

# GEORGIA ASSOCIATION GAWL FOR WOMEN LAWYERS

[www.GAWL.org](http://www.GAWL.org)

August 2014

## President's Message: GAWL Adopts Strategic Plan Focusing on Wellness

By Cindy Manning

On May 8, GAWL inducted our new Board and I was honored to be sworn in as President for the 2014-2015 term. The new Board is a tremendous mix of experienced GAWL leaders and new, enthusiastic members, all of whom are eager to take our organization to the next level. The new Board's passion was evident at the annual retreat held in June, where we undertook the challenging but inspiring task of adopting a new three-year strategic plan. We were honored to have former GAWL President and current John Marshall Law School Professor Rebecca Cummings facilitate this process. Rebecca's assistance was a particular pleasure to me as she was President the first year I served on the GAWL Board and has been a mentor to me ever since.

At the retreat, Rebecca guided the Board through a thoughtful (and sometimes hilarious) process of creating six strategic goals for GAWL to fulfill over the next three years. Anyone who has gone through a strategic planning process knows it is designed to flesh out strengths and weaknesses on the way to setting organizational priorities. We identified the primary objectives that would drive the organization's activities, many of which encompass the values and priorities GAWL has already been addressing in recent years.

Once we settled on objectives, we spent the remainder of the

retreat creating concrete goals that GAWL will work toward accomplishing in the coming years. Our new goals are the following (in no particular order):

1. Provide training and opportunities for business development and purposeful networking.
2. Advance equal status, rights and opportunities for women lawyers.
3. Examine and address systemic barriers to women in leadership and support women lawyers in their endeavors to achieve leadership positions.
4. Cultivate and champion our members' professional worth.
5. Support women lawyers in their pursuit of wellness and personal satisfaction.
6. Convey GAWL's value in order to attract and retain members and sponsors.

We held our first board meeting this month and have already begun to implement strategies in pursuit of these worthy goals. Keep an eye out for future programming, including fresh and new events that GAWL has not previously hosted, specifically addressing our six



strategic goals.

I am honored and humbled to serve as GAWL's President this year and want to convey how much I value our members' input and diversity of views above all else. The Board and I are always open to hearing from members and potential members about the benefits they seek from GAWL. I'm looking forward to an exciting year!

*Cindy Manning, a founding partner at Manning, Levine & Marlow, LLP, specializes in civil and criminal litigation with a focus on individualized client service.*



*From left, Tedra Hobson (VP Programs; Butler, Wooten & Fryhofer, LLP), Natalie Sacha (VP Membership; Troutman Sanders LLP), Jennifer Jakob-Barnes (Membership Chair; Jakob-Barnes Law Firm, LLC) and Valentia Alleyne (Strategic Partnerships Chair; The Alleyne Law Firm) brainstorm during GAWL's 2014 Annual Board Retreat.*

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**Five Questions with GAWL  
President Cindy Manning**

**What first inspired you to join GAWL?**

I went to law school in Boston and had never lived in Atlanta before taking my first job here in 2002. I joined GAWL that year in an effort to meet other women lawyers in Atlanta and begin to build a network of friends and colleagues.

**What has been the most memorable GAWL activity that you planned or participated in?**

I was honored to be a member for the second GAWL Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy was comprised of an amazing group of women. We learned a lot of leadership skills, but what I gained most from the program were relationships with a set of inspiring, intelligent women leaders,

many of whom have already gone on to great things from serving in our State Legislature or sitting as judges to making partner. I value that experience and wholeheartedly encourage any eligible woman lawyer to consider applying to this valuable program.

**What is your trick to balancing work with family life and personal time?**

There is no trick. It is hard and it will always be hard for women who have a passion for family and work. For me, the most important skill is keeping calm and realizing that if I do the best I can, that will be good enough. I fear that many women put an inordinate amount of pressure on themselves and that pressure is what often causes them to be unhappy, not the work or the family. Keeping life in perspective and enjoying the "now" is crucial.

**Do you have any vacation plans for the summer?**

Yes. Vacation is important and I am privileged to have the opportunity for two this summer. Earlier this month my family of five spent a week in rural Michigan with my husband's family, and at the end of this month we are taking our whole crew on a long weekend trip to the beach with close friends. I never want to look back and say that I missed this time with my young family. Enjoying each other is of utmost importance.

**If you could have one super power, what would you choose?**

I used to love that 80's sitcom "Out of This World" where the main character, a teenage girl, had the power to freeze time by touching her index fingers together. If I could have one power, that would be it. Then I could do all the things I want to do without missing out on anything and still managing to get some sleep every now and then.



Above, Patrise Perkins-Hooker, vice president and general counsel for Atlanta Beltline Inc., is sworn in as 52nd President of the State Bar Georgia on June 22. GAWL co-sponsored an event in Ms. Perkins-Hooker's honor. Photos courtesy of the State Bar of Georgia.



**The GAWL Foundation's Girl Scout Project – Badges Earned and Lessons Learned**

By Morgan Bembry

We all know the Girl Scouts teach young girls valuable business and sales skills (how many of us still have Thin Mints left in our freezer?). Did you know Girl Scouting also helps its members expand other skills for their futures? On June 9-10, GAWL members helped Atlanta-area Girl Scouts learn about the law and earn their "Finding Common Ground", "Social Innovator" and "Public Policy" badges during the GAWL Foundation's 12th annual Girl Scout Project.

GAWL's Girl Scout Project is open to rising eighth graders through twelfth graders in the greater metro Atlanta area, northwest Georgia and Polk County, Tennessee. The two-day event teaches Girl Scouts about the law by presenting speakers from the legal field and facilitating mock trials. "It is the

combination of these two components that, in my opinion, makes the program a huge success," said event co-organizer Caitlin Shetter, business and tort litigation attorney with Jones Day.

Participants began the event by engaging with lawyers and law students in panels and presentations on topics such as social media responsibility, goal-setting, keeping one's career options open through high school and college, communication and relationship-building, women in law enforcement and the various career paths available to lawyers. Then, the Girl Scouts put their skills to the test in mock civil and criminal trials (Lord Capulet v. Friar Laurence and The State v. Hansel Schmidt and Gretel Schmidt) before the Honorable Asha Jackson of the DeKalb County Superior Court – who is a former Girl Scout herself.

"The girls jumped right in and made the cases their own," said GAWL member Annie Watson of The Law Office of Anne M. Watson, LLC in Decatur. "I especially loved their

theatrics on the witness stand. I was a Girl Scout, and I would have loved to have had this opportunity. So, I was thrilled to be involved!"

This year's Girl Scout Project was spearheaded by co-organizers Katie Acree of Carlton Fields, Sharon Zinns of Levy Konigsberg LLP and Caitlin Shetter. Mindy Pillow of Pillow Law organized the mock trial and Bethaney Paige Embry of the Embry Law Firm planned the mentor lunch.

The GAWL Foundation will hold its 13th annual Girl Scout Project on June 1-2, 2015. Look for more information on GAWL's website or email [gawl.communityservice@gmail.com](mailto:gawl.communityservice@gmail.com) for volunteer information.

Morgan Bembry is the GAWL Foundation Communications Chair. She is also a founding member of Wood & Bembry LLC, located in Lawrenceville. Her practice focuses on general business law, including intellectual property, estate planning and administration and state and local tax law.

These images represent the "Finding Common Ground," "Social Innovator" and "Public Policy" Badges that Girl Scouts earned by participating in the GAWL Foundation's Girl Scout Project.

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Being a new lawyer is hard.

In 12 four-hour monthly sessions (held Fridays, from 9am to 1pm in Buckhead), GAWLedu will cover 30+ relevant topics of interest designed for newer lawyers, such as your role within the business of a law firm, selecting your practice area, how to start your own practice, how to avoid malpractice, communicating with clients, technology, negotiation, marketing, and practical research techniques -- as well as one-hour discussions with experienced attorneys about their 12 substantive areas of legal practice ranging from litigation and estate planning to real estate and small business law.

GAWLedu will deliver its content in speaker presentation/Q&A format with approximately 40 women attorneys as speakers. Each speaker will have been in practice for 10+ years, and they will practice a variety of types of law in various practice settings.

GAWLedu costs only \$75 for 48+ hours of quality content to help you become a confident, savvy newer lawyer with skills and knowledge to join more experienced practitioners in the practice of law in Georgia! In addition, the members of the group will get to know each other well over the course of the year, forming friendships and support that we hope will last for many years.

The program is limited to 20 participants who will be selected from a quick and easy application process. You must be a GAWL member to be eligible to participate in this program. All applications are due by **August 4**, so [submit yours today!](#) Questions? Email [gawledu1@gmail.com](mailto:gawledu1@gmail.com).

## Lean In and Lead On

By Laurie Rashidi-Yazd

This spring the 2014 GAWL Leadership Academy met at the State Bar of Georgia office in Atlanta for a one-day session exploring leadership roles. The event gave participants first-hand access to women leaders from GAWL's past governing boards who shared their stories on the deep, productive roles they pursued during their tenures. Past presidents speaking at the event included: Elizabeth Appley, Patti Gorham, Susan Howick, Stacy Hyken, Annette Idalski, Carol Naughton, Shayna Steinfeld, Lee Wallace and the Honorable Wendy Shoob.

The panel first discussed the changes women have faced practicing law over the past several decades. For example, they discussed GAWL's involvement with important initiatives such as the introduction of maternity leave for working mothers; participation in judicial selection,

nomination and approval; and support of women in key leadership positions. They also shared their own personal experiences and insights.

By remaining connected to GAWL's past leaders, the organization remains dedicated to its mission of raising and addressing issues that impact women practicing law. GAWL Leadership Committee Member Elaine Levine of Manning, Levine and Marlow, LLP said, "We all need to be reminded and warned periodically of the reality that life does not progress along a straight line but is a roller coaster of accomplishments and setbacks, moving forward only to be startled into the humility that children and households and husbands/partners bring to our world. Yet it is so refreshing and encouraging to see that these strong and resilient women have accomplished so much in so many ways – and we can too if we strive and we maintain our integrity!"

Bethaney Paige Embry, a 2014

Leadership Academy participant, shared her take-away: "The panel... exemplified the underlying sisterhood within GAWL. More importantly, their sacrifices ensured my ability to practice today."

Drawing on their career and life successes (and the occasional misstep), the panel offered an insider's perspective on the qualities of leadership – namely wisdom, perseverance, dedication, humility and courage. As a 2014 Leadership Academy participant, I personally found the day intensely inspiring and reassuring. Rather than focusing on being the best at everything all the time, I can rest assured that there is no one right path to success. After interacting with these women, I am assured there is a path for me and I can shape it.

Learning from our preceding leaders connects us to that which we have overcome and also that which we seek to affirm. It beckons the organization to do more than just "Lean In"... we should also "Lead On."

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

## Looking Forward to Leadership Academy 2015

Inspired by feedback from this year's Leadership Academy class, GAWL's 2015 Leadership Academy theme will be "Lean In and Lead On."

Michelle West, Leadership Committee Vice President, remarked, "Through GAWL's Leadership Academy we will continue to foster an environment where women can grow and develop professionally and personally. We look forward to another year of successful, inspiring, motivating and intellectually stimulating sessions."

The Academy will start its application cycle on September 1, 2014, with applications due September 30, 2014.



*GAWL's 2014 Leadership Academy participants gather to take a photo during their February session at Leadership Committee Member Elaine Levine's home. Photo courtesy of Laurie Rashidi-Yazd.*

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## Upcoming GAWL Events

Check GAWL's [upcoming events calendar](#) on our website for additional information on these and other events.

- Aug 4: GAWLedu Applications Due
- Aug 6: Intown Neighborhood Networking Breakfast
- Aug 8: Run Group — Piedmont Park
- Aug 12: Cobb/Cumberland Neighborhood Networking Breakfast
- Aug 12: Druid Hills Neighborhood Networking Breakfast
- Aug 12: Run Group — Druid Hills
- Aug 13: Perimeter Neighborhood Networking Breakfast
- Aug 13: Newer Lawyers Affinity Group Happy Hour
- Aug 13: Happy Hour & Atlanta Dream Game
- Aug 21: North Fulton Neighborhood Networking Breakfast
- Aug 21: East Cobb Neighborhood Networking Breakfast
- Aug 22: Working Mom's Affinity Group Lunch
- Aug 26: Buckhead Neighborhood Networking Breakfast
- Aug 26: Girls in Sports & Entertainment (GISE) Affinity Group Meeting
- Aug 29: Solo/Small Firm Affinity Group Lunch
- Sept 13: 14th Annual Legal Runaround Road Race\

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