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President's Message: Talk Less, Listen More

AS I BEGIN this new GAWL Board Year, I must begin by thanking you for challenging me to serve you this year as your President. We as members of GAWL have much to be grateful for; GAWL is an organization that by its very mission has platformed us into positions of leadership and given us strong voices.

GAWL was founded 85 years ago in 1928 by Minnie Hale Daniel, the first woman to graduate from law school in Georgia, and Betty Reynolds Cobb, the first woman to pass the Georgia State bar exam. Their courageous efforts made it possible for all of us to practice our chosen profession. Years later, GAWL's members continued to be a strong voice and advocate for women in Georgia. Through the efforts of Ruth and Ruby Crawford and countless others, women were finally allowed to serve as members of Georgia juries. As more years have passed and our membership has grown in number, our circles of influence continue to be noticeable. Our members include judges, general counsels, equity and named partners, entrepreneurs, as well as Atlanta and State Bar Presidents.

As we look back at our rich history and contemplate what the next 85 years will bring, something that should strike and inspire us today is the passion and commitment of our amazing members. We are firmly committed to our mission, and throughout our history we have come together to fight for the legal rights and professional advancement of women and other groups in the State of Georgia. This passion was so very evident these last few months as we began a dialogue



Cristina C. León, Esq.

about the voice and role of GAWL in issues impacting us today. We find ourselves at a unique crossroads of knowing what GAWL has been, recognizing our myriad achievements, and determining how we build on our legacy for a bright future for GAWL. Our notable accomplishments include gaining admittance to the State Bar and on juries, training leaders at our recognized Leadership Academy and Leader Within program, providing scholarships, giving countless hours of community service, and serving as a voice for others. At this crossroads we must ask ourselves, "What do we want GAWL to be in the next 85 years?"

All of these accomplishments, as well as the work which still lies ahead, were the focus of the GAWL Executive Board retreat in June. As your Board, we recognize that we

represent you – our members. We are a statewide organization made up of a diverse group of individuals. We want to hear from you. One of the goals I have set for the GAWL Board is to "TALK LESS, AND LISTEN MORE!" As an organization, we must be committed to listening to you, our members. We will be coming to you in your mentoring circles and neighborhood networking events, and we will be hosting town hall meetings so we can hear from you.

I challenge you to think about what GAWL has meant to you, the amazing benefits and skills you have obtained from your involvement with GAWL, and to think about what you envision for GAWL as we move forward.

Our founder and first GAWL President, Minnie Hale Daniel, said "[w]hen a woman spends her time, energy and money . . . on legal training with which to equip herself for a better world, then it is that woman who does a worthy act and MUCH is expected of her." MUCH is expected of all of us GAWL's members.

We want to listen to you and be your voice. This amazing Board of Directors all answered "YES" when called to serve and now I ask you to also answer "YES" – to GAWL. To answer "YES" to the next 85 years. To answer "YES" to continuing to build upon our strong history of serving the diverse interests of our members.

Cristina C. León, Esq., 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.

When it Comes to Legal Service, Judge Susan E. Edlein says "Don't Wait"

Each year, the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers presents the Kathleen Kessler Award, our organization's most important award, to a female attorney who exhibits a high degree of professionalism and a strong dedication to service in the legal community. This year's recipient is the Honorable Susan E. Edlein.

"This award came from out of the blue for me," said Judge Edlein, "I am honored beyond words to be a recipient."

While the Kathleen Kessler Award may have been a surprise to Judge Edlein, Georgia's legal community has long held her in high esteem. Beginning with her legal career at Holland & Knight, to her current role with the Fulton County State Court, Judge Edlein has earned numerous honors and awards from the Atlanta Bar Association, State Bar of Georgia, and the Daily Report. In addition

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JMLS Holds Fundraisers in Memory of Classmate

A MOTHER OF TWO young children. A fourth year evening law student. A member of the John Marshall Law School GAWL Chapter. A lasagna prodigy. These are only a few ways to describe Tawnie Adams, who tragically and suddenly passed away in February. Despite Tawnie's health challenges, she was always determined to succeed in her field of study, and to excel in her passion to practice law. To honor her memory, the John Marshall Law School Chapter organized a week of fund-

raising events to benefit Tawnie's family.

The week began with a bake sale offering over 500 assorted baked goods. The JMLS Chapter also hosted a pancake breakfast, taco lunch and dinners, spaghetti dinners, and sold pizza donated by Da Vinci's Pizzeria. Those daily food events proved to be a key component of the JMLS Chapter's success in honoring Tawnie. The final fundraiser was a final exam prep Jeopardy tournament which allowed students and professors to be involved together in rais-

ing money for a great cause and studying for finals. More than 100 prizes were awarded, all of which were donated by local businesses.

The benefit was a huge success and the family graciously accepted the donations. Though Tawnie is all too suddenly gone, she will always be remembered at JMLS for her tenacity and determination.

Nicole Fegan is a third year law student and President of the John Marshall Law School Chapter of GAWL.

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to her judicial duties, the proud wife and mother of three also finds time to participate on committees related to leadership, pro bono work, mentorship, and professionalism.

"There are a lot of rules, when it comes to professionalism. But at its core is the 'Golden Rule'. Treat others the way you want to be treated, whether it's your clients, your opposing counsel, or other members of the legal profession," said Judge Edlein.

Along with her reputation for professionalism, GAWL also recognized Judge Edlein's dedication to service within the legal community. Currently, she serves as one of two DUI Court judges at the State Court of Fulton County. In conjunction with all her other varied volunteer projects, Judge Edlein is also helping update the court's case management system. Edlein, an Atlanta native, says she learned about service by watching her parents' involvement in the community. They taught her if you are going to complain about something, you bet-

ter be prepared to be part of the solution. Both of Judge Edlein's parents attended the GAWL Annual Dinner, where they watched their daughter receive the esteemed Kathleen Kessler award. In her acceptance speech, Judge Edlein thanked her parents for instilling a sense of philanthropy. She then offered this advice to the rest of the group:

"Life is short. What can we do in our lives, to try and make the most of it? One – help yourself. Two – help others. Three – don't wait."

GAWL created the Kathleen Kessler to honor the memory of the pioneer female attorney, who was killed in the 1996 ValuJet Airlines crash. Kessler was a leading trial attorney and served as a mentor to many young lawyers. For more information about this award, including past recipients, visit the GAWL website at gawl.org.

Megan Hodgkiss, GAWL Communications VP, is a licensed attorney and mediator. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Communication Law.



State Bar of Georgia presents GAWL with its "Best Website" Award for organizations with 500+ members

A Night of Art and Charity

The GAWL Foundation successfully hosted the 20th Annual Art Auction, on April 20th, at the Art Space International in Atlanta. This event included a live and a silent auction featuring art (paintings, photographs, jewelry, and textiles), vacation packages, and many other luxury items and gift baskets. Local Georgia artists generously donated their artwork for auction. Some of the artists featured at this year's auction were Frederic Payet, C. Schulz, Ellen Shaw, Sheila Turner, Robert Deyber, and Noelle Theard.

The Art Auction is the GAWL Foundation's signature event and is one of the main sources of funding for the Foundation's activities, including funding 100% of the Foundation's student scholarships. Each year, the Foundation awards scholarships to public-interest minded female law students in Georgia. This year's scholarship recipients include: Kaitlin Ball (University of Georgia) \$2,500; Meredith Lowry (Mercer University) \$2,500; Rotsen Law (John Marshall Law School) \$1,000; and Kelly Wegel (University of Georgia) \$1,000. In addition to the student scholarships, the GAWL Foundation uses a portion of the Art Auction proceeds to fund various grants. Visit our gallery to check out pictures from this event and past events!

Eloise Pinto is a CPA and licensed attorney with Habif, Arogeti & Wynne, LLP's Forensic & Litigation Dept., a CPA firm which provides accounting, audit and business advisory services as well as forensic accounting, fraud investigations, dispute resolution, litigation support, and business valuation services.

Upcoming Events Online on GAWL's website

GAWL has a number of networking opportunities every month, including breakfasts, lunches and happy hours. Not a member? Join us sometime, experience the GAWL advantage, and learn how membership with GAWL can help you in your business and personal development plan. We invite you to visit the GAWL Upcoming Events page and begin building relationships with a RSVP.

August 22: Happy Leaders Happy Hour, Gwinnett County

August 26: Savannah Chapter Meeting and Membership Lunch

September 19: A Conversation with GAWL, 6-8pm, John Marshall Law School's Blackburn Conference Center

September TBD: GAWL's Annual Participation Party

October 22: Lunch at a Haunted Restaurant, Savannah

October TBD: GAWL's Annual Judicial Luncheon

Check out the GAWL Upcoming Events page for more information.

GAWL IS ON LINKEDIN, FACEBOOK AND TWITTER!

SEARCH FOR US UNDER

"Georgia Association for Women Lawyers". You can also follow the GAWL Foundation on Facebook. Search for "GAWL Foundation".

GAWL Foundation is Empowering and Inspiring Girl Scouts

The GAWL Foundation invited local Girl Scouts on a two-day exploration of the legal practice, during its 11th annual Law and Order program held Monday and Tuesday, June 3-4. At this event, 28 girls from middle and high school gathered at the State Bar of Georgia in Atlanta to learn about legal careers, the Fourth Amendment, school law, freedom of speech and the role of computers in law enforcement. The program connected the Scouts with dozens of local lawyers and judges during mentoring sessions, lunches, speaker panels and mock trial coaching. The girls also had the opportunity to earn either a "Finding Common Ground" or "Social Innovator" badge.

The Law and Order event culminated with two mock trials, presided over since 2012 by the Honorable Asha Jackson, a DeKalb County Superior Court Judge and herself a former Girl Scout.

Katie Salinas Acree, event organizer and recipient of the GAWL Foundation's Honorable Debra Bernes Community Volunteer Award (2012), has been involved in the event since 2006. She said working with the Girls Scouts is inspiring: "You don't have to look up, at older more 'successful'

women to be inspired; you can just look around and draw strength from the young as well."

The Girl Scouts and program volunteers demonstrate the continuum of female leadership in Georgia: from the young Scouts who are playing a leadership role in their schools, to the Emory University student volunteers attending college on a debater scholarship, to the ACLU intern law school students, to the young lawyers, and continuing to the more senior lawyers. Acree observed that "It's fun to get that whole group together for two days and watch the creativity and energy flow among them."

GAWL members Mindy Pillow and Sharon Zinns, along with more than 30 other legal professionals, helped orchestrate the event. The Law and Order program is always seeking additional volunteers, as it is a chance to meet a Scout one-on-one with a very small time commitment. To learn more about this program, or get involved in other GAWL Foundation events, visit gawl.org or contact info@gawl.org.

Laurie Rashidi-Yazd, GAWL Communications Chair, is a solo practitioner in Marietta specializing in estate planning and litigation.

GAWL Members Sworn In To the U.S. Supreme Court

A group of GAWL members and their guests recently traveled to Washington, D.C. to be sworn in to the Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States, a trip sponsored by Judge Susan Edlein and Shira Crittendon. The nine applicants were sworn in on Monday,

May 13, 2013. Prior to the ceremony, the group and their guests were served breakfast at the Court. U.S. Supreme Court Clerk William Suter, who will retire this year after more than 20 years in his position, visited with the group to share history and protocol of the Court.

After the applicants and guests observed the Court issue three unanimous opinions, the Court approved the motions for

admissions of more than 70 lawyers from around the country. After Court adjourned, Justice Antonin Scalia joined the GAWL members to provide his background on their meeting location, formerly dubbed the "Ladies' Dining Room" and then renamed the "Spouses' Dining Room" to reflect the presence of women on the Court. The room is currently called the "Natalie Rehnquist Conference Room," and showcases photos of spouses of the Court as well as historical artifacts and artwork on loan from the Smithsonian Museum. Before departing, the group returned to the main courtroom for a brief historical lecture and tour of the courthouse.

"The amount of history contained in the building is incredible – the people, the symbolism, the decisions issued. But what is more impressive is the overwhelming sense that the Court and its staff care about the important job it is tasked with, careful interpretation of the law and the preservation of justice," commented GAWL attendee, Laurie Rashidi-Yazd.

For those who may be interested in joining GAWL on a future swearing-in trip to the U.S. Supreme Court, please visit our website for information about the application process. Space is always limited for this exciting opportunity, so please express your interest early!

Laurie Rashidi-Yazd



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