances, the resources and the motivation. Team participation and team leadership are interconnected: leadership today is often not command and control but persuasion and motivation and empowerment of teams around a shared vision."

I encourage you to embrace the challenge of leadership. The one certain reward is that it will make you a more whole human being. In all of your endeavors, go forward with a renewed spirit – commit, go after a dream, courageously lead others toward a shared vision!

Inside AWL

How to Reach Us

Our administrator, Dana Kader Robb, can be reached at 414/463-0758 or dana@barefoot-marketing.com. Her fax number is 414-463-0759. Please send changes in your contact information directly to her.

If you've changed jobs, won an award, are hosting an event, have committee news or a topic of interest to AWL members, this is your forum. Please submit information to Dana using the above contact details. We reserve the right to edit for length and content. Deadline is the 16th of each month prior to the issue. Newsletters will be in members' hands within the first week of the month.

Visit our Web site at www.wisbar.org/bars/awl.

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