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Leadership:

It Has Everything To Do With the Practice of Law

*Pilar Prinz,
President of GAWL*

Leadership development is studied at business schools and seminars throughout the country. Yet, poll the average attorney, and you would be hard pressed to find one who studied leadership as a course in law school. It is an unfortunate fact that most of us graduate having learned the basics in contract law, torts, and civil procedure (all relevant and necessary courses), but not in leadership skills, as being an effective leader and being an effective lawyer have much in common.

Within the first few years of practice, a lawyer is called upon to be a leader. We lead meetings with our clients and with personnel. We lead pro bono projects, summer associate programs, and by directing associates. The person who heads up a litigation team is often referred to as the "lead" counsel. Clients expect their lawyers to be leaders, because the attributes of a great lawyer and a great leader are often parallel.

At the most basic level, a leader

is someone who leads others. But what makes someone a leader? What is it about being a leader that some people inherently understand and others don't? Is leadership a skill with which one is born or can it be developed?

Many researchers have concluded that effective leaders have certain fundamental traits in common, such as integrity, people skills, and a positive attitude. A leader also has a vision for the future, a drive and commitment, and the skills, energy, and optimism to inspire others to achieve that vision. Leaders are forward-thinking, motivating, and determined. These traits and skills can be nurtured.

One of GAWL's five core goals in our current strategic plan is leadership--more specifically, to cultivate and energize the leader within women lawyers. To aid women lawyers in developing and enhancing their own leadership

skills, GAWL provides the opportunity for approximately 16 women each year to attend our Leadership Academy. In 2011, GAWL will hold its fourth annual Academy designed to train and support the appointment and promotion of qualified women lawyers to leadership positions. The committee will be seeking applications starting in mid-October from women lawyers who have at least six years in practice. The Academy will be held in February, March and April of 2011. Applications will be available on GAWL's website, www.gawl.org and at various GAWL events. Applications will be due November 30.

I encourage each of you to consider applying, and to look for other opportunities to develop, practice, and enhance your leadership skills throughout the year and throughout your practice.

Pilar Prinz is GAWL's current President and a partner at Lawler, Green, Givelber & Prinz in Vinings. She practices family law and specializes in contested divorce matters. Ms. Prinz may be reached at 770-563-8800.



Pilar Prinz

GAWL Leadership Academy Alumna Takes Service Back to Firm

BY CATHERINE SALINAS

I FIRST HEARD ABOUT the Nicholas House at a GAWL Leadership Academy session. I was drawn to the idea of doing a community service activity with other women lawyers and of helping homeless families. Little did I know that I would make service at this local homeless shelter for transitional families part of my Firm's culture.

After graduating from the Leadership Academy, I joined

the GAWL Foundation Board and participated in a Nicholas House dinner where we brought and served dinner. It was a meaningful experience that prompted me to be in charge of another dinner.

For the dinner I hosted, I sent a firm-wide email asking for volunteers and money contributions for the dinner. The response was overwhelming. Not counting the in-kind donations, my friends and

colleagues donated more than \$900! The dinner was a huge success – pizza, sodas, salad, and lots of homemade desserts. Ten volunteers from my firm helped serve the meal.

While we served dinner, a case manager talked to us. Nicholas House's basement floor needed repairs, and they needed a bike rack for storage issues. After a little more investigation, we held a "work day," where we organized

a large storage shed, cleaned the yard, and repaired broken playground equipment. We also obtained tickets to the Zoo for the Nicholas House children. The outpouring of support was contagious – even my mother donated a handmade quilt and a senior partner built a bike rack for Nicholas House. All of this work was accomplished in roughly a two-week period.

Since then, other people at my firm have

spent hundreds of hours at the Nicholas House – renovating the bathrooms, painting the common rooms, and serving dinners. My GAWL Leadership Academy class also reunites each year for an annual Nicholas House dinner. Each of us has been personally enriched by the Nicholas House experience. I never would have expected that so much would have come from that little session at the Leadership Academy.

I am very grateful to the GAWL Foundation

for presenting this opportunity to me and my colleagues. Certainly I have received more from the experience than I have given. I challenge each GAWL member to do something for her community before the end of the year – it can start with just a simple email.

Catherine Salinas is a GAWL Leadership Academy graduate and attorney with Carlton Fields where she handles insurance coverage, bankruptcy, business litigation, and criminal matters. She can be reached at 404.815-2753.

Charitable Brides Wanted

And then she jumped in the pool in her dress because she was hot from dancing at her wedding reception. She didn't feel too bad about it. She got a great deal on the dress, and everyone else jumped in behind her (including her mom).

She got her designer dress through "Brides Against Breast Cancer." Perhaps if she'd not jumped in the pool, she might have donated it (back) to them! Brides Against Breast Cancer is a unique initiative that resells top-of-the-line wedding gowns and accessories. However, proceeds from these sales go towards the battle against breast cancer. Wedding gowns, veils, headpieces, shoes and other wedding accessories...including "Special Occassion" dresses...can be had there for a fraction of the costs that are seen around town. The reward of shopping here is not only access to

amazing dresses, but knowledge that the purchase has a higher purpose.

Shop online <http://www.bridesagainstbreastcancer.org/> or take a weekend-trip to one of their warehouses in nearby South Carolina! http://makingmemories.org/eastern_division.html And, to those looking for their second husbands, if you would like to donate your wedding gown, they are receiving donations from 2005-present wedding gowns. All donations, including shipping, are tax-deductible!

And speaking of charitable causes, for a \$5.00 contribution to GAWL's Foundation during the month of November 2010, we will tell you who the pool-jumping bride is, along with photo evidence. Contribute through the home page – www.gawl.org.

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