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President's Message What We've Seen and Heard

By Cristina C. León, Esq.

At the GAWL Annual Dinner last May, the 2013-2014 Board announced its theme for the year – “Listen More and Talk Less.” Our goal was to celebrate our 85th year by asking our diverse membership what each of you value most about GAWL and how Georgia’s premiere organization for women lawyers can continue to enhance your welfare and development and to support your interests. In September, GAWL hosted a Conversation with GAWL (akin to a Town Hall meeting) where members candidly and openly shared with the GAWL Board their vision for our organization for the next 85 years. Suggestions included increased communication and visibility about GAWL events, more substantive programming - including a study or discussion involving equal pay - and transparency related to Board voting procedures.

Your GAWL Board listened, and we worked hard this year to implement your suggestions. Our **Communications** Committee took a multi-platform approach, sharing information about GAWL events via the quarterly newsletter, routine blog posts, and increased social media presence across Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and the GAWL ListServ. Our **Leadership** Committee re-launched our popular Leadership Academy, which drew a larger applicant pool and introduced new aspects to the program, including opportunities to meet with leaders in the Georgia Legislature. Additionally, we had one of our best turnouts for The Leader Within program, despite the



threat and impact of the January snowstorm.

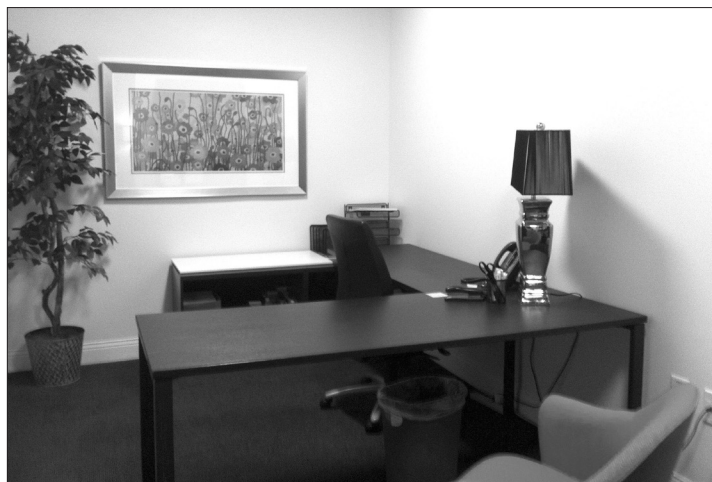
GAWL’s **Membership** Committee introduced a renewal campaign that to date has increased our membership by approximately 25% over the past year. The **Mentoring** Committee placed new members in Mentoring Circles, continued to provide programming ideas to our ever-popular NNBs and launched four new affinity groups: Large Law Firm, Newer Lawyers, Working Moms, and Girls in Sports and Entertainment (GISE). This month, the **Programs** and **Public Affairs** Committees hosted an Equal Pay program – a practical training event aimed to help women lawyers negotiate for salaries commensurate to their efforts by coaching members how to advocate for themselves in a variety of professional settings. **Strategic Part-**

nerships continued to forge strong relationships with GAWL’s valued sponsors. **Special Events** hosted the Atlanta Judicial Luncheon in October, organized the Atlanta Holiday Party in December, and has planned a signature celebration event for our Annual Dinner in May.

In addition, the GAWL Board called upon the **Bylaws** Committee to fully review the organization’s governing documents, including our policies and procedures. This committee recommended changes to voting procedures to align the Association with other similarly situated organizations. Further, committee activity included updates to the provision of proxies and the treatment of abstention votes. Notably, the Committee drafted a non-discrimination policy to be presented to the incoming GAWL Board. The Committee will be continuing its work during the next Board year.

I almost cannot believe that a year has passed since the GAWL Board took its oath of office and pledged to listen to your visions on how we can improve this great organization! We promised then that we would work diligently to act on your advice. During our tenure, you shared a number of great thoughts with us, and your 2013-2014 Board did its best to incorporate as many of your ideas as we could into our vision for the year and into our roadmap for GAWL’s next 85 years.

Cristina C. León is a Senior Director of Attorney Recruiting with The Partners Group, a premier national legal search and staffing agency that specializes in placing attorneys in permanent and temporary positions.



Check out our new digs!

On March 25th, 2014, GAWL moved into a new office space at 1230 Peachtree Street NE in Atlanta. Not only is the new office convenient for members coming from all parts of the city, including towns and suburbs located to the north of Atlanta, but we are also now located at Pursley Friese Torgrimson, LLP, current Diamond Level GAWL Sponsor, where two former GAWL Presidents, Stephanie Friese and Christian Torgrimson, serve as Managing Partners. Photo Courtesy of Karyl Davis, GAWL Executive Director.

21st Annual GAWL Art Auction



This year's 21st Annual GAWL Art Auction took place at Art Space International, Inc. on Saturday, March 1st, 2014. Attendees bid on and purchased silent and live auction items, and GAWL raised nearly \$20,000 for GAWL Foundation scholarships and grants. At left - Sonja Brown, Attorney with the DeKalb County Office of the Solicitor General, Karen Kenner, Assistant Solicitor General with the Fulton County Office of the Solicitor General, and Melissa Redmon, Assistant District Attorney with the Fulton county District Attorney's Office attend GAWL's 2014 Art Auction. At center - The event's organizers Morgan Wood Bembry, of Wood & Bembry LLC, Andrea Wood, of Manning, Levine & Marlow, LLP, Beth Kinsinger, Attorney with Thompson, Sweeny, Kinsinger & Pereira P.C., and Susanne Tarter, VP of Sales at Cambridge Professional Group, take a break for a group photo. At right - A selection of the paintings auctioned off are displayed. Photos courtesy of Jennifer Gore-Cuthbert.

GAWL Gains Growth and Development in Columbus

By Laurie Rashidi-Yazd, Esq.

Columbus GAWL Chapter President Morgan Duncan touts the increase in Columbus Chapter membership as a significant indicator of the strength and value the group has offered its participants this year. With a more than fifty percent increase in membership, the Chapter engaged more local lawyers than ever in meaningful professional programming and outreach activities.

This year, the Chapter presented

monthly luncheons with speakers including judges, self-defense experts, and non-profit leaders. It also held a winter holiday party, during which the members collected gifts to donate to a local family, and held a wine tasting/membership mixer that allowed GAWL members to network with each other. This month, the Chapter co-sponsored a happy hour to raise funds for the Georgia Bar Legal Food Frenzy with the Columbus Younger Lawyers Division, the Columbus Trial Lawyers Association and Butler,

Wooten & Fryhofer LLP on April 22nd. Upcoming events include a lunch meeting addressing financial issues relevant to women on May 20th at the River Club and the annual Columbus judicial luncheon on June 17th, which will feature the Honorable Sara Doyle of the Georgia Court of Appeals.

Morgan summarized the Chapter's goals, growth, and development over the course of the past year: "We are women with a wonderfully diverse array of practice areas," she said. She further noted that her

involvement with the Columbus Chapter has provided "a great way to get to know people [she] might not otherwise meet."

To get involved with the Columbus Chapter and to learn more about its upcoming events, visit gawl.org or contact Morgan Duncan at GAWL. Columbus@gmail.com.

Laurie Rashidi-Yazd, GAWL Communications Chair, is the principal attorney at the Rashidi Law Firm based in Marietta. She specializes in civil litigation, business law, and estate planning.

The Leader Within Provides Wisdom for Area Attorneys

By Megan T. Hodgkiss, Esq.

In January, dozens of legal professionals braved the looming winter weather to attend GAWL's popular annual event, The Leader Within. The intensive training seminar, co-hosted by GAWL and the Atlanta Bar Association's Women in the Profession (WIP) Section, aids prospective, new, and experienced attorneys who want to further develop their leadership skills. This year's program featured two breakout sessions, a panel presentation, a networking lunch, and a keynote address.

The morning breakout sessions focused on a plethora of personal and professional challenges faced by attorneys, including alternative work styles, growing personal brands, the evolution of the billable hour, and business development in large law firms. This year's speakers hailed from non-

traditional, small, and large law firm environments and practice in a wide variety of legal fields. Each speaker shared excellent advice on how to become a leader in the workplace.

"It is perfectly okay to lay it out there and ask for help and guidance - especially when you're just starting out," said estate and probate attorney Victoria H. Watkins, a solo practitioner, who led the Alternative Work Styles breakout session.

Attorney Cheryl B. Legare, partner at the Buckley Law Firm specializing in employment litigation, led a discussion on Growing Your Personal Brand. She advised attendees to "Make friends with lawyers in your practice area. Make friends with the lawyers outside your practice area. Continue to develop that referral network. Keep your net wide and get your name out there."

Following the breakout sessions, attorneys Christian F. Torggrimson, managing partner at Pursley Friese Torggrimson, LLP, Rita A. Sheffey, partner at Hunton & Williams, and the Hon. Wendy Shoob, of the Superior Court of Fulton County, led a panel on the importance of finding a mentor. They discussed how to identify what you want in a mentor, where to look for possible advisors, and how to ensure the mentor-mentee relationship is valuable for all parties involved.

This year's Leader Within Keynote Speaker, attorney Caroline J. Tanner, of Holland & Knight, LLP, talked about the art of leadership and leading by example. She opened her keynote address by telling the group: "We are all leaders in some way, and we should feel comfortable in claiming that, participating in it, and enjoying that." Ms. Tanner then

encouraged everyone to be bold, to look for opportunities to lead, and to be reliable and conscientious - to be the type of leader that people want to follow. The Leader Within event concluded with Caroline Tanner's six tips for emerging leaders: 1) Listen, 2) Have courage - Get comfortable with fear, 3) Find good legal advisors (don't wait for a mentor), 4) Show up, 5) Network and increase your emotional intelligence, and 6) Don't mistake management for leadership.

For more information about The Leader Within, including an event photo gallery, visit gawl.org.

Megan T. Hodgkiss is an attorney, mediator, and freelance writer. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Communication at Georgia State University. Megan serves as VP of Communications for GAWL and the GAWL Foundation.

GAWL Celebrates Its Members’ Varied Interests With Four New Affinity Groups

By Jennifer Gore-Cuthbert, Esq.

GAWL strives to represent a wide range of working and social interests for women attorneys in Georgia. One of the ways GAWL addresses these interests is by supporting a number of Affinity Groups designed to meet the specific needs and interests of our members. As our organization has grown, Affinity Groups have become a great vehicle for member networking and support. This board year, GAWL welcomed four new Affinity Groups: Working Moms, Large Law Firms, Newer Lawyers, and Girls in Sports and Entertainment.

The **Working Moms Affinity Group**, hosted by Rachel Platt and Janie Hagood, is a forum for working moms to share their parenting and professional experiences

and to provide support and advice for one another. Regular meetings include open and lively discussion on topics including work-life balance, childcare arrangements, and creative networking. The Working Moms Affinity Group meets every other month.

The **Large Law Firm Affinity Group** is a forum for practitioners looking for a sense of camaraderie and collective wisdom among those who work in large law firm environments. The group provides a confidential sounding board on topics such as meeting and dealing with the demands of the large firm. The Large Law Firm Affinity Group is hosted by Rebecca McFayden and meets the first Tuesday of every month.

The **Newer Lawyers Affinity Group**, hosted by Kristy Zimmerman and Annie Watson, provides attorneys new to the prac-

tice of law with great networking opportunities and powerful legal resources. This group is formed by and for female attorneys who have practiced five or fewer years. Previous discussion topics have included finding your niche within the law, how to make meaningful connections in the legal community, and successfully negotiating salaries. The Newer Lawyers Affinity Group meets the second Wednesday of each month.

The **Girls in Sports and Entertainment (GISE) Affinity Group** is hosted by Veronica Higgs Cope and Kristy Zimmerman and is a resource for those who are interested in Georgia’s growing field of sports and entertainment law. GISE held its first meeting on March 27th and will meet quarterly moving forward.

In addition to these new Affinity Groups,

GAWL has other active affinity groups to support a variety of interests relevant to its members, including the **Solo and Small Firm Affinity Group**, which is hosted by Heather Wright and Cheryl Legare on the last Friday of each month at Seasons 52 in Buckhead. Additionally, the **Feminist Affinity Group** meets once a month under the direction of Ave Mince-Didier. All Affinity Group meetings can be found on GAWL’s Upcoming Events page on our website.

Jennifer Gore-Cuthbert is a personal injury attorney. She is the founder of The Gore Law Firm, LLC, located in Alpharetta. Jennifer serves on the Communications Committee, is the ListServ Editor for GAWL and manages the GAWL and GAWL Foundation Facebook accounts.

GAWL Committees and Networking Groups Honor Equal Pay Day

By Brandy Noelle Hughes, Esq.

On Wednesday, April 23rd, GAWL hosted its first ever Equal Pay Day program. Presented by GAWL’s Programs and Public Affairs Committees, this event was held at Freeman Mathis & Gary at 100 South Galleria Parkway. The event specifically addressed how GAWL members can better represent ourselves in the workplace on issues ranging from negotiating pay raises, performance evaluations, and representing internal and

external clients.

Equal Pay Day is observed each year in April to commemorate the point in the current year at which women have earned the same amount that men earned in the previous year. According to Laurie Vickery Benesh, attorney with Vickery Benesh Law, P.C. and a member of the current GAWL Board of Directors, honoring Equal Pay Day this year is consistent with GAWL’s goal of providing substantive, practical programming for its members.

The event’s speaker, Annette Saldaña,

speaks regularly to women on the art and science of making irresistible requests in both their personal and professional lives. Frequent topics include negotiating for promotions and pay raises, managing teams through collaboration and open discussion, and seeking out new and creative opportunities for success. Her message for GAWL’s Equal Pay Day Program focused on raising awareness of the gender-based pay gap and educating GAWL members on how they can better negotiate for themselves with supervisors, peers, and clients alike.

GAWL’s Equal Pay Day Program was just one of this year’s many activities aimed at increasing awareness of the pay disparities faced by women in the workplace and supporting GAWL members by advising them how to address the issue in their own lives. Neighborhood Networking Breakfast Leaders incorporated articles on Equal Pay Day and the advancement of women in the workplace at their April gatherings. Margaret (Max) Ruthenberg-Marshall, attorney with Hanrahan Freitag Family Law, LLC,

hosts the Intown Networking Breakfast. This month, she lead her NNB in a discussion of how the pay gap affects even solo practitioners, as illustrated by Robb Mendelbaum’s article “There is a Salary Gap Even When Women Pay Themselves,” which appeared in the *New York Times’* website on February 18th.

For more information on Equal Pay Day and related resources, please check out the following organizations:

- United States Department of Labor
- National Association of Women Lawyers
- American Bar Association Gender Equity Task Force
- National Committee on Pay Equity

You can also learn more about Annette Saldaña and her Irresistible Request programs at her website, irresistiblerequests.com.

Brandy Noelle Hughes is the Marketing & Communications Manager for FiberLight, LLC in Alpharetta, where she previously served as Corporate Counsel. She is a member of GAWL’s Communication Committee and is GAWL’s quarterly Newsletter Editor.

Upcoming Events Online on GAWL’s Website

May 1st:	Peachcrest Boys and Girls Club Project
May 3rd:	Nicholas House Children’s Project & Beautification Project
May 3rd:	One Love Stache Dash 5K
May 6th:	Large Law Firm Affinity Group
May 8th:	GAWL Annual Dinner
May 14th:	Newer Lawyers Affinity Group
May 19th:	Feminist Affinity Group
May 20th:	GAWL Columbus Monthly Luncheon
May 22nd:	GAWL Savannah Happy Hour
May 30th:	Solo/Small Firm Affinity Group
June 9th-10th:	GAWL Girl Scouts Project
June 10th:	GAWL Gwinnett Lake House Day
June 17th:	GAWL Columbus Judicial Luncheon

Check out the GAWL Upcoming Events page for more information on these and all of GAWL’s exciting events for 2014!

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