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Onward and upward

GET OUT AND VOTE

Amy Alcoke Quackenboss

Perhaps it is denial that another year has gone by that prevents me from writing an all-encompassing year-end article. I am GAWL's President for another month. A month is an eternity to my 4-year-old. And so, with this optimism, I ignore the fact that this is the last President's article I will be writing for GAWL, and instead of summarizing GAWL's amazing annual accomplishments (which you will hear about in great detail at the Annual Dinner on May 12 and read about in GAWL's Annual Report), I devote this article to those qualified women attorneys who serve and who are seeking to serve in elected government positions - whether they be in the legislature, judiciary, state and local bar organizations or in another governing body.

Ask anyone who has done it - running for public office is not fun. It's expensive, all-consuming and intense. In many instances, opponents do not play fair, and candidates face public exposure of very private facts. It also means spending less time with family. So, why run? Prestige? Fame? Power? The

good candidates make these sacrifices to facilitate change.

"[T]here never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers." Susan B. Anthony, 1876.

Although we have made much progress since Susan B. Anthony's fight for the vote, the need for women to fill roles where rules and laws are made and interpreted is no less. Moreover, having a handful of women in government will not change things much. Instead, a critical mass is needed to effectuate change. How do we get that critical mass? I suggest we should focus our resources on three tools: Vote. Teach. Support.

Vote: Women will not get elected if we are not voting. I am not suggesting that we should all go out and vote for every woman on the ballot. We should focus our attention on qualified women candidates. Before you go to the polls or cast your ballot, do some research



Amy Alcoke Quackenboss

into all of the candidates. In many cases, however, qualified women candidates are losing elections simply because of low voter turnout, especially from women. Please make sure your voice is heard in every election.

Teach: Yes, leaders are born every day. But, without leadership training, their talents are wasted. GAWL is committed to training women attorney leaders. Through its Leadership Academy and programs, like "How to Get Elected" and the "The Leader Within," (a free program for GAWL members), GAWL provides invaluable resources to its members who want to identify and pursue leadership opportunities. Moreover, these programs allow members who are interested in running for office to connect with senior women attorneys who currently hold positions in the judiciary, legislature and State Bar of Georgia. Any woman attorney who is interested in running for election should put these programs on her calendar.

Support: We need to support our women candidates. We need to announce their candidacy to their world, donate money to their cam-

Year in Review:

GAWL FOUNDATION PRESIDENT, AMY KOLCZAK

We all belong to many different communities, whether they are through our profession, our employer, our family, our neighborhood, our outside interests, or our friends. By becoming actively engaged in each of the communities to which we belong, we are not only helping our communities, but we are also helping ourselves. My life has been forever enriched by the year that I have spent as president of the GAWL Foundation. The last year has once again illustrated the power of our legal community and the women

within it, while also reminding me of the depth and diversity within our community.

As lawyers, and female lawyers in particular, we likely have a number of common traits. How many of the following describe you and the other women lawyers you know: driven, busy, goal-oriented, successful, organized, strong, competitive, and smart? These adjectives describe every single woman attorney that I know, including the eighteen women that have served for the last eleven months with me on the GAWL Foundation Board. These eighteen successful, driven, busy women put together the best year

that the GAWL Foundation has ever had. The Foundation Charity Auction raised more than \$23,000 for scholarships to deserving Georgia female law students. The Communications committee set up Foundation Facebook and Twitter accounts and got the word out about the services we provided to our communities.

The Community Service committee organized monthly dinners at Nicholas House, GAWL Foundation teams at six charity runs/walks, a Habitat for Humanity day, a two-day Girl Scouts' project, blood drives, a children's party at Children's Healthcare at Scottish Rite, and more. The Endowment committee hosted two knitting events and a wine tasting in addition to planning the mother-daughter tea

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paigns, vote for them, solicit others to do the same and most importantly, encourage these women when they need a pat on the back. Because these women, if elected, will facilitate change for all of us, we should strive to make their sacrifices less, or at least to make their

efforts a little easier. For these reasons, GAWL supports its member candidates. Specifically, this year GAWL created the Candidates' Affinity Groups, which are formed by members who desire to solicit support and assistance from other GAWL members for a particular candidate. In addition, GAWL

publicizes key information about member candidates to GAWL's membership through Women on the Run e-blasts.

I hope that each of you will endeavor to vote in upcoming elections, including the State Bar of Georgia election, which ends May 3. You will find that many of our

members are running in contested elections for positions that have been traditionally held by men. We do nothing for them if we throw our ballots away. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Dinner on May 12. P.S. Thank you for a fantastic year!

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coming up on May 23, 2010. They also renamed the endowment the "Ruth and Ruby Crawford Endowment" and established a "Sustaining Member" giving society. The Grants committee solicited, reviewed, and presented grant applications that resulted in the Foundation awarding nearly \$20,000 in grants to fifteen different charitable organizations around Georgia. The scholarships committee received an onslaught of applications and selected ten finalists in time for the Charity Auction with the winners being announced at the GAWL Annual Dinner. These women used their common traits to provide opportunities for themselves, our Board, GAWL members, and lawyers, generally, to engage themselves in our communities.

At the same time, the GAWL Foundation board members, council members, and participants

brought their varied experiences, backgrounds, and viewpoints to enrich the lives of our community and the communities beyond. It is our differences, far more than our similarities, which enrich our lives. Take a minute to learn about the attorneys in your office, within your bar associations, and at your events. Not what they do, how many cases they've won, how many deals they've drafted, or how long they've been with their firm. Try asking your fellow lawyers about the place and environment where they grew up, why they chose the law, what their profession means to them, and what their special talents or interests are. You may be surprised by the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that surround you. You will definitely be enriched and enlightened. Through my involvement with GAWL and the GAWL Foundation, I have met people who

grew up in the smallest of towns and the biggest of cities, people who come from family lawyer legacies and people who were the first in their family to attend college, people who dreamed of being lawyers and people who dreamed of being police officers or Broadway dancers, people who have traveled the globe and people who have never been west of the Mississippi. We are all tied together by our profession and our common traits, but we are enriched by our differences and our varied passions. The GAWL Foundation has provided me with the opportunity to meet and learn about those in my community while we work together to make our communities better. While I will soon turn in my president's gavel, I hope that you will join me at upcoming Foundation events to improve our communities and improve ourselves.

JAZZIN' UP THE JARGON

MICHELE BRUCE,
CPA, CFE – INVESTIGATIVE
ACCOUNTING GROUP, LLC

One of the most challenging aspects of being a financial expert witness is presentation of complex analysis to an audience unfamiliar with the subject matter and prone to distraction, such as judges and juries. Almost nothing puts a trier of fact to sleep faster than a bunch of numbers. Numbers are more effective than most sleeping pills. Think about it—in addition to being pulled away from their daily routines, jurors must contend with being shuffled from room to room, sharing meals with complete strangers, learning legalese and then sometimes listen to lengthy testimony by an accountant, of all things.

Have mercy on these poor souls.

Litigation is serious business, but there is no law against creative exhibits. These may be in the form of innovative, computerized tools, but old-fashioned, less technical options can also be effective.

Fortunately, many courtrooms in Georgia are now equipped with computerized displays and with easy connection to laptops

or USB devices. This means that, with a little advance preparation, an expert can use colorful graphs, PowerPoint presentations, and other computerized techniques to present financial analysis.

Enlarged trial exhibits are also very effective, especially with a jury. There is some out-of-pocket cost involved but, preparation of large trial exhibits is much easier and less expensive than it used to be, because of advances in technology and availability of services. In one case where a perpetrator had conned an elderly man out of a substantial sum of money, the expert tackled the formidable task of breaking down the complicated scheme into an exhibit that a jury could readily grasp. Ultimately, the expert condensed many pages of analysis into one large exhibit. At the top of the display, green dollar bills were pictured falling into a large funnel. At the bottom of the funnel were pictures of a house, a car, a yacht and a few other large assets that the con man bought with the funds that he stole.

Live demonstrations are also very powerful. They are frequently used to re-enact automobile accidents, etc. but they can also work for

financial presentations. In a recent civil trial, the expert demonstrated the concept of co-mingling funds by using spices and sprinkles, paper muffin cups, and red plastic beverage cups. With those simple props and a couple of cardboard lids, she was able to show the flow of money from known sources of funds, co-mingling of assets in a particular account, and then distribution of the co-mingled funds to other known accounts, with only a few lost sprinkles along the way.

Half of a financial expert's job is doing the analysis. The other half is communicating the work to a judge or jury in a way that is helpful to them in rendering their decision. That's not possible if they are sleeping. Demonstrative exhibits are critical to the process. They must be accurate, clear, interesting, and simple. Stick to the KISS principle, and don't forget—it's okay to have fun, even if it is serious business.

Michele Bruce is a Friend of GAWL where she is a forensic accountant with Investigative Accounting Group, a firm that specializes in forensic accounting, fraud investigation, and litigation support. Michele can be contacted at Michele@iag-law.com or at 770-565-3098.

GAWL Charity Auction an Overwhelming Success

On March 20, 2010 at the DeFoor Centre in Atlanta, the GAWL Foundation pulled out all the stops for its annual Charity Auction. The over two hundred fifty people in attendance enjoyed delicious food and the GAWL Foundation signature cocktail while competitively bidding on over one hundred silent auction items and perusing over one hundred pieces of original artwork available for the live auction. The result was a spectacular evening for all in attendance and net proceeds of over \$23,000 for the merit-based scholarships awarded annually to female law students at Georgia law schools and grants that the Foundation awards to other 501(c)(3) organizations.

The hard work of the Charity Auction Committee, lead by Gretchen Holt Wagner, Heather Karrh, and Amy Kolczak definitely paid off! The committee was able to expand the silent auction and include vacations, vacation packages, gift baskets, date night baskets, restaurants, event tickets and more. The committee also procured original artwork from a large variety of artists in all different mediums – often while also negotiating lower artist reserves. With an expanded auction platform, attendees engaged in far more auction actions, leading to the spectacular fundraising results. Fun was had by all for a very good cause!

The Georgia Association For Women Lawyers cordially invites you to its **ANNUAL DINNER & MEETING**

Tuesday, May 12, 2010 at 6:30 pm
Il Mulino New York
Peachtree Tower
191 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Please R.S.V.P. by May 3, 2010 with payment to:
Betsy Giesler, GAWL Executive Director
3855 Spalding Bluff Drive, Norcross, Georgia 30092
(770) 446-1517, bng@bngiesler.com
OR

Register on-line at www.gawl.org

\$50.00 GAWL Members; \$85.00 Non-Members
\$25.00 Members of the Judiciary and
Public Interest Attorneys, and Law Students

Valet is available for a fee. Self-parking will be validated if you park in the 191 Building.

At the Annual Dinner, the recipient(s) of the GAWL Foundation's Scholarship Award will be announced. The finalists include:

Lauren Barger from John Marshall Law School
Jessica Bennett from John Marshall Law School
Allyson Gold from Emory University
Julie Hoehn from University of Georgia
Carmela Orsini from Georgia State University
Courtney O'Donnell from Emory University
Stacy Tolos from Emory University
Nicole Ware from Georgia State University
Katherine Willett from Mercer Law School
Emily Yu from Emory University